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ISSUE #213 - DECEMBER 5, 2025



Betterlucknexttime led all Manitoba-breds in 2025 with earnings of \$US57,823. Congratulations! (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Top-5 Manitoba-Bred Earners of 2025. Bright Futures Ahead!

Manitoba-breds put on quite the show again in 2025!

The top five earners all cracked the \$50,000 mark and easily paved their way into the history books with some exceptional performances for their owners, breeders, and trainers, once again proving that it pays to own horses bred in Manitoba, all of whom can take advantage of the stakes and bonus programs offered to homebreds.

[Full story here.](#)



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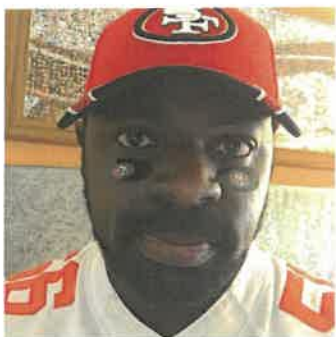
The fun never stops at Assiniboia Downs **Winnipeg's place to play and win!**

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Travers Cummings

NFL Picks by TravyFootball **Week 14**

Week 14 is loaded with struggling contenders, chaotic matchups, and a primetime game with major playoff implications. I break down which teams are spiralling, which ones still have a pulse, and where the real advantages lie—without spoiling my selections [here](#).

I'm coming off a 3-0 week and now sit at 27-12 on the season. Let's see if the streak continues.



Brittany Bergen leads Twoleftload out of the winner's circle after winning the R.C. Anderson Stakes on July 22 for trainer Mike Nault, A2 Thoroughbreds and True North Thoroughbreds. Click image for full size. (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 😊



[Click photo to enlarge](#)

A Snapshot in Time by Bob Gates

The holiday season is upon us, and our *Snapshot in Time* feature has sought out some appropriately named thoroughbreds to mark the month of December. Let's kick things off with a mare you might not remember: Dancing Elf. The bay was the daughter of North Pole—I kid you not! She raced from 1987 to 1989 and earned two of her three lifetime wins here at the Downs. (Gerry Hart photo)



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2025 Cigar Mile Handicap Cheat Sheet

The \$500,000 Cigar Mile Handicap (G2) at Aqueduct on Saturday offers one final opportunity for accomplished and aspiring stakes horses to compete in a marquee dirt mile race before the calendar turns to 2026.

Held around one turn, the Cigar Mile has long been an important race in the dirt mile division since its inaugural running in 1988 when Forty Niner won what was then called the NYRA Mile Handicap.

Horses charge into the stretch in the 2024 running of the Cigar Mile Handicap. The 2025 edition will be held this Saturday at Aqueduct. (Coglianese Photos/Dom Napolitano)

Handicapper Noel Michael's takes a closer look at the solid seven-horse field.

-- [*America's Best Racing*](#)

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Nominations for the Outstanding Western Canadian Backstretch Worker Award can be submitted online at the [Jockey Club of Canada website](#) until Wednesday, December 31, 2025

New Industry Award for Western Canadian Backstretch Workers

The Jockey Club of Canada is proud to announce a new industry award which will be presented for the first time at the upcoming 51st annual Sovereign Awards ceremony. The Outstanding Western Canadian Backstretch Worker Award is a partner to the longstanding Outstanding Groom Award, which is given to a groom working in Ontario.

This new award is open to backstretch workers who hold a valid thoroughbred license in the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and/or Manitoba.

-- [Canadian Thoroughbred](#)

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Jokestar has been listed as the second choice at 3-1 for Saturday's \$150,000 Valedictory Stakes at Woodbine. (Coady Media)

Jokestar May Deliver Punchline in Valedictory

In rattling off three dirt wins in his first five starts as a 4-year-old in 2025, Jokestar looked like a horse who was superior on dirt compared to synthetic, the surface on which he largely competed as a 3-year-old. But maybe with age, he's just gotten better altogether.

On Saturday, he'll face eight rivals going 1 1/2-miles over Woodbine's synthetic main track in the \$150,000 Valedictory Stakes (G3), and he'll have to beat morning line favourite Tosen Wish.

