

ASSINIBOIA DOWNS



The Inside Track | Issue #12 | Jan. 27, 2022



DINING



BET NOW



140 VLTS

- Open daily from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m.
- Full immunization and government issued I.D. required to attend Assiniboia Downs.
- VLTs, Race Carrels and Tables are sanitized between customer use.

In this edition . . .

- What's happening at the Downs?
- Valentine's Day Specials
- Happy Birthday Devon Gittens!
- A Snapshot in Time
- Horse Owner wins 'Capping Contest
- Photo of the Week
- Knicks Go faces big speed
- Eclipse Award for Peteski's owner
- NFL Playoffs with TravyFootball
- The Best of Bob

Do the Downs!

SPIN TO WIN FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS IN THE CLUBWEST GAMING LOUNGE - Enter at the VLT cage every Friday & Saturday for a chance to Spin the Wheel for up to \$100 Cash! Draws will be made throughout the afternoon and evening.



MONDAY MADNESS IN JANUARY - 5% cash back on all eligible wagering every Monday in January. Minimum wagered \$100 (each Monday). Maximum deposit \$25 (each Monday). Wagers must be placed on HPI account to qualify. (\$.10 payoffs not

included).



PEGASUS POINTS BONUS - Earn 10X points on Gulfstream Park wagering this Saturday plus free Gulfstream programs and DRF at [HPIbet.com](https://www.hpiwet.com). (Minimum wagered \$40. Maximum points value \$10. Wagers must be placed on your HPI account.)

TUESDAYS ARE TREMENDOUS IN FEBRUARY - 5% cash back on all eligible wagering every Tuesday in February. Minimum wagered \$100 (each Tuesday). Maximum deposit \$25 (each Tuesday). Wagers must be placed on HPI account to qualify. (\$2.10 payoffs not included).

FRIDAY & SATURDAY DINNER SPECIALS

FRIDAYS: 8 oz. top Sirloin steak charbroiled and seasoned with our smoky dry rub. Served with vegetables and choice of mashed potatoes or french fries. Every Friday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. \$24.95. Reservations are not required.



SATURDAYS: Smoky charbroiled St. Louis ribs with our signature BBQ sauce. Served with vegetables and choice of mashed potatoes or french fries. Every Saturday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. \$24.95. Reservations are not required.

VALENTINE'S DINNER SPECIALS

Monday, February 14 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Entree Specials

Certified Angus Prime Rib \$34.95 - Our signature favourite served with horseradish, Yorkshire pudding, peppercorn jus, fresh vegetables and your choice of potato.

Maple BBQ Salmon \$32.95 - With Dill Cream Sauce. Seared and baked with white wine and rich cream. Served with fresh vegetables and your choice of potato.



A full a la carte [menu](#) is also available and features appetizers, pizza, ribs, fish & chips & steak.

Dessert Specials

Red Velvet Cake \$6.95 - With cream cheese icing and strawberry sauce

Chocolate Cake \$6.95 - Layered with caramel and milk chocolate ganache

Warm Apple Pie \$4.95

Reservations are required. Call 204-885-3330.

PLAYER REWARDS POINTS EXTENDED - You now have until February 28, 2022 to use up your old Player Rewards points. Points can be used for program and DRF purchases from the kiosks, food and beverage purchases or entry into monthly handicapping contests.

Happy Birthday Devon Gittens! Talented up-and-coming trainer turns 37 today



Trainer Devon Gittens with his pride and joy, Dr. Betty Hughes' Purrsistent.

One of the best young trainers at the Downs, Devon Gittens celebrates his 37th birthday today. If you happen to see him, make sure to wish him a fabulous day!

Gittens is entering his fourth year as a licensed trainer at the Downs, and every season has been better than the last for the developer of Purrsistent, one of the best mares on the grounds for the past two years.

A Manitoba-bred daughter of Vengeful Wildcat, Purrsistent won her first start last year in the Astral Moon Overnight Stakes and ended the season with a convincing win over the boys in an allowance race. She also finished second in the La Verendrye Stakes and third in the Distaff.

