

### **ASSINIBOIA DOWNS**



### The Inside Track | Issue #67 | February 17, 2023







DINING

BET NOW

140 VLTS

- Open daily from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m.
- VLTs, Race Carrels and Tables are sanitized between customer use.

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# Do the Downs!

### **Club West Gaming Lounge**

140 VLTs available daily in our spacious Club West Gaming Lounge from 10 a.m. through 1 a.m. Please note that our VLTs are sanitized between play. Click <a href="here">here</a> for a full list of games available at ASD.

### Win CA\$H every day in February!

- Draws to win up to \$100 cash on our lucky wheel Monday through Friday from noon until 5 p.m.
- Draws for \$20 FREE VLT Spins Friday, Saturday & Sunday from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. One lucky person turned their free \$20 into \$306 last Sunday!





### 2023 Player's Choice Online Handicapping Tournaments

- This Saturday, February 18, 2023
- Saturday, March 18, 2023
- Saturday, April 15, 2023
- Saturday, May 13, 2023



Entry fee: \$25. Bankroll: \$60. Place 10 (\$2 WPS) wagers on any North American race that takes place on the contest day. You must have a Manitoba HPI account to participate. Deadline to enter is 4 p.m. the Friday before the tournament. For complete list of 2023 handicapping tournaments click <a href="https://example.com/here/new-10/48/">here</a>.

### **February HPI Cash Back Specials**

 TREMENDOUS TUESDAYS: Earn 4% cash back on all eligible wagers Tuesdays during the month of February (21 & 28). Minimum wagered \$100. Maximum cash back \$25. (\$2.10 payouts are not eligible.) All wagers must be placed on your HPI account.



HOLIDAY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20 BONUS: Earn 3% cash back on all eligible wagers on Monday, February 20. Minimum wagered \$100. Maximum cash back \$25. (\$2.10 payouts are not eligible.) All wagers must be placed on your HPI account.

# **Dining at Assiniboia Downs**

# **Club West Dining Room & Lounge Open Daily**

Enjoy breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks plus Happy Hour food and beverage specials in our Club West Dining Room & Lounge! Open daily from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m.

- Club West Dining Room menu
- Daily Happy Hour specials



### **New! Value Added Chef's Specials**

Friday's feature "Steak and Suds" which includes an 8 oz. top Sirloin steak plus a complimentary pint of ASD Lucky Lager and Saturday's feature "Prime and Wine" which includes an 8 oz. cut of Certified Angus Prime Rib plus a complimentary 6 oz. glass of house wine.

Served from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Reservations are not required.

# Friday \$24.95 STEAK & SUDS



8 oz. top Sirloin charbroiled and seasoned with our smoky dry rub. Served with fresh vegetables and choice of mashed potatoes or french fries. Plus a complimentary pint of ASD Lucky Lager!



# Saturday \$29.95 PRIME & WINE



Certified Angus Prime Rib (8 oz.) cut. Served with fresh vegetables and choice of mashed potatoes or french fries, horseradish and Yorkshire pudding au jus. Plus a complimentary 6 oz. glass

of house wine!



# At The Post with G.S. Thompson

### **Interview With a Groom**

### Winnipeg Free Press horse racing writer George Williams remembers



Former groom turned trainer George Williams (far right) in the winner's circle with Buck Domino after winning the 1985 Gold Cup at Assiniboia Downs.

Winnipeg Free Press horse racing writer George Williams groomed horses on and off for some of the best in the business for 15 years before going on to become a trainer and writer, and said it was one of the most rewarding jobs he ever had. With the HBPA Groom School currently accepting applications we thought it might be a good time to ask him about life as a groom. Enjoy!

**GST (George S. Thompson):** How did you get your start grooming horses? **GW (George Williams):** I was sitting in the grandstand on a rainy night with my Dad and he suggested I get a job in the backstretch. I was only 17 and I didn't even know what the backstretch was. He explained that it was where they took care of the horses that were in the races, and I was always an animal lover so, I thought I'd check it out.