-- [BloodHorse](#)

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The Best of Bob

Did you know that in the 1967 Centennial issue of the Canadian Horse magazine, Stanley Harrison was one of ten men honoured for their contributions to racing in Canada? Cap Harrison believed it was the broodmare and not the sire that played the major role in producing an outstanding racehorse. Click [here](#) to read more about this great racing icon and his interesting views on breeding. (From June 12, 2018)

Track Historian Bob Gates

Feedback & Inside Track Archives

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Top-5 Manitoba-Bred Earners of 2025. Bright Futures Ahead!

Dec 4, 2025 | The Inside Track



Betterlucknexttime (#6) and Antonio Whitehall on their way to victory in the \$40,000 J.W. Sifton Stakes. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

By G.S. Thompson

Manitoba-breds put on quite the show again in 2025, with the top five earners all cracking the \$50,000 mark and easily paving their way into the history books with some exceptional performances for their owners, breeders and trainers, once again proving that it pays to own horses bred in Manitoba, all of whom can take

advantage of the stakes and bonus programs offered to homebreds.

Betterlucknexttime US\$57,823

Betterlucknexttime topped all Manitoba-bred earners in 2025 with \$US57,823. Bred by Larry Falloon and Denis Huberdeau, the 3-year-old gelding by Nonios went on a three-race winning streak early in the season that included a victory in the Frank Arnason Sire Stakes, and went on to win the J.W. Sifton Stakes later in the season, compiling a record of 4-1-1 from nine starts for owners A2 Thoroughbreds and True North Thoroughbreds and trainer Mike Nault.

A \$25,000 Manitoba CTHS Yearling Sale purchase in 2023, last year's Buffalo Stakes winner has now earned \$US91,519 from a career record 6-2-1 in 13 starts, easily paying back his purchase price with handsome profit!

Mighty Mikee US\$50,974



*Mighty Mikee and Shavon Belle win the \$40,000 Buffalo Stakes.
(Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)*

2-year-old Mighty Mikee showed all kinds of talent in his first lifetime start for trainer Devon Gittens and lived up to his promise with victories in both the CTHS Sales Stakes and the Buffalo Stakes in 2025.

In the Buffalo Stakes, the grey gelding by Mitole-Piccadilly Line by Air Force Blue set a fast pace early and romped away in the stretch under no urging from jockey Shavon Belle to notch the

largest winning margin of the day in North America at 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ -lengths.

Bred by Larry Falloon and owned by a partnership that includes Falloon, Anne Champion, and McLaren Racing, Mighty Mikee was the sales topper at \$32,000 in the 2024 Manitoba CTHS Yearling Sale, but has easily paid for himself with earnings of US\$50,974 from a record of 3-1-0 in four starts, with more stellar performances no doubt yet to come.

Mechanic Susie US\$50,598



Mechanic Susie returns with jockey Antonio Whitehall after winning the \$40,000 Distaff Stakes. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Manitoba monster Mechanic Susie was at it again in 2025, winning her final three races of the season including the Distaff Stakes. Bred by Larry Falloon, who also owns the 5-year-old mare in partnership with Tom Payne and trainer Elton Dickey, the daughter of Nonios-Quantum Mechanics by Einstein was purchased for just \$1,000 at the 2021 Manitoba CTHS Yearling Sale, and has since gone on to compile a career record of 11-3-5 from 22 starts for earnings of US\$153,390.

Last year, on her way to championship honours, Mechanic Susie went on an amazing six-race win streak, which also included a

victory in the Distaff Stakes. Trainer Elton Dickey has to be commended for his impressive work with this Manitoba star, who absolutely loves to win.

Twolefftoload US\$45,208



Twolefftoload trails the field early before rallying to win the \$40,000 R.C. Anderson Stakes. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

Twolefftoload won three races including the R.C. Anderson Stakes in 2025, and just missed making it over the US\$50,000 mark in her second season of racing at ASD.

Trained by Mike Nault for A2 Thoroughbreds and True North Thoroughbreds, Twolefftoload was winning the first stakes race of her career in the R.C. Anderson, having previously finished second in the Hazel Wright Sire Stakes and third in last year's Buffalo Stakes.

