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DID YOU HEAR THE LATEST?

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

ISSUE #186 - MAY 30, 2025



Live Racing this Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Live racing is back every Tuesday and Wednesday plus select Mondays (June 2, June 23, July 14, August 4, August 25 and September 15) at 7:30 p.m. Free admission and free parking! Don't know how to bet? Just stop by and see Shannon and Brad at the Fan Education Centre and they will answer all your questions!

CLICK HERE for schedule



Jockey Ciera Pruitt is congratulated by her father and mother, former top ASD jockey Jerry Pruitt, and trainer Lise Pruitt, after scoring her first lifetime win in the seventh race on Tuesday. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Monster Pick 4 Payoff, Huge Pools, Highlight of Week at ASD

Ciera Pruitt Scores First Lifetime Win

Two huge Pick 4 pools and a monster payoff were the highlight of the week at ASD, and the latter was partly the result of new apprentice Ciera Pruitt booting home her first career winner in the seventh race on Tuesday for trainer Jason Homer.

Pruitt bided her time wide while avoiding a loose horse aboard Mineral Rights (\$41.60) and came powering home to win by 1 ½-lengths over Sneaky Situation, triggering a celebration in the winner's circle and a massive \$1 Pick 4 payoff.

CLICK HERE to see the payoff!



ASD Player Portal

- Free ASD Live Racing Programs
- Race Night Selections
- Links to Player Podcasts & more



ASDowns/player-portal



Live Racing Prime Rib Buffet

Get ready to indulge in the ultimate dining experience at the track. Savour melt-in-your-mouth Certified Angus Prime Rib carved to perfection, plus a delicious variety of chicken and seafood dishes, rotating entrée selections, and so much more! Adults: \$59.95, Seniors (65+): \$54.95, Kids (6–12): \$34.95, Kids (5 & under): \$22.95. **Call 204-885-3330 to reserve your table**



Apprentice jockey Ciera Pruitt gives her first lifetime winner Mineral Rights a pat on the way into the winner's Circle. Click photo to enlarge. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Looking for a Special Photo?

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

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 😊



- #1 Spot in Winnipeg for VLT Jackpots!
- Free \$500 Cash Draw after every live race night
- Free \$200 Cash Draw plus draws to Spin the Lucky Cash Wheel every Friday, Saturday & Sunday starting at 6 pm



A Snapshot in Time by Bob Gates

In what will be our final look at opening day wins, pictured is Golden Bid from 20 years ago on May 1, 2005. This was the 12th running of the Don Gray Memorial, which, as you know, is always the first race on opening day. Here we have co-owner and trainer Mike Nault with jockey Larren Delorme. As you can see in this photo, you can never be too sure what Mother Nature has in store for us early in the season! (Gerry Hart photo)

[Click photo to enlarge](#)



- \$13.95 Daily Lunch Special
- Happy Hour (3 to 5pm & 9pm to close)
- Crazy Hour after Live Racing! Beer, Shots & Wine \$5 plus 25% off all appetizers



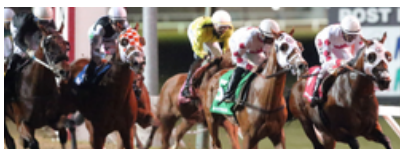
Santa Anita Derby runner-up Baeza will try to upset the Derby and Preakness winners in the Belmont Stakes on June 7. (Ernie Belmonte / Santa Anita Park)

Belmont Stakes Cheat Sheet Top Three Derby Finishers Meet In Belmont

The top three finishers in this year's Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve Sovereignty, Journalism, and Baeza – are scheduled to start in the Belmont Stakes, with Journalism coming in off of a courageous victory in the Preakness Stakes.

He'll square off against Sovereignty and Baeza who have the advantage of an extra two weeks of rest. The field also includes highly-rated Rodriguez, who won the Wood Memorial Stakes Presented by Resorts World Casino. -- [*America's Best Racing*](#)

[CLICK FOR FULL STORY](#)



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





Journalism (inside in checkered sleeves) looking for room in the Preakness Stakes. (Jeffrey Snider / Maryland Jockey Club)

Preakness Stretch Rumble **The Gift That Keeps On Giving**

Half the racing world thinks Umberto Rispoli took a foolhardy chance and got away with it, and the other half would hang Flavien Prat by his thumbs for nearly turning the 150th Preakness Stakes (G1) into a nightmare.

