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

ISSUE #180 - APRIL 18, 2025



Assiniboia Downs is open regular hours (10 a.m. to 1 a.m.) for VLTs, dining and wagering on horse racing on Good Friday, April 18, Saturday, April 19 and Easter Sunday, April 20.



Trainer Lise Pruitt with 2024 Rangatira Stakes winner Explosive.

Pruitt will have 15-18 horses at ASD this season, including a number of exciting juvenile prospects.

[Trainer Lise Pruitt Looking Forward to 2025 Live Racing Season at ASD](#)

"I can't wait to start," said trainer Lise Pruitt. "Can't wait." Pruitt is looking forward to the start of the 2025 live racing season at Assiniboia Downs on Tuesday, May 13, and for good reason.

This will be her fifth season at the helm for top owner Barry Arnason and his Arnason Farms, and she's got some exciting young prospects along with last year's stable star Explosive.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more about Lise's 2025 stable.



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](#)



Easter Brunch and Mother's Day Brunch

Easter Brunch and Mother's Day Brunch are both SOLD OUT.



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 6 to 12 years old \$34.95, Kids 5 & under \$22.95.

SPECIAL LIMITED OFFER: \$10 off per person for any race night in May. Promotional 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

This is the third part of our four-part series revisiting wins recorded by Hall of Fame jockey Irwin Driedger. Irwin is seen here aboard Tommy Elias's Criollazo. Who remembers this boy? Criollazo was an old class horse who, at the age of 12, won three straight races in 1981. During his career, Irwin rode all types of horses. (Gerry Hart photo)

[Click to enlarge photo](#)



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



Western Canadian Derby Series News

\$100,000 Derby Bonus and \$25,000 Owner-Trainer Bonus

With Western Canadian race meets launching in May, the 2025 Western Canadian Derby Series promises to elevate an already thrilling season of Thoroughbred racing across Western Canada.

The Western Canadian Derby Series offers a \$100,000 bonus to any horse that can sweep the Manitoba Derby, Canadian Derby and BC Derby, plus a lucrative owner-trainer bonus.

A \$100,000 Derby Bonus awaits any three-year-old daring enough to sweep all three races, bolstered by the Manitoba Derby's return to the series alongside the Canadian Derby and BC Derby. A \$25,000 Owner-Trainer Bonus will further stoke the competition. ~ CanadianThoroughbred.com

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- Wager on Top Tracks
- Simulcast Schedule
- Off-Track Betting Locations



Steve Haskin's Kentucky Derby Rankings Week 12

Get your reading glasses on! Steve Haskin's final Kentucky Derby Rankings piece for 2025 is long!

With all the prep races complete, Haskin now moves beyond looking at the positives and negatives, strengths and weaknesses, to analyzing the final Thoro-Graph patterns and asking questions.

Secretariat.com has been running Hall of Fame writer Steve Haskin's horse racing columns for years, and for good reason! Haskin spent decades in the backstretch learning his craft, and it shows!

He'll make his final assessment next week after observing the horses and watching how they are training and will then provide his final Derby analysis and handicapping column. ~ Secretariat.com

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Arkansas Derby winner Sandman is expected to be in the field for the 2025 Kentucky Derby. (Coady Media)

SLIDESHOW: Get to Know the 2025 Kentucky Derby Contenders

The 2025 edition of the [Kentucky Derby](#) should draw a full field of 20 horses including the winners of all the major prep races.

For most of the horses expected to compete in the first jewel of the Triple Crown, [America's Best Racing](#) was able to find a nice mix of photos to show fans the competitive side of the horses, as well as a bit of their personality.

The contenders appear in order by points earned via the Road to the Kentucky Derby scoring system that determines the 20-horse field, with profile photos, workout images, and racing pictures when available.

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



The Best of Bob by Bob Gates

From August 23, 2024: Will 2024 Be Gary Danelson's Swan Song?