GST: What was your first job in the backstretch?

**GW**: I got a job cleaning stalls and filling and hauling water buckets for an old trainer with a few horses. He didn't want me near the horses at first, but I gradually got up the courage to walk one and I was hooked from there.

**GST:** When did you first start grooming?

**GW:** My first year as full-time groom was in 1977 with trainer Don Gray and his wife Lorna. They were very kind to the horses and taught me all the important basics I needed to know to work anywhere as a groom. It was one of the best work experiences of my life up to that point and led to more jobs with trainers that included Bert Blake and Red Johnson

in Winnipeg, Ron Brock in Alberta, and Tony Mattine and Mike Luider in Ontario. It also resulted in jobs in the US working for Hall of Fame trainers.

**GST:** What Hall of Famers did you work for south of the border? **GW:** In the fall/winter of 1978 I worked for Woody Stephens at Belmont Park in New York and Hialeah in Florida. In the summer of 1979 I was a swing groom for Charlie Whittingham at Hollywood Park and Del Mar, and in the winter of 1984 I got a job working for Allen Jerkens doing the same thing.

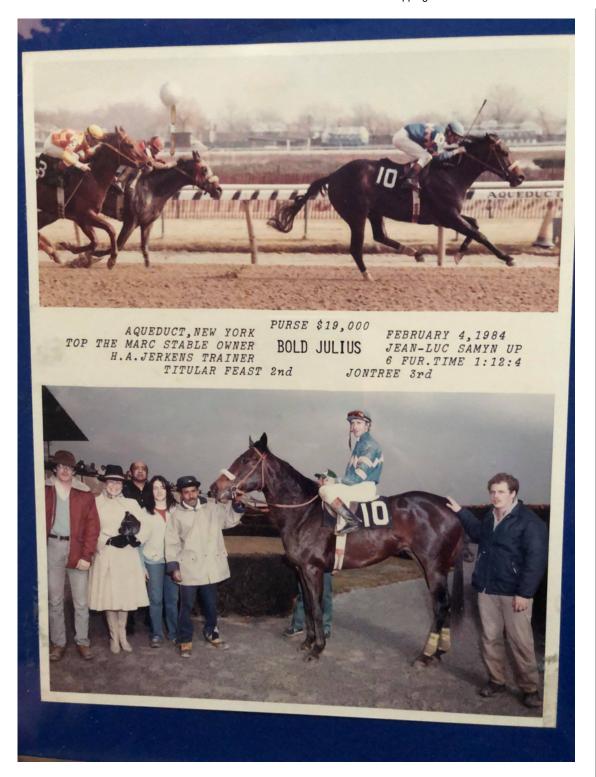
GST: What did you learn from the Hall of Fame trainers?

**GW**: You're continually learning when it comes to horses and experience is everything. Stephens, Whittingham and Jerkens had decades of experience working with the best horses in North America. Stephens and Whittingham were fitness experts, which would explain why the former won five Belmont Stakes in a row and the latter is the all-time leader in stakes wins in California.

They weren't afraid to work their horses faster and farther than other trainers, no matter how many races they'd already had. Their horses were always fitter than the competition. Whittingham taught me that even if a horse has had numerous hard races, he still may not be at the highest fitness level he can get to. There are much higher levels, and he knew how to get them there. Good examples of that for Whittingham were when he won the Kentucky Derby with Sunday Silence and Ferdinand.

**GST:** What about Allen Jerkens. Why did they call him the "Giant Killer"? **GW:** Allen Jerkens was by far the best trainer I ever worked for and we remained friends throughout his lifetime. The media said he was half horse, and I was lucky enough to find out why first hand. Jerkens spent a lot of time with the horses in the barn. They were like personal friends to him and he could tell what they were thinking and how they were feeling like no one I've ever seen before or after. He would buy horses with physical ailments, patch them up and persuade them to <u>defeat more champions than any other trainer in the history of the sport</u>.