On both social and serious media, opinions since the May 17 race have rained down like confetti. -- Jay Hovdey, [BloodHorse](#)

CLICK FOR FULL STORY



Kentucky Derby winner Sovereignty is training more aggressively for the June 7 Belmont Stakes. (John Gallagher/Coady Media)

Kentucky Derby Winner Gets Aggressive **Hall of Famer Mott Sees Attitude Change**

Kentucky Derby winner and Belmont hopeful Sovereignty drilled five furlongs Saturday with Grade 1 winner Arthur's Ride while his Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott noticed an overall change in his on-track demeanor.

It appears he's headed for the June 7 showdown with Preakness winner Journalism in great shape! -- The [Paulick Report](#)

CLICK FOR FULL STORY



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Bob's Blog - "Assiniboia Downs Honours Local Horse Racing History"

How about a tour of the Downs lobby area, which doubles as a time machine? This week, Bob takes us on a journey through what he likes to call the "Racing Through Time" display. From the history wall to the jockey/trainer leaderboard and historical display cases, the Downs has it all! [Click here](#) for your tour of the history area, compliments of the track historian.

Feedback & Inside Track Archives

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

Monster Pick 4 Payoff, Huge Pools, Highlight Week at ASD, Ciera Pruitt Scores First Lifetime Win

May 29, 2025 | The Inside Track



Jockey Ciera Pruitt (#9) scores her first lifetime win aboard longshot Mineral Rights (\$41.60) in the seventh race on Tuesday for trainer Jason Homer, triggering a huge Pick 4 payoff. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia photo)

By G.S. Thompson

Two huge Pick 4 pools and a monster payoff were the highlight of the week at ASD and the latter was partly the result of new apprentice Ciera Pruitt booting home her first career winner in the seventh race on Tuesday for trainer Jason Homer.

Pruitt bided her time wide while avoiding a loose horse aboard Mineral Rights (\$41.60) and came powering home to win by 1 ½-lengths over Sneaky Situation, triggering a celebration in the winner's circle and a massive \$1 Pick 4 payoff of \$14,295.45. Pruitt was greeted in the winner's circle by her beaming mother and father, trainer Lise Pruitt, and former top ASD jockey Jerry Pruitt, both of whom had proud ear-to-ear smiles.



Jockey Ciera Pruitt is congratulated by her father and mother, former top ASD jockey Jerry Pruitt, and trainer Lise Pruitt, after scoring her first lifetime win in the seventh race on Tuesday. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Bettors flocked to the windows for the newly upped guaranteed \$1 Pick 4 pool of \$50,000 and poured \$93,205 into the pool before the first leg of the Pick 4 in Race 4 on Tuesday, and it didn't take long for the fireworks to begin when Double Time (\$38.10) surged through a small hole at the top of the stretch under jockey Shavon Belle and held on to win by the narrowest of noses in his first start of the year for trainer Steve Thompson.

Second choice Distinctive Deb (\$5.70) romped home by 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ -lengths under Ronald Ali for trainer Mike Taphorn in Race 5 to keep most of the Pick 4 tickets that were still alive rolling forward and then the heart factor came out.



Double Time (\$38.10) holds on inside to win the fourth race on Tuesday under jockey Shavon Belle for trainer Steve Thompson. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Starship Chewbacca (\$14.70) was probably an overlay in Race 6 based on some of his previous gutsy performances and he wore down another game rival in Blackteca to win by half a length under Damario Bynoe for trainer Will Tourangeau, setting the stage for some monster Pick 4 payouts. There were more than a few bettors that wheelbarrowed out with their \$14,000-plus

winnings and they were likely back along with a tidal wave of bettors on Wednesday to balloon the Pick 4 pool again to a whopping \$151,435!

Once again a longshot kicked off the Pick 4 on Wednesday in Race 4, as Blue Skye Jade (\$17.80) gave trainer Dewey Williams his first victory of the season at ASD under Antonio Whitehall. Trainer Jason Homer, the trainer who saddled Pruitt's longshot winner on Tuesday, was back at it again in Race 5 on Wednesday, notching his second win of the season with another longshot, The Ronald (\$33.20), who fooled just about everyone with his easy 6 ½-length victory under Neville Stephenson.



Longshot The Ronald (\$33.20) on his way to an easy victory in the fifth race on Wednesday for trainer Jason Homer. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Race 6 on Wednesday brought things back to earth when favourite Totalizer (\$6.50) opened up early and made no mistakes under Sachin Parris, and it was more of the same in Race 7 when favoured Pino Bambino (\$6.20) gave trainer Steve Gaskin his second win on the card under Rachaad Knights. The combination of two longshots and two favourites provided an excellent \$1 Pick 4 payoff of \$2,958.65. One more longshot in the mix and who knows what it might have paid with over \$150,000 in the pool!