The 3-year-old Manitoba-bred filly by Speculating—Talkn to Midnight, by Broken Vow, was bred by Cam Ziprick and Charles and Stephane Fouillard, and sold for \$23,500 in the 2023 Manitoba CTHS Yearling Sale. She has now earned US\$55,222 for her owners from a record of 2-3-1 in 10 starts, and she's still improving. The farther they go, the better.

Nikkitysplat US\$37,773



Nikkitysplit and Rachaad Knights win the \$40,000 Hazel Wright Sire Stakes. (Jason Halstead / Assiniboia Photo)

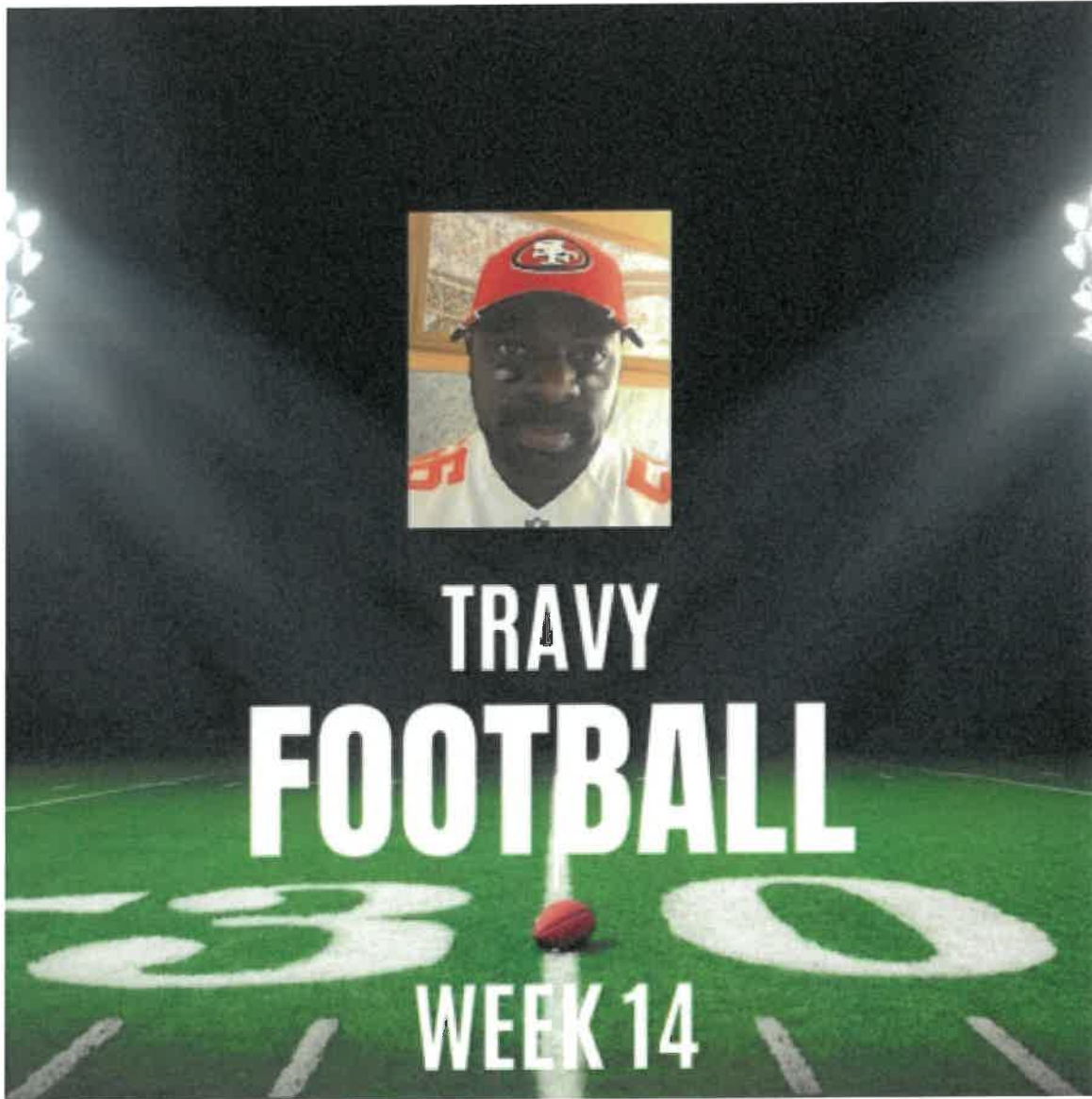
Nikkitysplit won the 18th Running of the \$40,000 Hazel Wright Sire Stakes for Manitoba-sired 3-year-old fillies in 2025, and it wasn't close. Trained by Tom Gardipy, Jr. the daughter of Speculating opened up early under jockey Rachaad Knights and maintained her lead to the wire to win by 3 ½-lengths over Twolefttoload, also a daughter of Speculating.