One of Jerkens' favourite training techniques was jogging, not only for getting and keeping horses sound and fit, but also for giving them a mental boost and putting a bounce in their step. He would also take horses out at night, walk them around the barn and give them pep talks. He was an absolute genius with horses and his son Jimmy is also a trainer of the same quality. Both taught me what I needed to know to get started as a trainer.



George Williams (far right) in the winner's circle with Bold Julius, trained by Allen Jerkens, at Aqueduct. Allen's son Jimmy Jerkens on the far left.

GST: How did you do as a trainer?

**GW:** I trained a few horses off and on for about 10 years and won races with most of the horses I had. We didn't pay much for them, but almost all of them won. We even won with a horse we paid a dollar for. My Dad and his partners bought Buck Domino for \$7,500 after he'd been outdistanced at Woodbine in a maiden claiming race, and he went on to win two Gold Cups at Assiniboia Downs. The Gold Cup has been my favourite race ever since, and it is still one of the hardest races to win here. I quit training in the early '90s and started writing for the <u>Daily Racing Form</u>, but even when I was training it was the time spent grooming the horses that was my favourite part of the job.

**GST:** What was your favourite part of grooming horses?

**GW:** Horses are smart sensitive animals and they're very loyal and loving. Most people don't know how smart they really are. And they will give you everything they have in a race if you take care of them and treat them well. My favourite part was getting to know the horses and becoming friends with them. They become your loyal companions. They can sense what you're feeling and they will often respond in kind. Horses are used for therapeutic purposes with humans now, and I understand why. They could help with a lot of today's mental health issues, they're that good with people.

**GST:** What was the most important thing you learned as a groom?

**GW**: The ability to stay calm under pressure and the fact that heavy handedness doesn't work at all with horses. I was often given the most rambunctious 2-year-olds and rowdy stallions to look after and I loved it. The ability to stay calm and quiet when in the stall with these horses was often the key to getting along with them and getting them to perform at their best. Horses are kind at heart and they will treat you the way you treat them. Treat them with respect and kindness, and they will go to war for you. They're that loyal. Who wouldn't love a friend like that?

GST: Who were some of the best horses you groomed?

**GW**: As a swing groom I got to spend time with some major graded stakes horses including White Star Line, Terpsichorist, Sensational, Sirlad, Inkerman, Balzac and Amazer, and those are just the ones I can remember. I also looked after a Canadian horse named Jacksboro that helped jockey Angel Cordero set the new world record at the time for purses earned in a single year. That's one of my all-time favourite win pictures. These were all very serious, classy racehorses, among the best in the world.

**GST:** As a groom what's the difference between a graded stakes horse and a \$2,500 claimer?

**GW**: The graded stakes winners run faster. The very best horses are often advantaged by genetics, which provides them with more natural ability than the claimers. In some cases the best of the best are extremely intelligent and can be trained to do anything. When it comes to heart and the will to win however, a claiming horse can have just as much heart as a graded stakes horse.

The job of the groom and the trainer is to persuade the horses to give their best, and some horses will run through a brick wall for you. Regardless of the class level they're racing at, they are considered "classy" because they give their best every time. Being around animals like that is the same as being around people like that. They make you better.

**GST:** What advice would you give to someone thinking about becoming a groom? **GW:** I would tell them it's hard work, but very rewarding, and the best job I ever had. If you enjoy grooming horses and you have a knack for getting along with them, it won't feel like work. You'll look forward to showing up every morning, just to see your happy horses and spend time with them. You take care of them and take great pride in the fact that they are happy and healthy because of you. They get to know you, you get to know them, they start to love you, and you do the same. It's like going to work every day to hang out with your best friends.

What could be better than that?

