

SOUTHEAST

Georgia Regroups in Pursuit of Racing

Effort falls short in 2015 but advanced farther than ever this spring



Advocates of pari-mutuel wagering in the Peach State believe a high-class racetrack in the Atlanta metro area with a boutique meet can be a success, without alternative gaming

BY ERIC MITCHELL

ONLY TWO VOTES prevented Georgia residents from getting the chance in 2016 to vote on a constitutional amendment to legalize pari-mutuel wagering, an issue that polls suggest a strong majority support.

However, no actual voting took place.

A straw poll conducted by lobbyists for the Georgia Horse Racing Coalition revealed that 36 senators supported the bill that would put the amendment on the ballot. A two-thirds majority, or 38 votes, was needed, and 10 senators were undecided.

(continued on page 48)

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2015 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2015 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	WILDCAT HEIR (00, Forest Wildcat), Journeyman Stud	Died, 2015	155/50	2/2	0/2	(Wild Dude, \$176,667)	\$1,546,232	*522	25	1.43	1.47
2	WITH DISTINCTION (01, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$7,500	122/34	2/2	1/2	(Charlie's Brother, \$69,100)	\$807,346	*422	10	1.14	1.21
3	EXCLUSIVE QUALITY (03, Elusive Quality), Journeyman Stud	\$2,500	75/21	2/2	2/2	(Sr. Quisqueyano, \$183,400)	\$641,190	229	7	1.12	1.14
4	TWO STEP SALSA (05, Petionville), Get Away Farm	\$7,500	35/11	1/1	0/1	(Conquest Two Step, \$150,000)	\$543,694	108	2	1.55	1.04
5	POLLARD'S VISION (01, Carson City), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$6,500	66/18	0/0	0/0	(Twentytwentyvision, \$82,080)	\$493,280	*592	16	1.37	1.27
6	MAGNA GRADUATE (02, Honor Grades), Woodford Thoroughbreds	\$3,000	42/17	1/1	0/1	(Bellarmine, \$76,000)	\$479,685	*169	6	1.04	1.14
7	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), HallMarc Stallions at Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$4,500	49/14	1/1	0/1	(Long On Value, \$115,560)	\$374,583	*342	3	0.98	1.16
8	IN SUMMATION (03, Put It Back), Ocala Stud Farm	\$2,500	39/16	1/1	0/1	(Calculator, \$60,000)	\$365,560	136	2	0.88	1.48
9	BURNING ROMA (98, Rubiano), Prestige Stallions	\$6,000	34/11	1/1	0/1	(Sheer Drama, \$168,720)	\$363,682	*177	5	0.87	1.18
10	MONTBROOK (90, Buckaroo)	Died	51/15	0/0	0/0	(Dinner Time, \$31,265)	\$362,831	*882	47	1.51	1.52
11	HIGH COTTON (03, Dixie Union), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	56/15	0/0	0/0	(Tarp's Goal, \$37,040)	\$361,956	*218	4	1.06	1.30
12	KANTHAROS (08, Lion Heart), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	18/5	0/0	0/0	(Papa Upa, \$48,000)	\$316,271	65	1	1.48	1.29
13	COOL COAL MAN (05, Mineshaft), Journeyman Stud	\$3,500	23/7	0/0	0/0	(Competitive Player, \$46,320)	\$193,185	53	1	0.69	1.11
14	FLASHSTORM (04, Storm Cat), Northwest Stud	\$2,500	14/7	0/0	0/0	(Abounding Legacy, \$48,260)	\$191,676	24	0	0.93	1.00
15	INDY WIND (02, A.P. Indy), Journeyman Stud	\$2,000	20/7	0/0	0/0	(Indy Breeze, \$30,590)	\$186,588	55	1	1.10	1.11
