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ASSINIBOIA DOWNS



The Inside Track | Issue #111 | December 22, 2023



DINING



BET NOW



140 VLTS

ASD Holiday Schedule

- Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Christmas Day, Monday, Dec. 25 - Closed
- Boxing Day, Tuesday, Dec. 26 - 10 a.m. to 1 a.m.

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Do the Downs!

2023 Online Tournaments

2023 TOURNAMENT WINNERS:

Player's Choice Tournaments

- Saturday, January 21 - Randy Premachuk
- Saturday, February 18 - Steve Holborn
- Saturday, March 18 - Nicole Baker
- Saturday, April 15 - Barry Mymko
- Saturday, May 13 - Brad Ostrove

Las Vegas Challenge Tournaments

- Monday, June 19 - Ron Zurba
- Monday, July 10 - Murray Chaban
- Monday, July 31 - Tanis Atras
- Monday, August 21 - Brian McKellar
- Monday, September 18 - David Blake

Player's Choice Tournaments

- Saturday, October 14 - George Williams
- Saturday, November 11 - Cecelia Liebrecht
- Saturday, December 16 - Jeff Rozmus

2023 Handicapper of the Year

- Glen Gray



- Earn 1% Cash Back on all eligible wagers made from December 12 through December 23. Play any track! Minimum wagered \$1,000. Maximum cash back \$100. All wagers must be made on your [HPI](#) account.
- Don't have an HPI account? You can open a free wagering account at [HPIbet.com](#). All new accounts are eligible for the bet \$100 get \$100 promotion. Click [here](#) for

details.

- Enter at the VLT cage starting Thursday, December 14 through Tuesday, December 26 to pick an ornament from our Christmas tree. Win up to \$100. Draws will take place throughout the day and evening.
- Enjoy complimentary snacks which will be served at various times during our 12 Days of Christmas!



Player Rewards & Cash Bonus Programs!

REWARDS FOR ALL WAGERING



ONE CARD DOES IT ALL!

- Earn points for all your wagering when you swipe your card or wager on HPIbet.com
- Wager on your account on betting terminals
- Earn cash bonuses on wagering (see below)
- Convert your points to CASH
- Buy programs & DRF on HPIbet.com

CASH BONUSES FOR WAGERING

PLATINUM BONUS LEVEL	GOLD BONUS LEVEL	SILVER BONUS LEVEL	BRONZE BONUS LEVEL
Bet \$5,000 or more in the week* and receive a cash back bonus of 4%	Bet \$4,000 or more in the week* and receive a cash back bonus of 3%	Bet \$3,000 or more in the week* and receive a cash back bonus of 2%	Bet \$2,000 or more in the week* and receive a cash back bonus of 1%



Wagers must be placed using your HPIbet Rewards Card. The week (*) is designated as Monday through Sunday. Any bonus money earned during this period will be deposited to your HPI account on Wednesday by 5 p.m. Betting bonus cash is in addition to regular HPIbet rewards points earned. Assiniboia Downs reserves the right to alter or amend this promotion at any time. Bonus calculations are available on payouts of \$2.20 and above. Maximum weekly bonus deposit \$1,000.

There's Always a Deal at ASD!

Christmas Buffet

Join us for a fabulous Christmas Buffet on Saturday, December 23.

- Roast Turkey
- Ham with Dijon Cream Sauce
- Sweet & Sour Meatballs
- Apple, Onion & Tarragon Stuffing
- Turkey Gravy & Cranberry Sauce
- Garlic Mashed Potatoes
- Green Beans Almondine
- Caesar Salad
- Greek Vegetable Salad
- Broccoli Bacon Salad
- Kolbassa & Cheddar
- Pickles, Sweet Mix and Beets
- Breads, Dinner Rolls with Butter
- Pumpkin Pie, Dainties, Cakes & Cookies
- \$34.95 per person, Kids 12 & under \$29.95, Kids 5 & under \$16.95
- Reservations are required. Available from 4 p.m. through 8:30 p.m.



