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[Join Our Email List](#)**ASSINIBOIA DOWNS****The Inside Track | Issue #68 | February 24, 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 [here](#) for a full list of games available at ASD.



Win CA\$H Every Day!

- 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 \$207.50 last Sunday!**



2023 Player's Choice Online Handicapping Tournaments

- 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 [here](#).

February HPI Cash Back Specials

- **TREMENDOUS TUESDAYS:** Earn 4% cash back on all eligible wagers on Tuesday, February 28. Minimum wagered \$100. Maximum cash back \$25. (\$2.10 payouts are not eligible.) Opt-in at HPIbet.com. **All wagers must be placed on your HPI account.**



March HPI Cash Back Specials

- **MONDAY MARCH MADNESS:** Earn 4% cash back on all eligible wagers on Mondays, March, 6, 13, 20 & 27. Minimum wagered \$100. Maximum cash back \$25. (\$2.10 payouts are not eligible.) Opt-in at HPIbet.com. **All wagers must be placed on your HPI account.**
- **DUBAI WORLD CUP SPECIAL:** Earn 3% cash back on all eligible wagers on Dubai Racing on Saturday, March 25. Minimum wagered \$100. Maximum cash

back \$25. (\$2.10 payouts are not eligible.) Opt-in at HPIbet.com. **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

Steve Holborn Wins February Player's Choice Tourney

Veteran 'capper overcomes chaos, takes tourney with 9 wagers, thanks to friend



February 2023 Player's Choice Handicapping Tournament winner Steve Holborn.

Can you win a handicapping tournament with zero preparation? You certainly can! But it helps to have a talented handicapping friend in your back pocket.

Steve Holborn had just the Ace he needed when he won last Saturday's Player's Choice tourney on a tip from friend and fellow handicapper Randy Premachuk, who won January's rendition of the monthly contest, but it takes a good handicapper to know one. More on that later.

Holborn had no time to handicap in advance of Saturday's contest, and he almost didn't enter. He and his wife Rita were organizing a birthday party for their daughter Melissa on Saturday, and he didn't think he'd have time. After talking it over with his wife, Holborn

decided he could play before and after the party. Of course, nothing went according to plan and the party that was supposed to start at noon began at 3 p.m. instead.

Amidst the controlled chaos, Holborn managed to get a winner on his first play, but the rest of the day was a bit of a blur.

"I got up and made a few early wagers," said Holborn. "My first horse in the seventh race at Gulfstream Park won and another bet came third. Then people started arriving and I wasn't able to play again until after 6."

Holborn's first winner, El Socio, paid \$15.60, \$6.90, \$4.70 across the board, and got him off to a good start, but the remainder of his wagers wouldn't come until very late, which caused him to miss getting his final bet in. As a result, he won the tournament with only nine wagers instead of the allowed 10.

Holborn's total bankroll of \$138.90 was \$9.90 better than runner-up Keith MacLennan (\$129.00), followed by Trevor Tilston-Jones (\$116.40), Randy Premachuk (\$106.20) and Myron Fedoruk (\$102.00), and enough to win him the \$1,000 first prize, a trophy and rather unique bragging rights. Only one other person that we know of, Larry Liebrecht, has won the Player's Choice tourney with only nine wagers.

After breaking for the birthday party, Holborn didn't get back to contest betting until 6:15 p.m. With time and tracks running out, he called Premachuk and the two discussed remaining opportunities.

"We really only had Delta Downs, Fair Grounds and Turfway left to play," said Holborn. "And I don't often play the synthetic tracks. We liked 6-7 in Race 13 at Fairgrounds and they ran one-two at 13-1 and 16-1 respectively. Randy bet the winner and I played the second-place horse, so he was ahead of me at that point."