### **Manitoba HBPA Groom School Application Information**

For more information, or to apply to the HBPA Groom School Program, please email a resume along with a cover letter or summary to the attention of Shannon Dawley at <a href="mailto:hbpamanitoba@mymts.net">hbpamanitoba@mymts.net</a>. Deadline for applications is March 10, 2023. **And if you know** 

# someone who might be looking for a job working with horses, please share! Thank you!



Manitoba HBPA Groom School graduate Skyla Blanchard shares a moment with Miss Giving in trainer Devon Gittens' barn. Bred by Sherisse Ziprick and owned by Miss Understood Stable, Miss Giving is a Manitoba-bred 3-year-old filly by Kentucky Bear-Bull Market Lady by Holy Bull. She won her first lifetime start on May 31, 2022 for a very happy groom. (George Williams photo)

### Advertisement #40620

Steward-In-Training Seasonal/Casual (May 1 – September 30) Social Occasions and Horse Racing Department, Operations Unit

Closing Date: February 28, 2023

Salary Range: \$33.31/hourly (B Classification)



The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba (LGCA) regulates the province's liquor, gaming, cannabis, and horse racing industries. We license liquor sales, service and manufacturing, gaming employees, products, and operations; retail cannabis stores; and horse racing. We strive to serve the public interest by regulating these industries in a respectful, impartial, and balanced manner.

The LGCA is seeking a highly motivated individual to work within the Social Occasions and Horse Racing Department, which is part of the Operations Unit. The steward-intraining position supports officiating horse races and contributing to the general conduct and enforcement of the legislation, and rules of thoroughbred horse racing.

Please click the following link to view this job posting: <a href="https://lgcamb.ca/job-postings/">https://lgcamb.ca/job-postings/</a>

Apply to:

Advertisement # 40620 Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba Human Resources 1055 Milt Stegall Drive

Winnipeg MB R3G 0Z6 Fax: 204-927-5384

Email: resumes@LGCAmb.ca

#### Advertisement #40621

Judge (2 Positions)
Seasonal/Part-Time (June 1 – September 30)
Social Occasions and Horse Racing Department,
Operations Unit

Closing Date: February 28, 2023

Salary Range: \$248.50 - \$309.91 per race day (C

Classification)



The LGCA is seeking a highly motivated individual to work within the Social Occasions and Horse Racing Department, which is part of the Operations Unit. The judge position is responsible for officiating horse races and contributing to the general conduct and enforcement of the legislation, and rules of standardbred horse racing.

Please click the following link to view this job posting: <a href="https://lgcamb.ca/job-postings/">https://lgcamb.ca/job-postings/</a>

### Apply to:

Advertisement # 40621 Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba Human Resources 1055 Milt Stegall Drive Winnipeg MB R3G 0Z6

Email: resumes@LGCAmb.ca

### Advertisement #40622

Fax: 204-927-5384

Steward

Seasonal/Full-time (May 1 – September 30) Social Occasions and Horse Racing Department,

**Operations Unit** 

Closing Date: February 28, 2023

Salary Range: \$3,327.41 - \$3,714.50/biweekly (B

Classification)

LIQUOR, GAMING & CANNABIS

**AUTHORITY OF MANITOBA** 

The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba (LGCA) regulates the province's liquor, gaming, cannabis, and horse racing industries. We license liquor sales, service and manufacturing, gaming employees, products, and operations; retail cannabis stores; and horse racing. We strive to serve the public interest by regulating these industries in a respectful, impartial, and balanced manner.



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#### Apply to:

Advertisement # 40622 Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba Human Resources 1055 Milt Stegall Drive Winnipeg MB R3G 0Z6 Fax: 204-927-5384

Email: resumes@LGCAmb.ca

Call for Foal Photos

The Jockey Club of Canada wants to showcase your foals and so do we!



The new Manitoba foals will soon be here and we want to see yours! (Manitoba CTHS photo)

The foaling season is upon us and the <u>Jockey Club of Canada</u> is looking for foal photos to share with their membership group. If you have a foal you'd like to show off, please email your photo to <u>jockeyclubcanada@gmail.com</u> and include the province foaled, sire, dam, and photographer, as well as any additional information you wish to provide.

Any photos received will be included in the Jockey Club of Canada Newsletter through to the end of foaling season. And don't forget to cc us on your email at <a href="mailto:theinsidetrack@asdowns.com">theinsidetrack@asdowns.com</a>.

We'd love to showcase your foal photos here too.