There are limited reservations available so book today!
204-885-3330.

\$11.95 Daily Lunch Specials

Enjoy breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks from our Club West Dining Room menu or try our ever changing \$11.95 lunch special.

- Club West Dining Room & Lounge [menu](#)
- Daily Happy Hour [specials](#)



Daily Drink Features All Day Long

- Monday - Margarita \$6 (lime, peach or strawberry)
- Tuesday - Corona \$5
- Wednesday - Wine \$4.50 (6 oz. glass of house white or house red)
- Thursday - Beer \$4.75 (house pint of beer)
- Friday - Trifecta Tea \$6 (Absolut peach vodka, lemonade, sweet tea)
- Saturday - RazDerby Lemonade \$6 (Absolut raspberry vodka, lemonade)
- Sunday - Caesar \$6



Daily Evening Chef's Specials

Monday - BBQ Ribs \$19.95: Smoky char-broiled ribs with our signature BBQ sauce. Served with french fries and coleslaw.



Tuesday - Tacos \$9.95: Two flour tortillas stuffed with taco beef, chicken or fish, lettuce, green onions, cheese and diced tomato. Served with a drizzle of avocado cilantro lime sauce and taco chips.



Wednesday - Two Topping Pizza \$14.95: Thin crust pizza with mozzarella and tomato sauce. Choose from pepperoni, bacon, ham, spicy beef, chicken, tomato, mushroom, peppers, black olives or onions.



Thursday - Chipotle Mozza Burger \$14.95: Our signature sirloin patty and crispy bacon smothered in melted mozzarella. Topped with fresh sliced tomato, fried onion rings, chipotle mayo and sweet bold barbeque sauce.



Friday - Steak & Suds \$24.95: 8 oz. Sirloin steak charbroiled and seasoned with our smoky dry rub. Served with fresh vegetables and a choice of mashed potatoes or french fries. **Plus a complimentary pint of ASD Lucky Lager.**



Saturday - Prime & Wine \$29.95: Certified Angus Prime Rib (8 oz. cut.) Served with fresh vegetables and a choice of mashed potatoes or french fries, horseradish, and Yorkshire pudding au jus. **Plus a complimentary 6 oz. glass of house wine.**



Sunday - Fish & Chips \$14.95: Two pieces of beer battered cod with tartar sauce and lemon. Served with french fries and coleslaw.



Reservations are not required. The above specials are available from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

Everyone who purchases one of the above specials will receive a coupon to play our free "Pick to Win" game in the VLT lounge for a chance to spin our lucky cash wheel where you can win up to \$100 cash!

New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance **Sunday, December 31**

- Prime Rib buffet served from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Late lunch served
- Dancing until 1:00 a.m.
- Door prizes
- Free coat check
- Huge dance floor
- Party favours
- Free VLT Game for a chance to win a share of \$2,024!
- DJ Music & Lights
- Hosted by Kathy Kennedy
- \$79.95 plus taxes & gratuities



This event sells out every year so order your tickets today! Call 204-885-3330.

At The Post with G.S. Thompson

Glen Gray Wins 2023 Handicapper of the Year Title

He'd won the Player's Choice tourney before, but this was the title he really wanted



2023 Handicapper of the Year Glen Gray with his dog Sparky. Congratulations Glen!

Glen Gray is the 2023 Handicapper of the Year at Assiniboia Downs, and he has some very special people to share his trophy with.

Gray entered the December [Player's Choice Handicapping Tournament](#) on top of the Handicapper of the Year standings and never wavered, earning 35 points from a ninth-place finish last Saturday to bring his overall point total to 265 and take home \$3,500, a trophy and at least a year's worth of bragging rights.

Gray finished only three points ahead of runner-up Keith MacLennan (262 points, \$500 prize money) in the year-end standings, followed by Nicole Baker (251, \$250), Randy Premachuk (250) and Steve Holborn (248).

Although he didn't win a monthly tournament in 2023, Gray's consistency was, well, just too consistent for his rivals, and it's been that way for awhile.