16	GREATNESS (99, Mr. Prospector), Prestige Stallions	\$6,000	24/7	0/0	0/0	(Blizzard Buddy Ben, \$28,680)	\$181,283	*224	7	1.44	1.02
17	BENNY THE BULL (03, Lucky Lionel), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,500	19/8	0/0	0/0	(Benny's Bullet, \$42,450)	\$167,209	*138	1	0.97	0.98
18	WEST ACRE (95, Forty Niner)	Died, 2012	14/4	0/0	0/0	(Fast Flying Rumor, \$46,870)	\$157,548	335	13	1.38	1.20
19	WAGON LIMIT (94, Conquistador Cielo), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,000	9/3	1/1	1/1	(Wagon, \$43,690)	\$131,803	190	6	1.31	1.12
20	AWESOME OF COURSE (00, Awesome Again), Journeyman Stud	\$5,000	15/5	0/0	0/0	(Dogwood Trail, \$47,850)	\$127,848	120	6	2.45	1.38
21	CONCORDE'S TUNE (89, Concorde Bound)	Died, 2011	22/6	0/0	0/0	(Grey by You, \$34,047)	\$114,240	486	25	1.25	1.12
22	MACH RIDE (03, Pentelicus), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,000	5/2	1/1	0/1	(Ackeret, \$72,000)	\$95,320	9	1	1.28	1.14
23	SCORPION (98, Seattle Slew)	N/A	10/3	0/0	0/0	(Scorpion Aly, \$39,640)	\$82,730	*126	0	0.80	1.07
24	SPELLBINDER (01, Tale of the Cat), HallMarc Stallions at Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$2,000	9/3	0/0	0/0	(Gryvon, \$48,280)	\$79,561	32	1	1.11	1.14
25	ROCK HAMPTON (04, Storm Cat), Ric Deg Farm	Private	11/3	0/0	0/0	(Get Creative, \$24,500)	\$68,915	30	0	0.51	1.07
26	HELLO BROADWAY (06, Broken Vow), Ups and Downs Farm	\$3,000	11/3	0/0	0/0	(U and Tequila, \$29,030)	\$63,565	18	1	0.99	1.07
27	HEAR NO EVIL (00, Carson City), Journeyman Stud	\$2,500	16/4	0/0	0/0	(Bella Bamba, \$13,600)	\$58,871	92	6	1.82	1.47
28	BOASTFUL (98, Cozzene), Covington Oaks Farm	\$1,000	9/2	0/0	0/0	(Colonel Red, \$19,530)	\$58,384	35	0	0.62	0.94
29	ADMIRAL'S CRUISE (02, A.P. Indy)	Died, 2011	7/2	0/0	0/0	(Crucero, \$24,380)	\$56,230	*75	0	0.63	0.78
30	SARAVA (99, Wild Again)	Pnsd	12/5	0/0	0/0	(Mr Moneypants, \$14,210)	\$55,318	193	2	0.67	1.15
31	KISS THE KID (03, Lemon Drop Kid), Journeyman Stud	\$3,500	7/1	0/0	0/0	(Just Kidding, \$24,890)	\$54,476	26	0	0.45	1.71
32	THE KAISER (95, Tasso)	N/A	3/3	0/0	0/0	(Hey Cuz, \$25,300)	\$48,785	34	0	0.77	0.90
33	LIFESTYLE (00, Indian Charlie)	N/A	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Rambling Richie, \$20,383)	\$44,699	10	1	1.45	1.13
34	AMERICAN SPIRIT (96, Storm Boot), Double Diamond Farm	Private	4/2	0/0	0/0	(Hereshecomesagain, \$33,819)	\$41,252	62	2	0.75	0.85
35	SWEET RETURN (GB) (00, Elmaamul), Ocala Stud Farm	\$3,500	19/1	0/0	0/0	(Gimme Jimmy, \$14,900)	\$41,234	91	0	0.67	0.87
36	INDIAN EXPRESS (00, Indian Charlie)	N/A	7/1	0/0	0/0	(Strongbaksteelties, \$23,730)	\$39,660	35	1	0.86	0.65
37	SPENSIVE (00, Ponche), Y-Lo Racing Stables	\$1,500	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Aces for John, \$26,940)	\$39,105	39	0	0.52	0.81
38	CONSCIENCE CLEAR (97, Relaunch)	N/A	3/3	0/0	0/0	(Lucy's Finale, \$22,040)	\$38,950	51	0	0.83	0.68
39	THE GREEN MONKEY (04, Forestry), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	5/2	0/0	0/0	(Fortyshadesofgreen, \$16,925)	\$33,001	35	3	1.18	1.01
40	WEEKEND CRUISE (97, A.P. Indy)	N/A	6/3	0/0	0/0	(Cruisenforlove, \$9,936)	\$25,910	145	0	0.56	0.78