Nikkitysplit also finished second in the R. C. Anderson Stakes on her way to compiling a record of 2-2-1 from seven starts for earnings of US\$37,773 in her first year at the track for owner-breeders Jerry Lambert and Lynn Mathews, and she's another youngster who looks like she has a bright future ahead of her.

The thoroughbred breeding industry is flourishing in Manitoba right now, thanks to the new incentives put together by the Manitoba CTHS and MJC, along with the existing bonus programs, and we look forward to the next crop of Manitoba-bred stars in 2026!

TravyFootball Week 14

Dec 3, 2025 | The Inside Track



By Travers Cummings

Ravens over Steelers (Sunday noon): Both these teams seem to be heading in the wrong direction at a very crucial point in the season. The Ravens somehow managed to lose to the Bengals last week and showed absolutely no fight in doing so. They were facing Joe Burrow, who hadn't played football in two months, and allowed him to march up and down the field on them. Burrow is an excellent QB so that part I *could* excuse, but what's

inexcusable is Lamar Jackson and the offense only scoring 14 points against one of the worst defenses in the league. If they want to see the postseason, they'd better get their act together, starting with this game against the Steelers. Pittsburgh is ripe for the picking, Rodgers is still dealing with an injured wrist, the defense just gave 245 rushing yards to the Bills, and the fans were chanting for Pittsburgh to fire their coach. If Baltimore can't take advantage of that, then they might as well just pack up and go home now.

Browns over Titans (Sunday noon): I'm calling this matchup "The 2025 Toilet Bowl Game." The Titans are awful, the Browns are a little bit less awful, and when two awful teams get together, nothing good ever happens. First overall pick Cam Ward is finding life in the NFL to be quite tough in his first go-around. He's stuck on a team that has no talent, hence them only having one win on the year. There's nothing about them that even looks promising for the future, and this is *after* they just hit the reset button on the organization a couple of years ago when they fired then-coach and current Patriots coach Mike Vrabel. I have to think they just want this season done and over with so they can head to Mexico for vacation time.

The Browns lost to the 49ers last week (like I said they would!) in what turned out to be quite the defensive battle. But the two biggest determining factors were turnovers and being stopped on 4th down twice. Shedeur Sanders didn't have the greatest game either in his second start of the season. The lone bright spot once again was Myles Garrett, who must be licking his chops getting to go up against Tennessee this week.

Chiefs over Texans (Sunday night): The Chiefs are once again in do-or-die mode. They're two games back of a wildcard spot in the AFC and really can't afford to lose any more games, which is weird to even say about Kansas City considering they've been in the Super Bowl the last three years. This game will definitely be another defensive battle. Houston has given up the least number of points and yards in the NFL, and Kansas City isn't that far behind, sitting at 6th in points against and 8th in yards given up. CJ Stroud returned from injury last week and was average, probably still shaking off some of the rust from being inactive. Meanwhile, Patrick Mahomes played a pretty good game in a losing effort against the suddenly rejuvenated Dallas Cowboys. Not sure if weather is going to play a factor, but I do know December in Kansas City isn't exactly warm. I can't imagine a dome team from Texas is going to enjoy being outside in the elements. Despite Houston's defense being extremely good, I cannot bet against Mahomes on his home field in a must-win situation.