"My friend Earl Grantham got me into it about seven years ago," said Gray. "Without him, I would never have been playing these tournaments. He pestered the hell out of me."

Gray had won the monthly tournament before but never the Handicapper of the Year title. "This is the one I really wanted," he said. "I really just wanted the trophy. I wasn't so concerned about the money."

Now 72 and retired from the heavy construction industry, Gray got into handicapping through his father, Bert, who passed away at the age of 97 four years ago.

"He was playing horses for around 65 years," said Gray. "Horse racing has always been in the family, but I never really got that interested in handicapping until I joined the I Won Bigg group. I was gambling on horses and loved the sport, but had no interest in really looking at handicapping seriously.

"I got some good tips off Ivan Bigg, but I came up with my own handicapping method. I spend probably four hours on a card. You wouldn't believe the amount of paperwork that I've got here from records. If I could put a money value on it for the amount of time it took me to do this. I just love doing it."

Gray says he focuses on stats, and combinations of stats.

"You filter through them all. And it should show you what you want to see when you're finished. Sometimes it doesn't, but mostly it does. And of course I look at the trainers and all the other basic handicapping things, the track, the weather, the surface, class, condition, speed, form. All of that."

What about finding longshots?

"That's the fun part," said Gray. "And when you do find a long shot, it just sticks out, it jumps right out at you, right off the page."

But it's even more than that.

"I have two other partners, the Stewin brothers, Kenny and Stanley. The three of us split everything. It's the camaraderie and the discussions. It's just a lot of fun. I would say it's my hobby now because the older you get physically, you can't do the things you used to do, so you have to change to things that you get enjoyment out of. And I love handicapping."

When Gray started out, the only plays he would make were on the Pick-6, the toughest bet in racing.

"I was playing Gulfstream when I was just starting out," said Gray. "The Pick 6 was the only thing I would play. I wouldn't play anything else. I've won it a few times, not for big money, but to get five out of six was routine for me. My problem was, and here's another thing that's really important, is that you have to know how to bet. I mean, you can pick horses, but if you don't know how to play them, you might as well just throw everything away.

"You learn from experience. Just failing and failing and looking at what you're doing wrong and learning from that. I've become much better at making money on my bets than I was a few years ago."

Gray is looking forward to picking up his Handicapper of the Year Trophy.

"The very first thing I'm going to do is go across to Chapel Lawn, across Portage Avenue where my mother-in-law, Marina (Cartwright) is buried, and I'm going to share the trophy with her, because she was a woman who loved horse racing, and she would be so proud. Then I'm going to Brookside Cemetery.

"To share it with my Dad."

Jeff Rozmus Wins December Player's Choice Tourney

Parlays single winner into victory on day when "longshots were hard to come by"

It's pretty tough to win a contest with just one winner, but Jeff Rozmus managed to do that in the December [Player's Choice Handicapping Tournament](#).

Rozmus parlayed longshot winner Explosive Skies (\$30.40, \$16.60, \$9.10) in the first race at Tampa Bay into a bankroll of \$103.20 to defeat runner-up Alan Twerdochlib (\$100.40) by \$2.80 and win \$1,000 and a trophy. Barry Mymko (\$100.40) finished third followed by Keith MacLennan (\$76.40) and Trevor Phelps (\$75.10) on a day when "longshots were hard to come by."



"I got that winner on my first ticket," said Rozmus. "He'd run 12-14 times but in his last four races he'd received Lasix. He was moving up in class but he'd won his last two starts. And the trainer had two horses in the race, but his go-to jockey was on my horse."

Sharp handicapping, but somewhat expected from someone who has won the Player's Choice tourney "about 10 times," said Rozmus. Winter and summer.

"I've got a lot of trophies in that little trophy room," said the 70-year-old retired City of Winnipeg inspector who grew up in Winnipeg's north end. "And a lot of seconds and thirds too, but I've been playing the contest for 20 years. I think the last one I won was a couple of summers ago."