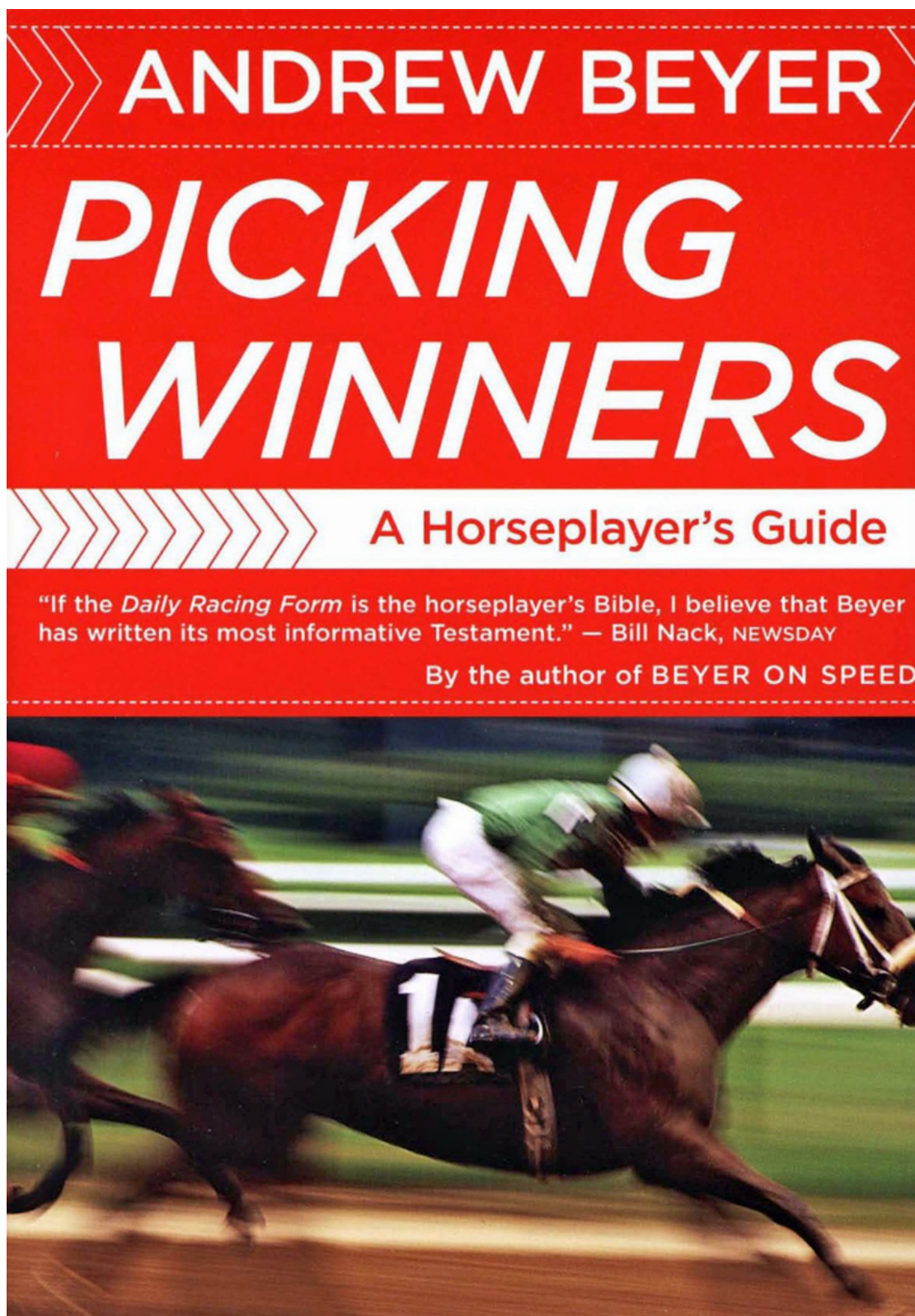
The tide turned in the sixth race at race at Delta.