Steve Crayne

(continued from page 48)

Some coalition members felt they should roll the dice and push for the Senate to vote on the bill anyway, hoping at least two of those undecided would commit.

"The way it works, if you don't have committed votes, they won't even put it on the floor for a vote," said Jack Damico, vice president of the coalition and a Thoroughbred racehorse owner for 35 years. "It was close, but we decided rather than run it up the flagpole and risk failing that we would withdraw and reevaluate what worked and what didn't."

Exceptionally bad winter weather, which dumped several feet of snow all along the East Coast in late winter, did not help the cause. Because of the bad weather, a Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee that passed the bill and put it in position for a full Senate vote had to meet a week later than scheduled. By the time the bill was eligible to be voted on and lobbyists knew where they stood on votes, only two days remained for the legislative session. The clock had run out.

"We don't know what would have happened in the House,"
(continued on page 52)

Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in New York (stallions that are dead or exported prior to 2011 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through April 12, 2015. As supplied to Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., include adjusted money from Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Adjusted earnings are put on par with average North American earnings from the previous year. For example, the average North American purse in 2014 is \$21,617 or 45% of the 2014 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 45% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 19%; Singapore by 54%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled stakes winners worldwide and any S.H.-foaled horses that won a N.H. stakes. *Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ♯ indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).

*AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX and COMPARABLE INDEX: Lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00; COMPARABLE INDEX indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX higher than their mares' COMPARABLE INDEX.

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ISTOCK PHOTO

Atlanta is a sports-crazy town and a melting pot of the South, making it ripe to become a new home for horse racing

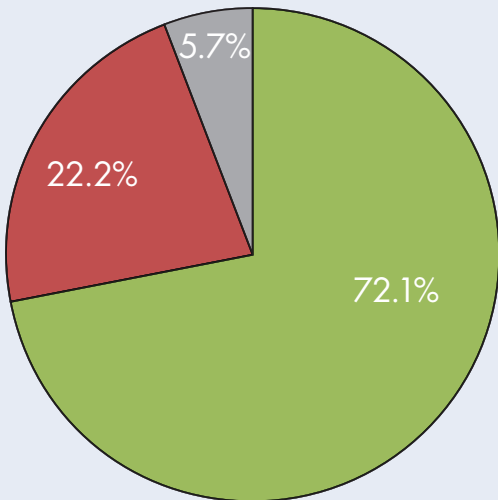
(continued from page 50)

admitted Steve Crayne, executive director for the Georgia Horse Racing Coalition. “But having a week and a half instead of two days could have made a difference. If the Senate had passed it,

then it would have put pressure on the House. With a more broad-range approach and some additional funding, I think we can get this done. A lot of times a bill that just misses one year will come back and pass the next year.”

Damico believes the Peach State is in its best position ever to adopt pari-mutuel wagering.

“Georgia, and in particular Atlanta, is a prime location,” Damico said. “It is (continued on page 54)



Poll Shows Most Georgians Want the Chance to Vote on Pari-Mutuel Wagering

A Landmark Communications poll in February 2012 asked 1,038 Georgia residents whether they supported a statewide voter referendum to allow pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing. The 19-question poll also asked voters about issues that might influence their opinion to support the referendum. Providing revenue for educational programs, the potential creation of jobs and economic development, that no public money would be spent on racetrack development, and a local option for cities and counties to legalize pari-mutuel, were the most influential reasons respondents cited for supporting pari-mutuel wagering.

