

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

DID YOU HEAR THE LATEST?

Stay up-to-date with the latest news from Assiniboia Downs.

ISSUE #176 - MARCH 21, 2025



Trainer Mike Nault exercising Load Abroad on the ASD training track. (George Williams)

Nault May Have Best Stable Ever

Leading riders Prayven Badrie and Antonio Whitehall back in action

Two-time leading ASD rider and reigning champ Prayven Badrie was seen along with three-time leading rider Antonio Whitehall Thursday morning on the training track, as was top trainer Mike Nault, as the backstretch continued to swell with horses. Nault has 20 horses on the grounds, and his stable looks even better this year than it did last year.

CLICK HERE to learn more.



Groom Katie Morris. Horses make you happy. (George Williams)

Groom School Open for Application - 4 Spots Left

Last week we wrote about [the annual Manitoba HBPA Groom School](#) and now almost all the openings are filled. There are four spots left in the paid training courses, which began on March 15. If you love animals, this might be just what you're looking for. And if you know someone who might be interested, please let them know! Applications can be emailed to the [Manitoba HBPA](#) at hbpamanitoba@mymts.net

CLICK HERE for more information.



2025 Live Racing Season

- 2025 Live Race Dates - click [here](#)
- **NEW ENHANCED** Shipping Incentives - click [here](#)
- **REVISED** Condition Book #1 - click [here](#)
- Stakes Schedule - click [here](#)
- Stall Application - click [here](#)



Tickets on Sale for Easter Brunch & Mother's Day Brunch

Tickets are on sale now for Easter Brunch & Mother's Day Brunch. **Both of these will sell out quickly so call 204-885-3330 and get your tickets today!**

- [Easter Brunch](#) - Sunday, April 20
- [Mother's Day Brunch](#) - Sunday, May 11

Click the above links for menu details and ticket prices.



Live Racing Prime Rib Buffet

Reservations are now open for our live racing Certified Angus Prime Rib Buffet featuring succulent, melt-in-your-mouth prime rib prepared to perfection, seafood table, rotating entree selections and much more! Buffet prices: Adults \$59.95, Seniors (65+) \$54.95, Kids 12 & under \$34.95, Kids 5 & under \$22.95.

SPECIAL LIMITED OFFER: \$10 off per person for any race night in May. **Discounted reservations are limited and must be made before April 30th.**



- #1 Spot in Winnipeg for VLT Jackpots!
- Free Draw for \$200 Cash every Friday, Saturday & Sunday plus draws to Spin the Lucky Cash Wheel




A Snapshot in Time by Bob Gates

Join us for the third installment of our tribute to the late Ken Hendricks, as we relive his masterful 1995 Manitoba Derby victory aboard Langara Island—30 years later, it remains a ride to remember! Click [here](#) to read more.



- \$11.95 Daily Lunch Special
- Happy Hour (3 to 5pm & 9pm to close)
- \$4 Spirit Hour (11 pm to midnight)
- Daily Evening Specials




2025 Louisiana Derby Cheat Sheet

Fair Grounds will host its final qualifying points race for the [Kentucky Derby](#). Presented by Woodford Reserve this Saturday when 10 3-year-olds go postward in the \$1 million [TwinSpires.com](#) Louisiana Derby (G2).

The Louisiana Derby has become increasingly more important as a prep race after being lengthened to 1 3/16-miles in 2020. That makes it the longest North American qualifying race for the Kentucky Derby. Five horses have exited the Louisiana Derby to win the Kentucky Derby. ~ [AmericasBestRacing.net](#)

Sam F. Davis winner John Hancock has been listed at 7/2 for Saturday's Louisiana Derby. (SV Photography)

[CLICK FOR FULL STORY](#)



Steve Haskin's Kentucky Derby Rankings Week 8

There are two Kentucky Derby preps this Saturday, the Jeff Ruby Steaks (G3) at Turfway Park and the Louisiana Derby (G2) at Fair Grounds. Hall of Fame racing writer Steve Haskin has an interesting take on a few of the Louisiana Derby entrants.

Secretariat.com has been running Steve Haskin's horse racing columns for years, and for good reason! Haskin spent

Haskin has already covered the Beyer Speed Figures and Thoro-Graph numbers of the major contenders, and now takes a closer look at the Brisnet Figures,

decades in the backstretch learning his craft, and it shows!

including early and late pace numbers. ~ [Secretariat.com](https://www.secretariat.com)

[CLICK FOR FULL STORY](#)



American Promise won the Virginia Derby by 7-1 over a sizzling Colonial Downs dirt track and earned 50 Derby points. (Coady Media / Colonial Downs)

D. Wayne Lukas and American Promise Headed to Kentucky Derby

89-year-old Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas is going back to the Kentucky Derby (G1), this time with the surprising American Promise. Lukas had his longshot sleek, sharp, and ready to live up to his name in the \$500,000 Virginia Derby at Colonial Downs last Saturday, and he did.