Rozmus has been going to the track since 1971 and has learned mostly by playing, rather than reading. "I'm the most dyslexic person alive," he said. "But I'm pretty good with numbers."

Rozmus not only wins contests, he wins regularly at the track. He won the largest Daily Double of the summer at the Downs and also hit a number of Pick 4s. "I had that big Daily Double for \$2," said Rozmus. "It paid \$2,380. And I think I had about five Pick 4s at the Downs this year, the largest was \$2,500."

Rozmus recalled that he has scored rare back-to-back contest wins at the Downs during both the summer and the winter, which resulted a number of trips to Vegas for the \$100,000 handicapping contest.

"I went about eight times, four times through the Downs," said Rozmus, who also owns a Handicapper of the Year title at the Downs. "I got my money back a few times."

Did he have any tips for aspiring handicappers?

"I'm usually a speed player," said Rozmus, referring to horses that can be on or near the lead. "My biggest angle is how well the horse has been running. And when I play in the contest, I don't bet any horses that are less than 10-1. That's my biggest downfall in handicapping. I could pick these chalk horse to fill up my total, but I don't do it."

"I think last year or the year before, I was in second place in the Handicapper of the Year standings going into the final tournament of the year and I only needed five points to pass the winner, which I'm sure I could have done if I'd used my head. I played my style. I played my longshots."

Rozmus says he has a ton of angles he likes for picking longshots. "I like betting first time starters based on sire and dam production," he said. "And if a horse goes through a sale

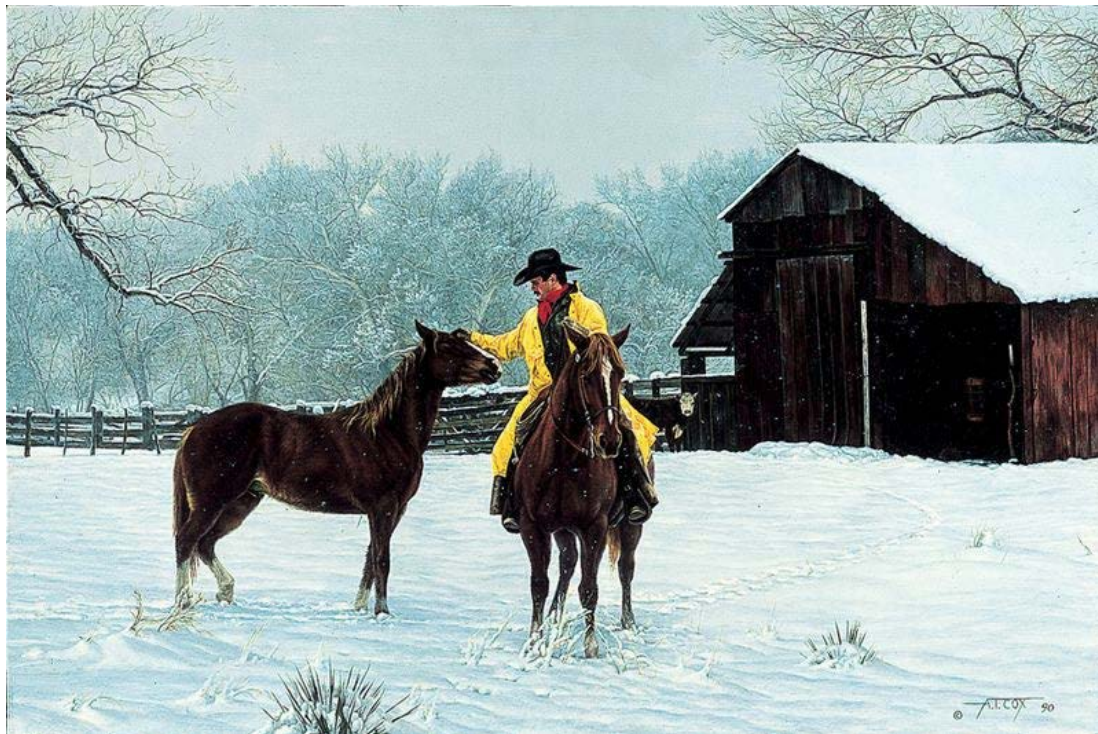
and the owners buy them back at a big price, when they could have sold them. And I like betting the Maiden Special Weight races when you've got the big guys in the races, like Brad Cox, Bill Mott, Shug McGaughey. You can still get value on Bill Mott at times. I can't believe it."