Gittens can't wait to get back to the track in early March for spring training. He'll again have horses for top Manitoba owner/breeders Dr. Betty Hughes, Cam Ziprick, Charles Fouillard and his sons, and the Assiniboia Racing Club. He'll also have one or two of his own including Mean Money, who had a win, a second in the Graduation Stakes and a third for Gittens from three starts as a 2-year-old. Mean Money was given to Gittens by Hughes as a gift in appreciation for his excellent work with the Hughes' homebreds, including Purrsistent.

"Purrsistent is one of the most honest horses I've ever come across," said Gittens. "That last race she ran I knew she was going to give her all. She did the same thing for me last year. She told me she was ready. Every horse is different, but it all comes down to noticing the little things and being patient. You have to get into the horse's mind. Once they get comfortable with you, they'll do anything for you."

Gittens exercises all the horses under his care himself, and he's shown exceptional talent for developing youngsters, which was expected considering his background. He started out grooming and exercising horses in Barbados long before he was licensed to do so at the age of 17.

He came to Canada in 2006 via an invitation from Downs CEO Darren Dunn and spent over a decade galloping horses for almost every top trainer at the Downs including the late Ardell Sayler, Rob Atras and Don Schnell.



Purrsistent (#4) flies home on the outside to win the 2021 Astral Moon Overnight Stakes. Leroy Nelson up.

Champions Balooqa Bull, Magic D' Oro and Escape Clause were all exercised by Gittens in their formative years, as were most of Sayler's stakes-winning 2-year-olds.

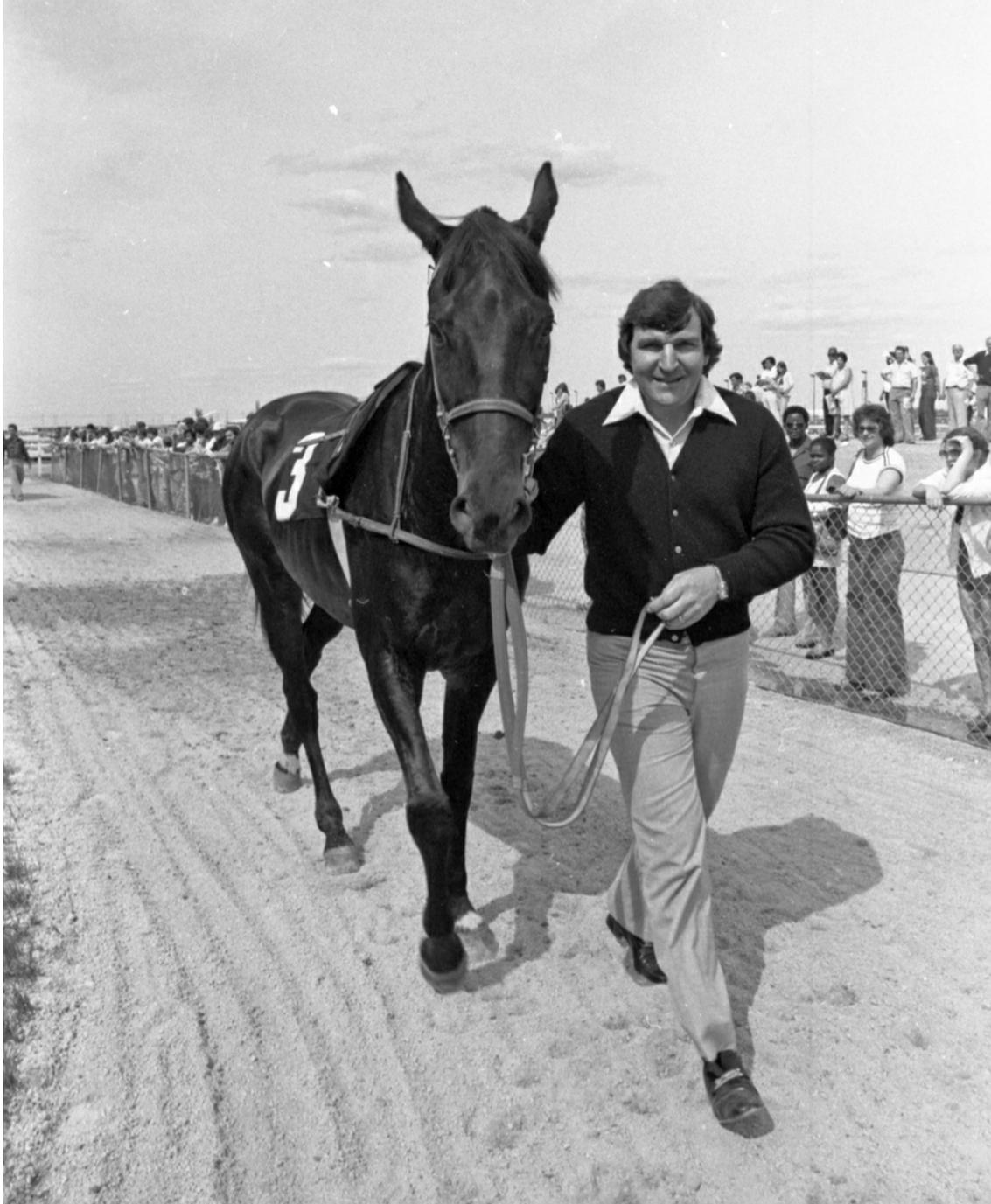
"A lot of them have potential, you just have to find it," said Gittens. "You have to figure out what they have to offer. If you can gain and build their confidence, they'll run for you. Getting the best out of them takes patience, you can't go too fast. You have to do it in stages and build them up physically and mentally. I'm very fortunate to have good owners that didn't pressure me with the young horses. I really appreciate my owners and I'm very thankful for the opportunities they've given me."