Damario Bynoe was the top jockey on the week with three wins followed by Antonio Whitehall with a pair of victories. Bynoe's hat trick moved him into a tie at the top of the standings with Rachaad Knights, each with six wins, followed by Prayven Badrie and Sven Balroop with four wins apiece. Whitehall rounds out the top five in the standings with four victories.



Blue Skye Jade (\$17.80) is led into the Winner's Circle with jockey Antonio Whitehall aboard after their victory in the fourth race on Wednesday. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Trainers Jason Homer, Steve Gaskin and Will Tourangeau all scored doubles on the week, while Steve Keplin, Jr. and Tom Gardipy, Jr. continued their battle for top spot with one win each. Keplin leads all trainers with six wins, one more than Gardipy. Lise Pruitt sits alone in third with four victories, followed by a logjam of trainers with three wins apiece including Wendy Anderson, Jared Brown, Mike Nault and Will Tourangeau.

Racing resumes with the first Monday card of the meeting at 7:30 p.m. on June 2, and it looks like all systems go for more strong, competitive fields and giant Pick 4 pools.

Who's ready to dive in!?!

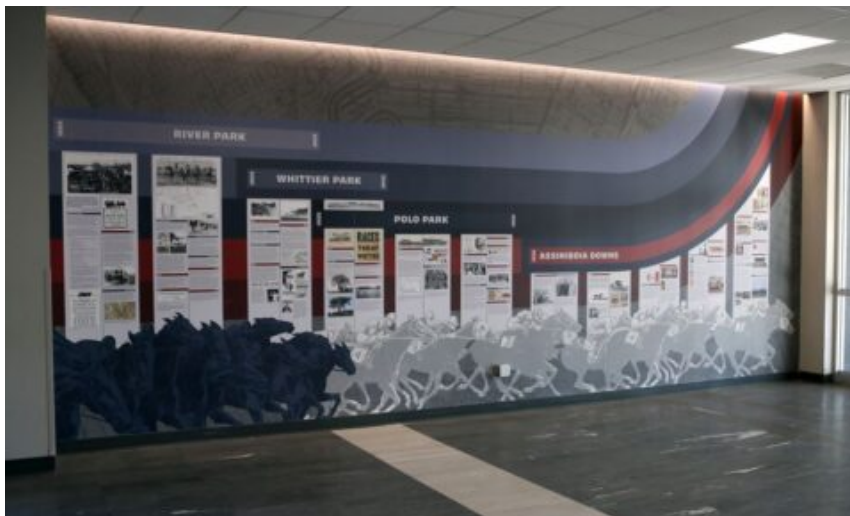
Assiniboia Downs Honours Local Horse Racing History

May 29, 2025 | The Inside Track



By Track Historian Bob Gates

When you walk through the main entrance at the Downs and make your way to the Guest Services area, don't be surprised if you start to feel a tad nostalgic. Cue Rod Serling's Twilight Zone music—for you have just entered the "history zone." The zone, or as some like to call it, the Racing Through Time area, may have you thinking of days gone by.



Downs History Wall (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

On your immediate right (the east wall) is a mural displaying more than 100 years of horse racing in Winnipeg. The main features of the wall are the stories of three racetracks that preceded the June 10, 1958 opening of Assiniboia Downs. The three tracks in question are River Park, Whittier Park, and Polo Park. Local racing as we know it today began in 1922 and ran until 1956, thanks to the tireless efforts of racing icon Robert James Speers.

River Park raced alone in 1922 and 1923. It was joined by the “new” Whittier Park, which opened in 1924, and these two were joined by the “new” Polo Park, which held its first day of racing in 1925. That year, the three tracks combined for 42 days of racing. Regular racing at River Park was not held after the 1925 season, with Whittier and Polo offering a total of 28 racing days per year from 1926 to 1942.

However, Speers—always the visionary—saw an opportunity in 1934 to squeeze in one last seven-day meet at River Park. The occasion was Winnipeg’s celebration of its Diamond Jubilee, which gave race fans a full 35 days of racing in 1934.

The following year, racing returned to the tandem of Whittier and Polo Parks until 1942, when wartime rationing led to the closure of Whittier Park. From 1943, all racing took place at Polo Park until its closure in 1956. Polo’s demise was a direct result of skyrocketing land values to the point where summertime horse racing could no longer be justified.

Over the span of 34 years (1922 to 1956), River Park, Whittier Park, and Polo Park racetracks planted the historic seeds for Jack Hardy’s Assiniboia Downs. These ancestors operated for a combined total of 53 years of thoroughbred horse racing—River Park for four years, Whittier Park for 18 years, and Polo Park for 31 years.