Rozmus says he likes the New York circuit best. "They seem to be the fairest. I'm not a big bettor, but I probably put \$5,000 in my pocket this year. And that's probably my average year over the past 10 years. I play for fun. But sometimes you win."

And sometimes you get an extra \$1,000 and trophy.

No Matter the Weather

Original painting by [Tim Cox](#)



"Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened." ~ Anatole France. See more original paintings from Tim Cox [here](#).

Top NFL Picks by TravyFootball: Week 16

Packers over Panthers (Sunday noon): The Panthers managed to get their second win of season last week against the Falcons in what was visually a very hard game to watch. You could probably count on one hand how many people were in attendance because tickets were selling for as low as 45 cents, that's right, I said 45 CENTS on some secondary ticket sites. The Packers playoff chances took a significant hit after they were manhandled by the Bucs last week 34-20. They haven't completely been eliminated yet, but they would need to win their remaining three games plus get some help in the form of other teams with similar records, losing. If the Packers can't beat the Panthers, maybe they don't deserve to be in the playoffs anyway.



Dolphins over Cowboys (Sunday afternoon): Jerry Jones blamed the weather as part of the reason why Dallas got their butts handed to them by Buffalo last week. I'm pretty sure BOTH teams played in the bad weather, but it didn't stop the Bills from putting up 31 points. Sounds more like excuses if you ask me. It doesn't get any easier for the Cowboys, as a date with the Dolphins is next on their schedule. Even without Tyreek Hill, Miami made easy work of the New York Jets last week 30-0. I'm assuming Hill will be back for this game which will mean big trouble for whichever Dallas defender is tasked with trying to cover him. Hill needs 486 yards in his remaining three games to hit the unprecedented mark of 2,000 yards in a season.

Niners over Ravens (Christmas night): The Ravens will face the 49ers in what could very well be a preview of the Super Bowl this year. Brock Purdy had another spectacular game last week against the Cardinals, throwing for 242 yards and four touchdowns. But at the 4:05 mark of the 2nd quarter, every 49er fan (myself included) held their collective breath as Purdy was hit hard and didn't get up right away. Considering the rate of starting QBs going down this year, some people thought the worst. Luckily, it was a minor shoulder stinger and he returned to the game after missing a couple of plays, thank goodness. I also believe that with another good outing, Purdy would solidify his league MVP status.

Last week: 3-0
Overall: 29-16

Looking for a Special Photo of Your Big Horse or...?

Track Photographer Jason Halstead may have just what you're looking for



That winning feeling. Trainer Mike Nault's grooms celebrate in the winner's circle after winning Race 5 on Sept. 4, 2023 with Doublebarreldelite for A2 Thoroughbreds and True North Thoroughbreds. (Jason Halstead photo)

Looking for that extra-special photo of your big horse, one you might not find in your win pictures? Track photographer Jason Halstead takes numerous photos during the races, and not all of them can make it into the win photos. If you're looking for something frameable from your big race, or of your special horse, email Jason at jjhphoto@gmail.com. Prices are excellent! Almost as good as his photos 😊

Carryover Watch

- Gulfstream Park (December 22) - Jackpot Pick 6 carryover \$215,759. **Mandatory payout on Saturday, December 23.**
- Woodbine Harness (December 22) - Jackpot Hi-5 carryover \$70,706. **Mandatory payout on Tuesday, December 26.**

See all carryovers [here](#).