Gittens will likely have a number of young Manitoba-breds in his barn again this year, and he's looking forward to the challenge of developing them.

"Every time I send a horse out, I expect them to win, but that's not reality," said Gittens. "My goal is to persuade them to give 100 percent, to give their best."

And they have.

A Snapshot in Time



John Bowie Ferguson getting his shoes scuffed up while paddocking an unidentified horse from the early 1980s. Who knew? John's middle name "Bowie" was his mother's maiden name. Yes sir, Big John, Vice President and General Manager of the Winnipeg Jets knew his way around the barns and the paddock.

John's daughter Chris trained here in the '80s as well, while her father was the heart and soul of our hockey club. John remained the Jets' top-boss until the fall of 1988 when the club decided it was time for a change, but no one ever doubted John's loyalty and devotion to our Jets. Photo courtesy of Track Historian Bob Gates.

Handicapper's Corner



Scott Anderson, third from left, in the winner's circle with Stevie Mac after her victory in the 2017 La Verendrye Stakes.

Long-time Horse Owner Wins Handicapping Tourney **Sharp handicapping and racing luck lead to big win**

Sharp handicapping and some good racing luck in the form of a disqualification were enough to get long-time horse owner Scott Anderson home on top in the first Player's Choice Handicapping Tournament of the Year on Saturday.

The 50-year-old livestock broker for Winnipeg Livestock Sales defeated a strong field of 54 players to score his first win in the monthly tournament and take home the championship trophy and \$1,000.

"Every dog has his day I guess," said Anderson, who won with four of his 10 bets in the contest and finished in the money with eight of his selections overall. "I was third, fourth and fifth in the contest a few times but I never could break the ice. I might have won a contest here 20 years ago but I can't remember. It's nice to win, and a thousand bucks certainly helps!"

Anderson came close to doubling his \$60 bankroll, finishing with a total of \$118.70 to best runner-up Kevin Palmer, who built his bankroll to \$115.60. Palmer won \$400 for finishing second, followed by George Williams (\$101.50 bankroll, \$200 in winnings) Nicole Baker (\$97.00, \$100) and Myron Fedoruk (\$86.80, \$50). [Full results.](#)

"Anytime you can double your money at the races it's a good day," said Anderson. "And that's what it takes to win."

Anderson's winners included Lido Key (\$10.40) in Race 3 at Gulfstream, Market Analysis (\$19.00) in Race 7 at Oaklawn, Miss Mosaic (\$16.20) in Race 8 at Oaklawn, and Cowan (\$10.30) in Race 8 at Fair Grounds. Cowan had originally finished second but was moved up to the win spot when the heavily favoured winner was disqualified for interference early in the race.

"I changed the channel and didn't see it," said Anderson. "But when I went back to look at my account, I had a bunch of money in it that I wasn't expecting."