The final section of the mural is, of course, dedicated to our own Assiniboia Downs. The wall is jam-packed with photos and stories that will keep you occupied for as long as you like.

On the south wall (the same one where you entered the lobby area) is a digital image board that features all the Downs’ leading jockeys and trainers since 1958.

On the jockey side of the ledger, you’ll see that Bobby Stewart won six seasonal titles, while Dick Armstrong, Irwin Driedger, Tim Gardiner, and Rohan Singh each had four. Brian Bochinski, Alan Cuthbertson, Todd Kabel, Tommy Stadenyk, and Antonio Whitehall each had three. Ken Hendricks is the Downs’ all-time leading jockey with 1,685 wins. The rider with the most wins in a single season is Irwin Driedger, who visited the Downs winner’s circle 214 times in 1981.



Downs Leading Jockey - Trainer 1958 to 2024. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Among trainers, Ardell Sayler claimed twelve Downs training titles, Clayton Gray won seven, Tom Gardipy, Jr. earned six, while Tom Dodds and Jerry Gourneau each won five. Gary Danelson is the Downs' all-time leading trainer with 1,255 wins, and Tom Dodds holds the record for most wins in a single season with 78 victories in 1990.

As you can see, we've been blessed with some truly gifted riders and conditioners of thoroughbreds!

Our tour of the area concludes with three history cases, each dedicated to one of the former local racetracks.

The Whittier Park case is highlighted by a starter's bell once used at the St. Boniface track and an official program from the final day of racing at Whittier on September 14, 1935. Behind the bell and program is a saddle and skull cap from the early 1940s that belonged to jockey Ray Stewart, who raced locally in the 1940s and '50s.



Whittier Park History Case (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

The Polo Park case features the Canadian Derby blanket won by Scotty Kennedy's Victory Gift in 1948. Also displayed is the Speers Trophy, won by Coiner in 1941.

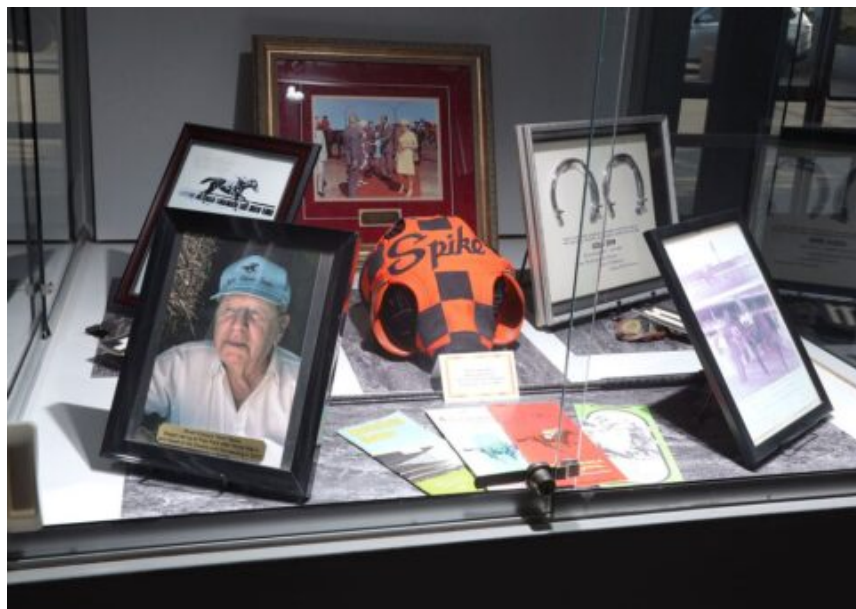


Polo Park History Case (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Who knew? Coiner was a son of Triple Crown champion Whirlaway.

While the picture doesn't do it justice, the framed text on the left is a copy of the speech given by R. J. Speers' daughter, Anna Speers, on July 4, 1956—the day Polo Park went dark forever.

Lastly, we have the case which pays tribute to Assiniboia Downs. This one was tough to put together—simply put, the case wasn't nearly large enough. What's your favourite? The Queen from her 1970 visit? Downs patriarch A. E. "Bert" Blake? Gary Danelson's first win in 1959? Or is it the shoes of Gold Ern, who won the first race on opening day, June 10, 1958?



By the way, the cost of the Racing Through Time tour is exactly the same as your parking and general admission—FREE. You can't beat the price!

– Maya Angelou

Assiniboia Downs Chief Executive Officer Darren Dunn has been the driving force since he took office in 2010 to ensure that the history of horse racing remains an important part of the fabric that is...

Our Assiniboia Downs.