## **Congratulations! The Second of our Foal Photos!**



Manitoba-bred foal by Fed Biz-Magic Vixen by Tapit. Born at Florent Rivard's farm in St. Eustache, Manitoba on Feb. 15, 2023. The foal is owned by former Manitoba CTHS President and current board member Grant Watson. Thanks to the <a href="Manitoba CTHS">Manitoba CTHS</a> and Grant for sending!

# 2023 SHIPPING INCENTIVE PROGRAM

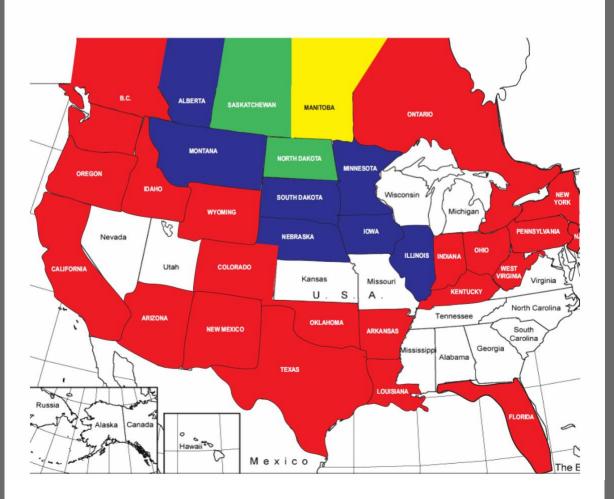
A one time credit per horse is automatically put in the horse owner's account by the horsemen's bookkeeper <u>after the horse has completed one start.</u>

Zone 1 - \$250 per horse

Zone 2 - \$350 per horse

Zone 3 - \$500 per horse

Zone 4 \$1,000 per horse



### **2023 ASD Race Dates**

Excellent Purses, Stakes Schedule and Shipping Incentives in Place for 2023 at ASD

Assiniboia Downs offers some of the best <u>shipping incentives</u> in North America, and an <u>excellent purse</u> and <u>stakes schedule</u> to match. If you're looking for a great place to race this summer, you won't find a more friendly and inviting track anywhere. We've also got one of the kindest racing surfaces in North America, complemented by numerous additional amenities.

The 50-day 2023 live race meeting begins on Monday, May 22, and runs through to Tuesday, September 19. We race Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings at ASD, which means you can take the weekends off and enjoy our fabulous Manitoba summer weather with family and friends! Links to the 2023 shipping incentives, racing and graded purse schedules <a href="here">here</a>.

### **ASD 2023 Condition Book #1**



### ASSINIBOIA DOWNS • WINNIPEG, MANITOBA • CANADA



# **CONDITION BOOK #1**

Monday, May 22 - Wednesday, June 21, 2023

The first ASD Condition Book for 2023 is here! Time to get excited! Click here to download.

### Can't make it to the track to wager?

Watch and wager at one of our off-track betting locations:

- Canad Inns Windsor Park 1034 Elizabeth Road
- Green Brier Inn 1611 Main Street
- Rookies at Central Hotel 201 Melrose Avenue East
- Quest Inn 367 Ellice Avenue
- McPhillips Station Casino 484 McPhillips Street
- Club Regent Casino 1425 Regent Ave W
- Nor-Villa Motor Hotel 1763 Henderson Hwy
- Club 3D 3317 Portage Avenue
- Wager 24/7 at <u>HPIbet.com</u>

### Road to the Kentucky Derby

- Feb. 18 Risen Star (FG)
- Feb. 25 Rebel (OP)
- Feb. 25 John Battaglia Memorial (TP)
- Mar. 4 Gotham (AQU)
- Mar. 4 San Felipe (SA)
- Mar. 4 Fountain of Youth (GP)



See Kentucky Derby prep winners here.