Nice! And interestingly, Anderson's biggest winner, Market Analysis, came in the same race that 2021 Gold Cup winner Plentiful finished ninth in while making his 2022 debut off a long layoff.

"I like to play trainers I know," said Anderson. "Robertino Diodoro, Rob Atras, Marty

Drexler etc. I grew up with some of these guys. Diodoro knows how to spot his horses and he had claimed Market Analysis out of his previous start.”

Scott is the son of MJC board member Barry Anderson, and the grandson of the late R.C. (Bob) Anderson, who was a volunteer at Assiniboia Downs, acting on the board of the HBPA for many years. The annual R. C. Anderson Stakes is named after Bob. Scott is also the nephew of former MHRC Chairman Wayne Anderson.

In keeping with the family tradition, Scott is on the HBPA Board, and is deeply involved in the local racing community at Assiniboia Downs. As a result of his family connections, he first came to the track at a very young age, and he’s been handicapping ever since.

“I’ve been here forever,” he said.

Anderson played in all but one of the tournaments last year and finished seventh in the 2021 race for the Handicapper of the Year title, which rewards the winner with a trip for two to Las Vegas to play in the Horseplayer World Series at the Orleans Race and Sports Book in Las Vegas. [Canadians have done very well](#) in this tournament over the past five years, with winners taking home upwards of \$200,000.

“It’s a fun way to spend the day,” said Anderson. “I hadn’t played at all in the contests until last year, but for the amount of money they give away, I thought why not.”

Anderson’s advice for contest players?

“Just don’t jump the gun,” he said. “Don’t feel the need to bet the first 10 races you watch. Sometimes it’s good to watch a few races and see if there’s a track bias or an angle you can take advantage of. I try to stay away from betting the favourites and not shoot for the stars too much on the CAP horses. I look for horses that are 6-1 to 8-1 and hopefully get a few of those.”



Why So Blue (#1) wins the 2018 Frank Arnason Sire Stakes for Scott Anderson and partners. Prayven Badrie up.

Anderson has owned horses at the Downs for 25 years, and was one of the partners on Manitoba champion Why So Blue and La Verendrye Stakes winner Stevie Mac. He

currently has shares in “seven or eight horses” trained by Shelley Brown and Steve Gaskin.

Stevie Mac won 11 races and over \$100,000 racing at Assiniboia Downs. Now retired, she is scheduled to be bred to Nonios this spring. On the other end of the spectrum, Anderson and his partners bred a 2-year-old colt that is just getting started on his racing career.

The son of Fort Lauderdale Stakes (G2) winner and millionaire Summer Front (War Front-Rose of Summer by El Prado) is out of their mare Tiz My Cherrie (Tiz Wonderful-Mine Inning by Mining), who is a half sister to Mac Diarmida Handicap (G2) winner Ramazutti. Could be a good one...

With a little racing luck!

Photo of the Week



It's almost time for spring training! In just over a month we'll be galloping through the snow again dreaming of big wins and good times! Manitoba tough.

Do you have an interesting photo you would like showcased in an upcoming newsletter? Email your photos to theinsidetrack@ASDowns.com.

In The News

Knicks Go faces serious speed in Pegasus World Cup defense
Life Is Good has no intention of giving up the lead



Life Is Good, shown above on his way to winning the Big Ass Fans Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile, will give Knicks Go a serious challenge for the lead in the Pegasus World Cup Invitational this Saturday at Gulfstream Park. Bill Denver / Breeders' Cup / Eclipse Sportswire photo.

Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) winner Knicks Go has drawn Post 1 for his highly anticipated title defense in the \$3 million Pegasus World Cup Invitational Stakes Presented by 1/ST BET (G1) this Saturday, but scintillating Big Ass Fans Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1) winner Life Is Good will not be letting him get an easy lead. What a race! More from the Blood Horse [here](#).

[Earle Mack To Receive Eclipse Award Of Merit For Lifetime Achievement](#)
Founder of Man O' War Project to be honoured at 51st Eclipse Awards ceremony



Earle Mack, who won the Canadian Triple Crown in 1993 with Peteski, has been selected to receive the Eclipse Award of Merit. Horsephotos / Paulick Report photo.