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
-

"I Won Bigg" Wagering Group

Saturday at 10:30 a.m. (2nd floor plaza)

There will be group play on the following days and then they will be taking a break for the month of January:


- Saturday, December 23 - Tampa & Gulfstream
- Tuesday, December 26 - Tampa & Santa Anita
- Saturday, December 30 - Tampa & Santa Anita

Shares are \$20. Email Larry at larry@ampereelectric.ca for more information.

A Snapshot in Time by Track Historian Bob Gates




All is calm, all is bright... Our Christmas week *Snapshot in Time* features Key Canadian, who won 26 races at the Downs, but contrary to the photo caption, he was not the "winningest" horse at the Downs. His win total finds him in third place behind Job's Alibi (29 wins) and Last Lea (28). All but two of his Key Canadian's 114 starts were at the Downs. 40 years ago, on October 10, 1993, Key Canadian celebrated the final win of his career amongst friends, including trainer Don Gray and jockey Ken Hendricks. A short two months later we sadly lost Don, who passed on Christmas Day. (Gerry Hart photo)



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I Am Up For Anything

Former ASD apprentice Fraser Aebly Inspired by late sister's passion



Fraser Aebly, his late sister Andie, and his parents Derek and Dale (Provided photo from Paulick Report)

Motivation and inspiration are always close at hand for Fraser Aebly. When he climbed aboard Lulu's Lullaby in search of his first win at Woodbine, the 19-year-old apprentice rider was, as always, focused on giving his horse the best shot at winning the race. His parents were in the stands, and his late sister Andie was in his heart... Read more from the *Paulick Report* [here](#).

Woodbine Stats Pack: Carey, Civaci on Top at Year's End

A look at the leading percentage trainers, jockeys and owners in 2023 at Woodbine



Runners head into the first turn during the third race on closing day of the 128-day Woodbine Thoroughbred race meet. (Woodbine/ Michael Burns Photo)

Julia Carey led all Woodbine trainers (with a minimum of 20 starters) by win percentage in 2023, Sahin Civaci topped the jockey standings in the same category, and owner Randy Bharat led all owners, winning at an amazing 33% clip. Former ASD trainer Marty Drexler also continued to hold his own at Woodbine, winning at a 24% clip. Well done Marty! More from Jennifer Morrison at the *Canadian Thoroughbred* [here](#).

Making Money Betting

Exactas and trifectas for the 2023 Gun Runner Stakes



Godolphin homebred Nash enters the Gun Runner Stakes on Dec. 23 at Fair Grounds off an impressive 10 1/4-length win at Churchill Downs on Nov. 12 and appears to be a formidable favourite. (Coady Photography)

Saturday's \$100,000 Gun Runner Stakes at Fair Grounds is one of the youngest Road to the Kentucky Derby qualifiers. The inaugural edition of the race in 2021 featured Rich Strike and Epicenter, the top two finishers in the 2022 Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve. Can the third renewal of the Gun Runner possibly prove as productive? The eight-horse field is packed with promising young runners. Analysis and exotic wagers for the race from *America's Best Racing* [here](#).

Best of Bob

by ASD Historian Bob Gates

It's time for our annual holiday treat from your "born-on-Christmas-Day" track historian, i.e. my take on Clement Clarke Moore's poem "A Visit from Saint Nicholas." The result is a Christmas classic with a local horse racing flavour that we can enjoy every holiday season. Click [here](#) for my version of A Racetracker's Night Before Christmas - and Merry Christmas (From December 17, 2020)





Upcoming events at ASD

- 12 Days of Christmas HPI Cash Back - Tuesday, December 12 through Saturday, December 23
- 12 Days of Christmas VLT Draws & Snacks - Thursday, December 14 through Tuesday, December 26
- Christmas Buffet - Saturday, December 23 - [more info](#)
- Christmas Eve - Sunday, December 24 - ASD open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Christmas Day - Monday, December 25 - ASD CLOSED
- Boxing Day - Tuesday, December 26 - ASD open regular hours 10 a.m to 1 a.m.
- New Year's Cash Draws - Wednesday, December 27 through Monday, January 1
- New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance - Sunday, December 31 - [more info](#)

Feedback

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

The Inside Track Archives

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