### **Kentucky Derby Future Wager Dates**

- Pool #3 Jan. 20 to Jan. 22 final odds
- Pool #4 Feb. 10 to Feb. 12 final odds
- Pool #5 Mar. 10 to Mar. 12
- Pool #6 Mar. 30 to Apr. 1

### "I Won Bigg" Wagering Group

The "I Won Bigg" wagering group is back at it this Saturday at 10:30 a.m. on the Clubhouse Plaza. Veteran handicappers Ivan Bigg and Larry Liebrecht lead the group discussions.

This week the group will be focusing on Santa Anita and Tampa Bay. \$20 gets you a share in the ticket. Can't make it to the track? **Email Larry** for a share.

# In The News

# Shirl's Speight Set for Sunday's February Stakes in Japan

Trainer Roger Attfield in Japan, says how the horse handles dirt is an "unknown"



Shirl's Speight at the Tokyo Racecourse on February 15 with Allyson Hartfield. (Japan / World Horse Racing Photo - Twitter)

Shirl's Speight, a Grade 1 winner owned by Canadian Charles Fipke and trained by Hall of Famer Roger Attfield, will be the first overseas runner ever to start in the February Stakes, the season-opening Grade 1 race in the Japan Racing Association this Sunday. Shirl's Speight comes off a close second place finish in the Breeders' Cup Mile (G1) on turf at Keeneland in November. More from the *Canadian Thoroughbred* here.

# Steve Asmussen Poised to Reach 10,000 Wins This Week Hall of Fame trainer has multiple chances to reach milestone this weekend

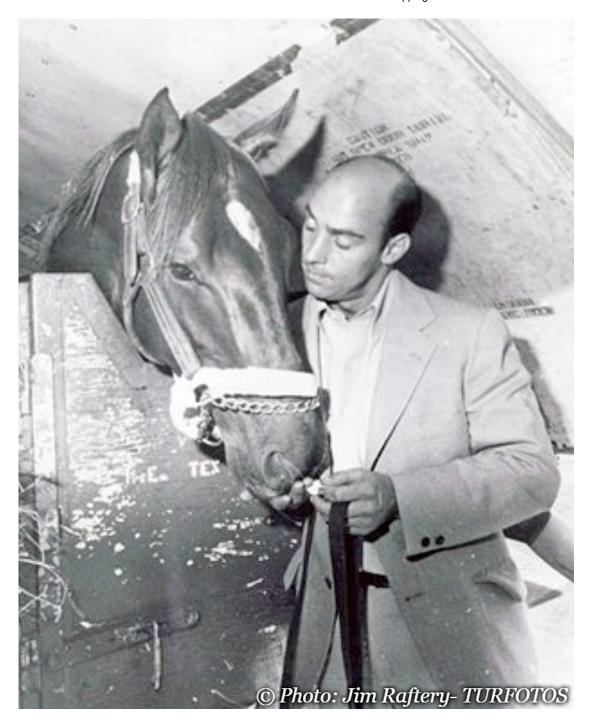


Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen. (Bill Denver/EQUI-PHOTO)

Less than two years after setting the record for North American wins, Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen is closing in on another career milestone. Asmussen entered the week with 9,997 North American wins, and he has multiple entries this weekend. Asmussen also has two wins outside North America, including including Curlin's victory in the 2008 Dubai World Cup (G1) putting him at 9,999 total career wins. More from the *Blood Horse* <a href="here">here</a>.

# **Hall of Fame Trainer John Veitch Dies at 77**

Trainer of 4 champions and Alydar also later served as chief steward in Kentucky



Trainer John Veitch with Alydar (Jim Raftery / TURFOTOS)

Hall of Fame trainer John Veitch, who trained the great Alydar, died Feb. 14 in Lexington, according to his second cousin Michael Veitch and his longtime friend Bobby Penn. Veitch was 77. In a career that spanned from 1974-2003, Veitch trained four champions—Before Dawn, Davona Dale, Our Mims, and Sunshine Forever -- as well as Triple Crown runner-up Alydar. More from the *Blood Horse* <a href="https://example.com/here/be/here

# Racing Changed Everything For Groom Ricky Dookeran

"For The First Time In My Life, I Had Something To Look Forward To"



Ricky Dookeran leading Lexie Lou at Woodbine

The hot headed kid from Weston Road and Finch was heading down a dangerous road. Ricky Dookeran saw it almost everywhere he turned, the temptations he knew would lead him astray, but at times feeling powerless to resist them. In the early 2000s, a friend asked him to take a ride to a place he'd never been, the backstretch at Woodbine Racetrack. Horses changed his life. More from the *Paulick Report* here.