Total Base 1,038

	GENDER		AGE				RACE		
	Male %	Female %	18-34 %	35-50 %	51-64 %	Over 64 %	African-American %	White %	Other %
■ Georgia should hold a voter referendum	75.4	69.9	71.2	73.4	71.5	72.6	74.5	70.7	75.4
■ Georgia should not hold a voter referendum	20.1	23.7	19.7	20.8	26.5	20.9	16.6	25.5	16.4
■ Undecided	4.5	6.4	9.1	5.8	2.0	6.5	8.9	3.8	8.2



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(continued from page 52)

a fresh palette for a painter. We already have an established Thoroughbred population, and Atlanta is at the crossroads of the south between Florida and Kentucky."

An economic impact study done by Deloitte Touche in 2005 found Georgia had nearly 180,000 horses in the state, more than Louisiana, Maryland, or New Jersey.

"From a regional perspective, Georgia is located within the largest cluster of non-pari-mutuel states in the nation, though we are close enough to major pari-mutuel racing states such as Kentucky, Maryland, New York, and Florida to grab a share of existing race activity," the study stated in a section on regional advantages of adopting pari-mutuel wagering. "One estimate claimed that 170,000 horses travel through Georgia on their way to race in Florida."

Damico and Crayne also both noted that Georgia—and Atlanta in particular—is sports-crazy.

The National Football League's Atlanta Falcons generated \$264 million in revenue in 2014. The Atlanta Braves was the 12th-leading Major League Baseball franchise in 2013 with about \$225 million in revenue, not that far below the St. Louis Cardinals or the Detroit Tigers. In the college realm, the University of Georgia's athletic program also ranks 12th with \$85.5 million in revenue.

Horse racing is part of the sporting landscape as well.

"They get 25,000 people for one day at Atlanta Steeplechase, and they



David Connell

COURTESY COBB COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

cannot even bet," said Damico, of the 49-year-old charity event held April 18.

The Atlanta Steeplechase will run five races offering \$110,000 in total prize money. The card's marquee event is the \$35,000 Budweiser Georgia Cup. Besides Budweiser, the Atlanta Steeplechase is supported by major sponsors such as Coca-Cola, Audi Atlanta, Nationwide, Enghouse Transportation, Deep Eddy Vodka, and Celebrity Cruises. Kingston Downs has been home to the Atlanta Steeplechase since 1994. The course is on 435 acres between Rome and Cartersville, about 70 miles northwest of Atlanta.

Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse races also are conducted with some regularity on a six-furlong dirt track with a 400-yard straightaway at the

SweetWater Horse Track and Training Center near Glenwood, which is midway between Macon and Savannah. The training center holds races on the third Saturday of each month.

Damico is confident the Atlanta metro area will support a world-class Thoroughbred racetrack without any reliance on alternative gaming.

"If you build a great facility—and don't overbuild it—it can work...without a casino," said Damico, who is a certified public accountant and works as a forensic accountant.

"There is a lot of money, there are a lot of owners, and a lot of interest here," he continued. "We will run a boutique meet at first, and we see our meet as complementary to other major meets. When they come south from New York to Florida, they could stop at Atlanta."

From an economic development standpoint, pari-mutuel wagering is attractive because travel and tourism is the second-largest industry in the state, according to David Connell, president and CEO of the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce.

"We look at this as a great economic development issue and a chance to bring a wonderful industry and exciting new sport to our state," Connell said. Cobb County recently lured the home of the Atlanta Braves away from neighboring Fulton County. A new \$672 million stadium is expected to be ready for the 2017 season. While the site of the proposed racetrack has not been selected, Connell said the Cobb County business community has expressed interest.

"We met with some representatives of the industry last year," he said. "We were positive toward the idea of pari-mutuel wagering being adopted in Georgia and even spoke of Cobb County as a potential home for a track. Cobb County has become the host of several national and international sporting events, making us an attractive sports destination."

