

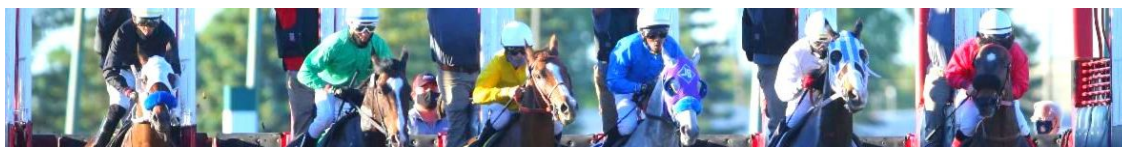
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DID YOU HEAR THE LATEST?

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

ISSUE #181 - APRIL 25, 2025



Jockey Sachin Parris and trainer Andre Ellis with their longshot winner Orcadian Storm. (George Williams)

Caribbean Connection: Parris and Ellis Making Their Mark at Assiniboia Downs

In the competitive world of horse racing, the partnership of apprentice jockey Sachin Parris and trainer Andre Ellis represents a compelling tale of Caribbean determination finding its footing on Canadian soil.

The dynamic duo teamed up on September 16 last year to win with 15-1 longshot Orcadian Storm. Can they do it again this year?

CLICK HERE to read more about the "Kings of the Caribbean"



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](#)



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, chicken, 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.

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

Please note that Mother's Day Brunch is SOLD OUT.



- #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

Today's Snapshot in Time marks our final look at wins recorded by Irwin Driedger—and few were more important than his victory aboard Just Like Liz on October 27, 1981.

Who remembers the Downs' "Ask Me Girls?" On this night, Irwin, the top rider at the Downs for three consecutive years, earned his 202nd win, securing the title of Canada's leading rider.

That same year, Irwin was honoured with a Sovereign Award for Outstanding Jockey in Canada (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



Everyone is all smiles with the 2025 new Woodbine Thoroughbred season set to open on Saturday. (Jeff Bowen)

Woodbine's 70th Opening Day; Star Shoot and Brooke Bays

Newly-turned 3-year-old fillies will sprint 6 furlongs in the opening day feature at Woodbine on Saturday, April 26, in the \$125,000 Star Shoot Stakes, and new jockey faces include Brooke Bays, a promising apprentice, and Barbados' Affrie Ward.

The first of 128 racing days at Woodbine has nine races and 59 entrants, down from the 71 who raced on opening day a year ago, but all raring to go, as are their connections!

~ CanadianThoroughbred.com

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



Kentucky Derby Rankings Feature Week 13

It's time to sit back in your favourite chair with a bowl of popcorn and enjoy the movie.

You know, those old films from the 1930s, '40s and '50s about the Sport of Kings, that even with their predictable endings still tug at the heart strings.

One of those films, considered the blueprint for future horse racing movies, is the stage setter for the horse story from this year's Derby. And it's a good one!

~ Secretariat.com

CLICK FOR FULL STORY

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!



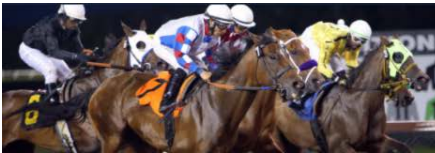
Santa Anita Derby winner Journalism is expected to be the favourite for the 2025 Kentucky Derby on Saturday, May 3. (Coady Media)

Kentucky Derby Hot Takes: What Will Happen, What Won't Happen?

If there's ever a time to have a bold opinion in horse racing, it's the Kentucky Derby. What's the fun in betting the favourite in the world's biggest horse race? Holding a contrarian view in a betting event filled with 20 contenders can mean massive returns.

Over the past three years, a \$10 win bet on the horse who won the Derby returned \$818, \$196.81 and \$162.10. [America's Best Racing](#) has two hot takes for this year's [Kentucky Derby](#). Presented by Woodford Reserve: Something no one expects, that will happen, and something everyone expects, that won't happen.

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The Best of Bob by Bob Gates

From May 26, 2023: Last Breaths and Forever Fred

Not every horse our history guy writes about was a record-breaker or a star of the stakes races. This time around, Bob delights in telling the story of a modest claimer with bragging rights of his own. Does anyone remember Don Keyes and his horse, Fred?

While Fred didn't race under that name, he spent his entire career at the Downs from 1976 to 1987 and could boast Native Dancer as his great-granddaddy. Click [here](#) to learn more about the heartwarming tale of Fred and the love of his life, Mother.