# A Snapshot in Time by Track Historian Bob Gates



This week's "Snapshot In Time" is the second in our four-part series in which we remember jockey Bobby Stewart. The above photo captures the action from the winner's circle at ASD on June 18, 1962 when legendary jockey Eddie Arcaro visited the Downs. Bob was all smiles that day when he got to meet "The Master" after riding Patty Kem to victory in the race named after Arcaro. (Assiniboia Downs Archive)

### **Carryover Watch**

- Gulfstream Park (February 17) Jackpot Pick 6 carryover \$484,392
- Aqueduct (February 17) Pick 5 carryover \$285,092
- Santa Anita (February 17) Jackpot Pick 6 carryover \$80,819

See all carryovers here.

Top NFL Picks by TravyFootball: Super Bowl LVII Recap

### Chiefs defeat Eagles 38-35

The Kansas City Chiefs were the last ones standing after a 38-35 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl LVII. Jalen Hurts and the Eagles offense were the first to strike, going up 7-0 to start the game, but not to be outdone, Patrick Mahomes marched his team right back down the field against what was supposed to be a very tough defense, but they certainly didn't play like it.



The Eagles faced nothing but mediocre guarterbacks all season for the most part, so that could've been the reason why their defense looked so superior all year. It's a whole different ball game when you're facing the best quarterback in the league. It showed because the Eagles did not pressure, force any turnovers, or even sack Mahomes once during the entire game. It did look dreary at one point when Mahomes got his previously injured ankle rolled up on again and he was clearly was in pain. But being down 10 points at halftime and having a bum ankle were not going to stop this man from achieving his goal.

The Chiefs came out firing in the second half, scoring three touchdowns and holding the Eagles to only one. Thanks in part to a penalty on third down by Philadelphia, the Chiefs got a fresh set of downs with less than two minutes left in the game inside of the Eagles 15-yard line. Harrison Butker kicked the field goal to put the Chiefs up by three with eight seconds left to go, and a very poorly thrown Hail Mary attempt by Jalen Hurts ended the Eagles' season.

I can't say I didn't enjoy watching the Eagles lose considering how they got there in the first place, but I'll keep most of my pettiness to myself. It was a very good game, between two good teams. Even on one leg, Patrick Mahomes is one heck of a quarterback.

And that's all she wrote, another NFL season in the books, and now we begin the long, long, LONG off-season which will feature the scouting combine in a few weeks, free agency, and the all-important NFL Draft at the end of April.

Cya in September!

Final overall record (45-18)

## The Best of Bob by ASD Historian Bob Gates

August 2020)

This week Bob takes a look back at memorial stakes races that were named for influential builders. The 2020 race calendar features seven memorial races. Bob went through his archives and found five others - one of which was not a memorial. How many stakes races can you name that were run in honour of a person because of their contributions to the local racing scene. Click here and compare your races to Bob's. (From





### **Upcoming events at ASD**

- Spin to Win in the Clubwest Gaming Lounge Monday to Friday more info
- Lucky Spins Draws for \$20 free VLT Spins Friday to Sunday more info
- 4% cash back on Tuesdays in February (21 & 28) more info
- 3% cash back on Holiday Monday, February 20 more info
- Together Again FROST: Loud Luxury + special guests Feb. 24 more info
- Live Pro Wrestling at ASD Saturday, March 4 more info

#### **Feedback**

We would love to hear from you! Email your comments and/or suggestions to <a href="mailto:theinsidetrack@ASDowns.com">theinsidetrack@ASDowns.com</a>.

### **The Inside Track Archives**

Did you know that past issues of The Inside Track are available on our website? Click here to read them now.







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