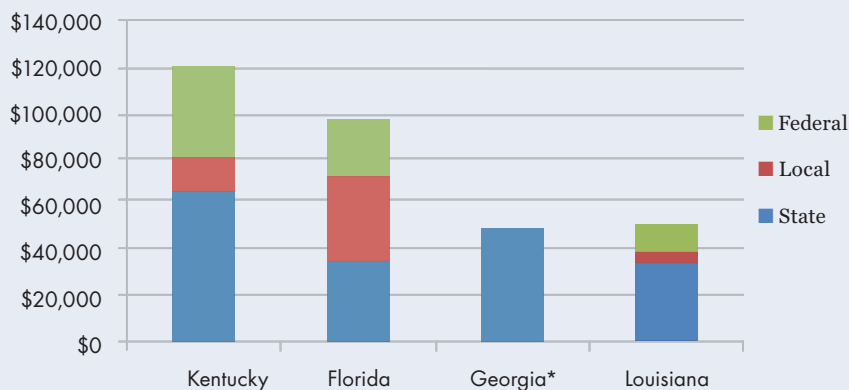
Casinos Not Out of the Mix

An obstacle to legalizing pari-mutuel wagering in Georgia has been a concern about opening a door for casino gaming.

"Some people believe this is the camel's nose under the tent, but that is not our plan," Crayne said. "We are only focused on horse racing, a boutique meet around 20 days of high-quality racing."

To help make its point, the Georgia
(continued on page 56)

Total Equine-Related Taxes Paid to State (\$000s), 2005



*A 2005 study by Deloitte Touche estimated the state taxes that could be generated from pari-mutuel wagering in Georgia by averaging the state taxes generated by Kentucky and Louisiana.

Source: "The Possible Economic Benefits from Instituting Pari-Mutuel Wagering on Horse Races in Georgia," Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies



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(continued from page 54)

Horse Racing Coalition invited Tim Ritvo, president of Gulfstream Park and chief operating officer for The Stronach Group, to testify at a committee hearing.

“Tim came in and stressed The Stronach Group’s philosophy toward its business, which is to emphasize horse racing,” Crayne said. “He testified that they believe gaming actually hurts racing. The only reason Gulfstream Park has slot machines is because there are other racetracks only a stone’s throw away with machines.”

Ironically, some Georgia legislators believe if the state is going to consider expanding the gaming menu that it should go ahead and authorize full-blown casinos.

Republican Rep. Ron Stephens, of Savannah and chairman of the House Economic Development and Tourism Committee, has pre-filed a bill that would create a constitutional amendment legalizing casino gambling. To become law, it also requires voter approval. The key incentive behind the casino



Jack Damico with daughter

bill, as with the effort behind pari-mutuel wagering, is to generate money for the state’s HOPE Scholarship program and provide pre-K funding. The HOPE program provides financial assistance to Georgia students so they can attend an eligible public or private college or university.

Stephens suggested in a report published on ValdostaToday.com that the revenue from a single “destination” casino would earn the state more than \$250 million a year. What is envisioned is the approval of up to six resort casinos regulated by the Georgia Lottery that would generate more than \$1 billion annually, according to Stephens.

As of now, pari-mutuel wagering has not been included in Stephens’ casino bill though some reports have suggested it might be added later.

Damico said it is too early to assess how Stephens’ bill might affect the coalition’s efforts next year.

“I think they have a steeper hill to climb,” Damico said of casino gaming’s supporters. “We have been warned to stay away from offering a casino at the track. I don’t know if we would be in-

cluded in that (bill), but it is not part of our model. How (the casino bill) plays into ours, I don’t know.”

Gambling in general has always been a tough sell in Georgia. Going back as far as the early 1800s, the only legal form of gambling consistently allowed has been some form of a lottery. In 1823 Georgia created its first lottery to finance county schools, according to a study that appeared in the *Southern Medical Journal* in 2000. The article, entitled “Gambling in the South: Implications for Physicians,” documents a seesaw of acceptance and prohibition throughout the southern states up to the early 1970s.