Feedback & Inside Track Archives

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

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



Caribbean Connection: Parris and Ellis Making Their Mark at Assiniboia Downs

Apr 24, 2025 | The Inside Track



Jockey Sachin Parris and trainer Andre Ellis with their longshot winner Orcadian Storm. (George Williams)

by G. S. Thompson

In the competitive world of horse racing, the partnership of jockey Sachin Parris and trainer Andre Ellis represents a compelling tale of Caribbean determination finding its footing on Canadian soil.

At 24, Parris is still establishing himself at Assiniboia Downs, where he's in his second official year as a ten-pound apprentice jockey. The young Barbadian won two races in his rookie season at the Downs, including a memorable score aboard Orcadian Storm at 15-1 for Ellis last September.

"I got the idea to be a jockey at around 12 or 13, through watching it on TV," said Parris, whose attraction to horse racing began particularly by watching the prestigious Barbados Gold Cup. Unlike many in the industry, he didn't come from a racing background. "None of my family was in racing," he said.

Parris's path to the saddle wasn't straightforward. "It was \$60 an hour to learn how to ride, and my mother couldn't afford it," said Parris, who eventually found his way into jockey school through a government program that offered a chance to those who might not be able to afford the tuition.

"I was just lucky enough to get in," said Parris. And under the guidance of Robert Pierce at the jockey school, he dedicated himself to the craft, becoming "the only person from the same program to even graduate and get my exercise license."

Parris longed to become an actual jockey after graduating, but faced some harsh realities. "There are more jockeys than horses there, that's the truth," said Parris, who then sought opportunities abroad. Fellow Barbadian trainer Devon

Gittens provided the crucial connection to Assiniboia Downs, and Parris arrived ready for action in 2024.

His first chilly spring in Canada exercising horses proved challenging but rewarding. "It was my first time ever travelling and experiencing the cold," said Parris. "But I battled it out and reaped some rewards."

His first Canadian victory came on August 21, 2024, aboard 17-1 Press On Baby for trainer Lee Delaronde, followed by the win with Ellis's Orcadian Storm. Parris also notched a victory at Century Mile in Alberta aboard Brody's Streak for 7-time ASD leading trainer Tom Gardipy, Jr.

Now galloping for multiple trainers at Assiniboia Downs including Wendy Anderson, Sherri Laing, Gardipy and Ellis, Parris hopes to build on his early success. With two more wins needed before losing his 10-pound apprentice allowance, the lightweight rider represents the valuable commodity of a skilled bug boy.



Kings of the Caribbean, jockey Sachin Parris and trainer Andre Ellis. (George Williams)

Ellis, 40, brings his own compelling backstory to the partnership. After more than 20 years as a groom in Jamaica and North America, the Jamaican horseman took out his trainer's license recently, focusing seriously on the craft only last year.

"I started out thinking that I could be a rider," said Ellis. "But the weight had me stressed out most of the time." When a trainer gave him a horse to look after, he found a different path in the industry. "I got the opportunity to start looking after horses, and less chances to get on horses, and I was getting heavy, so I just started grooming horses."

After years of working for accomplished horsepeople like all-time leading ASD trainer Gary Danelson, Jack Robertson, and Murray Duncan, Ellis transitioned to owner-trainer status. He currently conditions three horses, including Orcadian Storm, whom he owns himself.

The transition wasn't entirely self-motivated. "People everywhere I went always seemed to think I was a trainer," said Ellis. "At the time I wasn't training any horses, but people just said I should be training. It was people pushing me to be a trainer, more than me wanting to be a trainer."

Ellis maintains the optimistic outlook typical of Caribbean horsepeople. "You have to give thanks for what you have," he said. "Growing up in the Caribbean, whatever we had, we turned it into something. So it's not really like we're going out there on a big hope that we're going to take over the world. Whatever slice of the cake we get, we're happy with."

When asked about his talent as a trainer, Ellis responded with quiet confidence: "I was born for this." Parris quickly added, "He showcased it last year."

From 13 starts in 2024, Ellis registered two wins plus multiple in-the-money finishes. For 2025, he has secured outside owners and expects his stable to

grow beyond its current three runners, with one possibly targeting stakes competition.

As Parris and Ellis continue navigating their respective journeys at Assiniboia Downs, they represent the essential Caribbean influence that has reshaped racing both at the Downs and in North America over the past few decades. Their story of persistence, adaptation, and making the most of limited opportunities echoes throughout the backstretches of every track where Caribbean horsepeople have made their mark.

Especially at Assiniboia Downs.