"Randy told me the track announcer at Delta liked the 5, *Half a Buck*," said Holborn. "And he'd told me before that the announcer was a fairly good handicapper. So I played that horse and Randy was kicking himself after the race. I think he played the 8. If he had of played the 5, he probably would have won the contest."

Holborn's biggest winner of the day, *Half a Buck* paid \$31.60, \$13.00, \$9.40 across the board.

"Things at that point become totally frenzied," said Holborn, who was almost out of time to make his final wagers. "I lost track of how many bets I had made. I managed to get one more bet in at Meadowlands, a 17-1 horse who finished third, but that was a desperation bet."

The ninth bet was enough to give Holborn his first win in the local tournament. He'd finished third once before, and he'd had some success in contests out of town before Saturday's win. Holborn and his son Tom teamed up to win the Dog Days of Summer Handicapping Tournament at Canterbury Downs years ago, and he'd teamed up with Premachuk to play in the Orleans Handicapping Championship in Las Vegas a few times, even winning a day in that contest.



Picking Winners by Andy Beyer. The first handicapping book Steve Holborn ever read.

Holborn's handicapping skills have been developed over the course of 50 years, from reading books, playing, and learning from fellow sharp handicappers. His initial trip to Assiniboia Downs came in 1974 and the first book he read on handicapping was the classic text [Picking Winners](#) by Andy Beyer. The data analysis intrigued the now retired University of Manitoba psychology professor.

"It was interesting to me, because it was like doing research," said Holborn. "You get data and you make a prediction. And you get fast feedback as to whether your prediction is accurate or not. Normally when you conduct research it takes awhile to get data, and you don't find out right away, but with horse racing you find out instantly whether your analysis and predictions are correct.

"I enjoy problem solving, just as I did during my research work, helping clients with problems in their lives. Handicapping is also a problem-solving endeavour. I like the challenge of trying to figure it out. Each race is different. And I enjoy the social aspect of it. It's a lot of fun to handicap with somebody else."

Holborn moved on from straight number handicapping decades ago and now incorporates numerous handicapping factors into his analysis including pace, track biases based on different surfaces, and patterns in the past performances of young horses.

He's also gained some "insider" experience as a local horse owner, having started out as a partner on some yearlings purchased by top Manitoba breeder Dr. Ross McKague and later partnering on some horses with Premachuk. This year he and Premachuk will campaign 2019 Winning Futurity runner-up Rollin Sevens, who's as tough as they come when he's on his game.

Now 80, Holborn stays mentally sharp not only by handicapping, but also by playing bridge twice a week and doing physical exercise. He also knows who to take advice from when it comes to handicapping. In that vein, we'll borrow a [hilarious dialogue from famous comedian John Cleese](#), which goes something like this:

Knowing how good you are at something requires exactly the same skills as it does to be good at that thing in the first place. Which means... if you're absolutely no good at something, you lack the exact skills you need to know if you're absolutely no good at it. Which ALSO means, that if you're good at something like handicapping, you'll not only know it, you'll also know who else is good at it.

Holborn knew



Steve Holborn (top second from left) with wife Rita (in red) and the birthday party crew. Daughter Melissa in front of Rita, with her dog Gus making himself comfortable on the couch. "I trust that serious handicappers in future will use the birthday party hiatus method to win handicapping contests." -- Steve Holborn

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 hbpamanitoba@mymts.net. 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!**



Former groom and two-time leading ASD rider (2021-2022) Jorge Carreno shares a quiet moment with Randy Howg's 2022 Winnipeg Futurity runner Brandyn, trained by Robertino Diodoro. (George Williams photo)

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 [Jockey Club of Canada](#) 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 jockeyclubcanada@gmail.com 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 theinsidetrack@asdowns.com.