Our weekly trip down memory lane celebrates a couple of important dates for the Downs' all-time leading trainer, Gary Danelson. August is a special month— Gary has a birthday coming up, along with the anniversary of his first-ever win at the Downs. This week's story also includes thoughts from some of the people who know Gary best. Click [here](#) to see who Bob spoke with, as well as his take on Gary's plans for the future.

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.

Trainer Lise Pruitt Looking Forward to 2025 Live Season at ASD

Apr 17, 2025 | The Inside Track



Trainer Lise Pruitt with 2024 Rangatira Stakes winner Explosive. (George Williams)

by **G. S. Thompson**

"I can't wait to start," said trainer Lise Pruitt. "Can't wait."

Pruitt is looking forward to the start of the 2025 live racing season at Assiniboia Downs on Tuesday, May 13, and for good reason. This will be her fifth season at the helm for top owner Barry Arnason and his Arnason Farms, and she's got some exciting young prospects along with last year's stable star Explosive.

Explosive won the 2024 Rangatira Stakes at 30-1 for Pruitt, and that was after a long campaign south of the border at tracks that included Turfway Park, Churchill Downs, Del Mar, Keeneland, Los Alamitos, Santa Anita, and Golden Gate. The classy 8-year-old gelding has compiled a record of 6-7-5 from 34 starts and earnings of US \$160,697, and he's entering the 2025 season after a well-deserved winter vacation in Manitoba.

Pruitt will have between 15 and 18 horses this season, a number that might seem modest until you consider the quality. Besides Explosive, she's working to bring Saint George back into the fold, a Florida purchase who broke his maiden impressively last June 26th.

"He got left in the gate and just came running," said Pruitt. "Won by daylight."

Besides Explosive, Pruitt has conditioned a number of Manitoba-bred multiple stakes winners and champions including Hidden Grace, Melisandre, and Langara for Arnason Farms, the latter also owned in partnership with True North Thoroughbreds.

Langara is now retired to a wonderful life of leisure, while Hidden Grace and Melisandre have joined the broodmare ranks. Melisandre, like her stablemates,

retired on a stakes-winning note with a victory in the Taboga Overnight Stakes last year for Pruitt.

Pruitt lives at Arnason's farm with her husband, former top Assiniboia Downs jockey Jerry Pruitt, and spent the winter caring for the horses. While Jerry helps out at Maggie Lawson's Dunroven Farm year-round, Lise handles her training duties at the track for Arnason with the help of a dedicated team that includes top grooms Richie Ricketts and Keno Martin.



Pruitt is excited not only about her horses this year, but also about her 23-year-old daughter Ciera, who spent the winter at Palm Meadows working for Canadian Hall of Fame trainer Josie Carroll. Carroll was the first female trainer to win the Queen's Plate in 2006 and has now won it three times. Ciera has returned with ambitions of securing her jockey's license.

"Josie wanted to keep her, but Ciera really wants to ride," said Pruitt, who believes Assiniboia Downs would be a good starting point for her daughter's riding career. "She's learned so much."

Now in her fourth year of galloping horses, Ciera appears ready to follow in her father's footsteps. If successful, she'll write a new chapter in what's becoming one of Manitoba racing's most compelling family stories.

Beyond the current racing season, Pruitt and Arnason are looking toward the future. They have five yearlings preparing for this year's sale, including offspring of stallions Speculating and Nonios. Four of their homebred two-year-olds failed to meet their reserve at last year's sale, but that disappointment has turned into opportunity.

Among their promising juveniles is a Speculating gelding named "Bromeo." "He got nicknamed Romeo," said Pruitt. "But when I tried to punch it in, they wouldn't accept it. So I had to go with Bromeo." Another promising juvenile is Noble Escape, out of Reasonable Cause, who is a sister to Manitoba-bred Canadian champion mare Escape Clause. There's also a Nonios colt out of a Strawberry Flash mare that's a half brother to Silver Oak, winner of a \$100,000 stake at Santa Anita.

"I always look forward to a new year," said Pruitt, who has found her sweet spot at Assiniboia Downs.

And the horses know it, too.