Earle I. Mack, who has burnished a remarkable career serving his country and the thoroughbred industry through racing, breeding and philanthropic causes, has been selected to receive the Eclipse Award of Merit in recognition of a lifetime of outstanding achievement. Mack has bred or raced 25 stakes winners, including [1993 Canadian Triple Crown winner Peteski](#). His most recent cause, as founder of The Man O' War Project, has allowed him to combine his interest and passion for military veterans and retired racehorses. More from the Paulick Report [here](#).

Road to the Kentucky Derby 2022

- **Jan. 29** - Southwest - Oaklawn
- **Feb. 5** - Holy Bull - Gulfstream
- **Feb. 5** - Withers - Aqueduct
- **Feb. 6** - Robert B. Lewis - Santa Anita
- **Feb. 12** - Sam F. Davis - Tampa Bay
- **Feb. 12** - El Camino Real - Golden Gate



Full list of Kentucky Derby prep races [here](#).
Kentucky Derby [leaderboard](#).

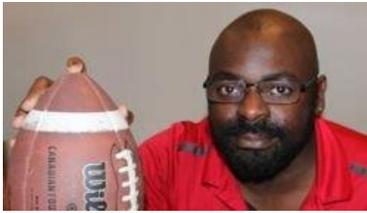
Carryover Watch & Programs

- [Gulfstream Park](#) (Jan. 27) - Jackpot Pick 6 - \$368,633
 - Gulfstream Jackpot Pick 6 mandatory payout Sunday, Jan. 30
 - [Santa Anita](#) (Jan. 28) - Jackpot Pick 6 - \$206,313
 - [Turfway Park](#) (Jan. 28) - Jackpot Pick 6 - \$44,591
 - [Sam Houston](#) (Jan. 27) - Jackpot Hi 5 - \$38,041
 - See all carryovers [here](#).
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"I Won Bigg" Betting Group

The "I Won Bigg" betting group meets every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. in the Clubhouse and you are welcome to join! This week the group will be focusing on Tampa Bay and Santa Anita. Want a share? \$20 gets you in! Email Larry at larry@ampereelectric.ca.

Top NFL Picks with TravyFootball: Conference Championships



49ers over Rams (Sunday evening): I could have just copied and pasted what I wrote when these two teams played three weeks ago, but I won't. For the third time this year the 49ers vs Rams battle will happen, except this one has a trip to the Super Bowl on the line. The 49ers pulled off the unconventional upset last week over the Packers, thanks in part to a blocked punt that turned into a

touchdown. Jimmy G tried his darndest to give the game away, but despite his errant dangerous passes, Robbie Gould sent the Packers packing on a last second field goal as time expired. The Rams organization was worried that 49ers fans would flood their stadium like they did in week 18, so they attempted to limit ticket sales to only people living in the Los Angeles area. Unfortunately for them, it looks like the strategy did not work, because they cannot control which tickets are resold on secondary markets like StubHub, SeatGeek, or Vivid Seats. Too bad, so sad. GO NINERS!!

Chiefs over Bengals (Sunday afternoon): The Chiefs are coming off arguably one of the best playoff games in NFL history last week against the Buffalo Bills. You would think that with 13 seconds left that the Chiefs would've been done, but they will always be in a game as long as Patrick Mahomes is the quarterback. Going 50 yards in two plays, they got into field-goal range to tie it, and then scored a walk off touchdown in overtime to end it. Once again, the debate of "should the NFL change the overtime rules?" came up. Personally, I think the rules are fine, and if you don't win the coin toss in overtime you need to make a stop on defense to give your offense a chance. Even though the Bengals knocked off the number one seeded Tennessee Titans, they are going to struggle to keep up with the Chiefs on the scoreboard.

LAST WEEK'S PICKS: 1-4

The Best of Bob

by ASD Historian Bob Gates

Did you know that Garylle Bruce Stewart passed away on Derby Day 2016? The Downs lost a good friend and loyal supporter that day, and it seemed only fitting that one year later the ownership of Murray Duncan and the Estate of Garylle Stewart would win the Manitoba Derby with Plentiful. Bob has this heart-warming story [here](#). (From August 2016)



Feedback

We would love to hear from you! Email your comments and/or suggestions to theinsidetrack@ASDowns.com



[Visit our website](#)