In the first-ever Kentucky Derby points race held at Colonial Downs, American Promise rolled to a 7 3/4-length victory, earning 50 points and all but securing a spot in the "Run for the Roses" on the first Saturday in May. ~ [CanadianThoroughbred.com](https://www.canadianthoroughbred.com)

[CLICK FOR FULL STORY](#)



- Earn Points for Wagering
- Wagering Bonuses
- HPIbet.com Wagering Promotions



The Best of Bob by Bob Gates

From July 27, 2023: The Legend of Ten to Ace

Since the beginning of racing, there has always been that one horse—the proverbial sure thing, the undeniable cinch. But if there's one lesson horse racing has taught us, it's that even the so-called "can't-lose" horse can lose. We've all seen it happen. This week's history blog tells the story of one such horse. We think we know how this tale will end—don't we? Click [here](#) to uncover the 80-year-old story of the 1942 Canadian Derby, held at Polo Park Racetrack.

Feedback & Inside Track Archives

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

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

Nault Enters 2025 Season with "Best Stable Ever"

Mar 20, 2025 | The Inside Track



Trainer Mike Nault exercising his new claim Load Abroad. (George Williams)

By G. S. Thompson

Nault Enters 2025 Season with "Best Stable Ever"

Leading riders Prayven Badrie and Antonio Whitehall back in action

Two-time leading ASD rider and reigning champ Prayven Badrie was seen along with three-time leading rider Antonio Whitehall Thursday morning on the training track, as was top trainer Mike Nault, as the backstretch continued to swell with horses.



Two-time leading ASD rider and reigning champ Prayven Badrie. (George Williams)



Three-time leading ASD rider Antonio Whitehall in action on the training track Thursday morning. (George Williams)

Nault has 20 horses on the grounds, and his stable looks even better this year than it did last year. The 58-year-old Laurier native is coming off an impressive 2024 campaign where he finished in a tie for second in the trainer standings with Jared Brown, winning 24 races and finishing in the top three at an amazing 70% clip.

"I think I've got my best stable ever," said Nault, who has been preparing his charges at Miracle Ranch since January. Located just off Garvin Road, the facility provides Nault with two barns, an indoor arena, and an outdoor arena where he's constructed a training track.

Nault's 2024 season featured five stakes victories for True North Thoroughbreds and A2 Thoroughbreds, one better than his 2023 tally of four. Nault won the Buffalo Stakes with Betterlucknexttime, the Harvey Warner Manitoba Mile and R. J. Speers Memorial with Blazing Bo, and the Hazel Wright Sire Stakes and R. C. Anderson Stakes with Commandoslastdance in 2024.

The veteran conditioner has firmly established himself as one of Manitoba's premier horsemen since returning from a 12-year stint in Alberta in 2018. That return was perfectly timed, as he took over a powerful stable from trainer Don

Schnell in 2019 and promptly won 10 stakes races, including six in a row with star Manitoba-bred mare Hidden Grace.

The year before, Nault was exercising Canadian champion mare Escape Clause for Schnell, and that included her time at Oaklawn Park when she finished second beaten a nose to the best mare in the world in the Apple Blossom Handicap (G1).

This winter, Nault has kept busy developing a promising group of two-year-olds, including three Manitoba-breds purchased at auction. His juvenile prospects include a colt by Fed Biz, a filly by Speculating, and Hidden Grace's half-brother, also by Speculating.

Looking ahead to the 2025 season, Nault has high hopes for several runners, including Northern Echo, a 3-year-old colt he describes as being "on the Derby trail." His stable also features the hard-knocking mare Jj's American Diva, whom Nault claimed for \$10,000 before finishing second in three subsequent stakes races.

"She can go to the lead and she can run a mile and an eighth," Nault said. "She's a very tough little mare." Other seasoned stakes horses in Nault's barn include Blazing Bo and Big Stretch, while he also has high expectations for Load Abroad, a \$5,500 claim from last fall.

Nault trains exclusively for two ownership groups – A2 Thoroughbreds (Nolan Allard, Arthur Roy, and Jean-Marc Roy) and True North Thoroughbreds (Pat Beavis, Phil Allard, Grant Sissons, and Ray Bouchard). These connections also have breeding interests, with broodmares Banking on Betty and Queen of the North both recently foaling offspring by Speculating.

The 2025 Assiniboia Downs meeting opens on Tuesday, May 13, with more than 170 horses already on the grounds and many more expected in the coming weeks. If Nault's assessment of his stable proves accurate, he'll be enjoying some extra time in the winner's circle this summer!

Snapshot in Time by Bob Gates

Mar 17, 2025 | The Inside Track



This is installment number three of our salute to the late Ken Hendricks. Hank won two Manitoba Derbies, and while most will remember his victory on Merry's Jay in 1976, who recalls his win aboard Langara Island on August 7, 1995—30 years ago?

Ken took charge of the race right out of the gate and wired the field. He was a great judge of pace and won "ridden out" despite a 22-second opening quarter. This Derby win was as good as it gets, and Hank's ride was masterful! (Gerry Hart photo)