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

2023 SHIPPING INCENTIVE PROGRAM

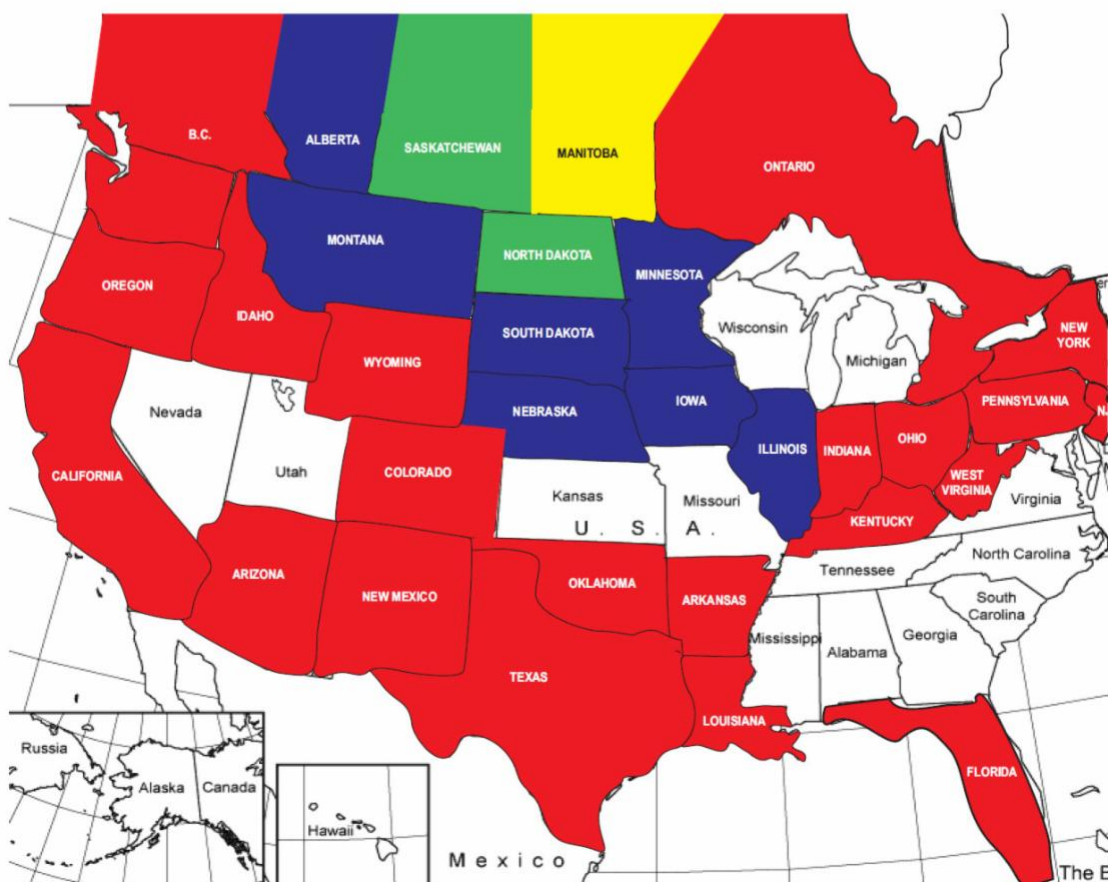
A one time credit per horse is automatically put in the horse owner's account by the horsemen's bookkeeper after the horse has completed one start.

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 shipping incentives in North America, and an excellent purse and stakes schedule 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 [here](#).

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 [HPIbet.com](#)

60-Second Betting Sprees!

60-Second Betting Sprees are coming to an off-track location near you! Visit any of the locations below on the corresponding dates and you could win a chance to make as many \$2 wagers as you can in 60-seconds!



- Quest Inn - Saturday, March 4
- Green Brier Inn - Sunday, March 5
- Nor-Villa Motor Hotel - Saturday, March 11
- Rookies (Central Hotel) - Sunday, March 12
- Canad Inns Windsor Park - Saturday, March 25
- Club 3D - Sunday, March 26

Road to the Kentucky Derby

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



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.

