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***"You could not draw up this season any better"***

"You could not draw up this season any better," CEO **Darren Dunn** said as the 50-day live racing season at Assiniboia Downs came to a spectacular end Sunday night with a stunning 44 per cent increase in wagering per race this season which included a single-day record of \$1.1 million on Manitoba Derby Day, Aug. 1.

"Our goal was to bring more horses into Manitoba to compete, increase the per race field size for our customers to wager on and drive further stimulus to the provincial economy in our role in the agriculture and tourism areas and we accomplished this in spades," Dunn said.

"We achieved revenue growth that far exceeded current industry norms, well matched with very large and enthusiastic crowds on a regular basis," he continued.

"Add to this the dramatic increase in our 'partner' (other gaming venues) wagering numbers which is always a continued focus to try and grow and it is clear that the Assiniboia Downs live race product was very desirable," he concluded.

Total wagering on last year's 50-day meet was \$6.5 million. This year it was \$9.53 million.

Riding a remarkable 10 winners in 21 races on the final weekend, Barbadian jockey **Christopher Husbands** (at right) easily captured his second riding title in three years with 15 wins more than



his rival, **Antonio Whitehall**. On the trainer side,



**Tom Gardipy, Jr.**, won his fourth title with 37 wins, three more than **Don Schnell**.

**Witt Six**, a 4-year-old gelding owned by Texas cattleman and former race car driver, **Henry Witt, Jr.**, stamped himself as the likely Horse of the Year by winning the Gold Cup Stakes Saturday in impressive run-down-the-leader fashion.

On the horseplayer side, former bank employee **Bonnie Simmonds** became the first woman in seven years to win one of four horseplayer tournaments that will send her to Las Vegas in March to compete in a continent-wide tournament for big prize money.

In the closing weeks, Winnipeg Beach vegetable grower **Al Siwak** was the talk of the track when his 20-cent quick-pick ticket on the Jackpot Hi 5 wager won him \$13,011.

Racing continues daily at the track and at off-track track betting sites from top tracks in Canada, the U.S. and Australia. The next big event is the Breeders' Cup World Championships the first week of November.

Besides racing, Assiniboia Downs is open every day of the year for 140 VLTs, Thursday prime rib buffets, \$10 buy-in poker Fridays and Saturday, VLT tournaments Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and all manner of group and corporate activities including banquets, socials, weddings and trade shows.

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For more information contact:

Darren Dunn, CEO at [ddunn@ASDowns.com](mailto:ddunn@ASDowns.com)

204-885-3330 ext 203

[www.ASDowns.com](http://www.ASDowns.com)