With the cancellation of Santa Anita this weekend, the group will be focusing on Gulfstream, Tampa Bay & Saudi Arabia. \$20 gets you a share in the ticket. Can't make it to the track? [Email Larry](#) for a share.

In The News

2023 Rebel Stakes Cheat Sheet: Get to Know the Horses



Horses break from the starting gate in the 2021 Rebel Stakes at Oaklawn Park. (Coady Photography)

Saturday's \$1 million Rebel Stakes is the third of four qualifying points prep races at Oaklawn Park for the May 6 Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve and it has an influential history on the road to the Derby. Get to know the horses with *America's Best Racing* [here](#).

Steve Asmussen Becomes First Trainer To 10,000 Wins

Milestone achieved Monday at Oaklawn with Bet He's Ready and Ricardo Santana



Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen, left, celebrates his 10,000th North American winner Monday at Oaklawn Park. (Coady Photography)

Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen became North America's all-time winningest trainer on Aug. 7, 2021, passing the late Dale Baird's record of 9,445 with a win at Aqueduct. Just over 18 months later, Asmussen became the first trainer to achieve 10,000 North American victories. The latest milestone was achieved on Monday at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs, Ark., when Bet He's Ready and jockey Ricardo Santana, Jr. scored a 3 3/4-length victory in the day's fifth race. More from the *Paulick Report* [here](#).

Saudi Cup Field Includes 2022 Winner, Baffert Duo
HPIBet.com to offer wagering on Races 3-8 beginning Saturday at 8:05 a.m.



Emblem Road wins 2022 Saudi Cup at King Abdulaziz Racecourse. (Edward Whitaker / Racing Post photo)

The fourth running of the Saudi Cup (G1) Feb. 25 at King Abdulaziz Racecourse features a rematch of the first two finishers from 2022 plus a potent sextet from Japan and a few wild card possibilities. Bob Baffert trains the only American horses in the field, last year's runner-up Country Grammer and Taiba, and said after the barrier draw he doesn't know what to expect from the opposition, especially the Japanese runners. More from the *Blood Horse* [here](#).

A Snapshot in Time by Track Historian Bob Gates

Dick Armstrong, Abelino Gomez,
Jim Kelly, Bobby Stewart
Jimmy Anderson



This is part three of our series in which we remember jockey Bobby Stewart. The above photo was snapped at the Manitoba Derby breakfast in 1969 at the St. Charles Country Club, and don't they all look dapper! The photo carries the names in the upper left-hand corner, but don't be fooled. There is an error in identifying the riders, who all had mounts in the 1969 Derby. Can you spot the mistake?

From left to right we have Dick Armstrong, who rode the Derby winner Fire N Desire, next to Dick is Avelino Gomez, who piloted the runner-up Icy Song, then the mystery man, nope it isn't Jim Kelly, it is Brian Swatuk, who was aboard sixth-place finisher The Northerner, then Bobby who was riding long shot Ice Palace, the third-place finisher, and on the far right is Jimmy Anderson, who was in the irons for Zorf, a local hopeful who finished up the track. (Assiniboia Downs Archive)

Carryover Watch

- Gulfstream Park (February 24) - Jackpot Pick 6 carryover \$768,472
- Parx (February 27) - Jackpot Pick 5 carryover \$113,757

See all carryovers [here](#).

The Best of Bob

by ASD Historian Bob Gates

It seems like 'characters' have inhabited racetracks since the beginning of time. This week the history blog takes a swing at a character from the Downs' circa 1970s – 1990s. This cigar-chomping, call-it-as-it-is big man was one-of-a-kind. Hutch was taken from us 20 years ago and once again we ask, where does the time go? Click [here](#) to read about the man they called Hutch. (From July 2021)



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](#)
- Together Again - FROST: Loud Luxury + special guests - Feb. 24 - [more info](#)
- 4% cash back on Tuesday, February 28 - [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 theinsidetrack@ASDowns.com.

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.



Visit our website