Today Georgia only permits three forms of gambling—the state lottery, bingo, and raffles. When the Georgia Lottery was approved in 1992, one of the concessions toward making that happen was a constitutional ban on pari-mutuel wagering, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Attitudes toward gaming have changed significantly since then.

A poll conducted by Landmark Communications in February 2012 showed 72% of 1,038 people surveyed supported allowing voters the opportunity to approve pari-mutuel wagering. Of the Georgia residents polled, 60% identified themselves as either very conservative or somewhat conservative with largely favorable opinions of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I) and the Breeders’ Cup World Championships, even though 54% said they had never visited a racetrack.

“There is a different demographic here,” said Damico. “Atlanta has become more of a melting pot of the South, and Georgians are more accepting because it really is a sports-crazy state and a sports-crazy town. We feel there are new people in town who may have been exposed to racing in other places and have enjoyed it. They have a different attitude now.”

So despite this year’s setback, Damico has not lost any optimism that Georgia will adopt pari-mutuel wagering and become a home to high-quality horse racing.

“We have the raw materials, we have the grass, we have the weather. There is a lot of interest in Atlanta; it is just an ideal location,” he said. **BH**

2015 FLORIDA SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Wildcat Heir	155	50
With Distinction	122	34
Exclusive Quality	75	21
Pollard’s Vision	66	18
Magna Graduate	42	17
In Summation	39	16
High Cotton	56	15
Montbrook	51	15
Value Plus	49	14
Two Step Salsa	35	11
Burning Roma	34	11
Benny the Bull	19	8
Greatness	24	7
Cool Coal Man	23	7
Indy Wind	20	7
Flashstorm	14	7
Concorde’s Tune	22	6
Kantharos	18	5
Awesome of Course	15	5
Sarava	12	5
Hear No Evil	16	4
West Acre	14	4
Hello Broadway	11	3
Rock Hampton	11	3
Scorpion	10	3
Spellbinder	9	3
Wagon Limit	9	3
Weekend Cruise	6	3
Conscience Clear	3	3
The Kaiser	3	3

2015 FLORIDA SIRES BY STAKES WINNERS

Sire	SWnrs	SWns
Exclusive Quality	2	2
Wildcat Heir	2	2
With Distinction	2	2
Burning Roma	1	1
In Summation	1	1
Mach Ride	1	1
Magna Graduate	1	1
Two Step Salsa	1	1
Value Plus	1	1
Wagon Limit	1	1

Groomed for Success . . .

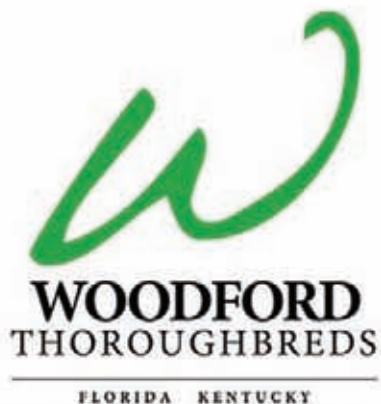
'The Woodford Way'

Yearlings Consigned and Sold:

- ▶ Highest-priced LOOKIN AT LUCKY of the year, \$490K ('13 KEE/SEP)
KENTUCKY DERBY CONTENDER ONE LUCKY DANE
- ▶ INDIAN CHARLIE, \$460K ('13 KEE/SEP)
KENTUCKY OAKS CONTENDER SILVERPOCKETSFULL
- ▶ Highest-priced CONGRATS filly of the year, \$300K ('13 FT/SAR)
- ▶ Highest-priced BLAME, \$200K ('13 FT/SAR)
- ▶ Second highest-priced PIONEEROF THE NILE, \$220K ('12 KEE/SEP)
- ▶ Second highest-priced WARRIOR'S REWARD, \$150K ('14 OBS/AUG)
- ▶ Co-highest priced TIZWAY of the year, \$425K ('14 FT/SAR)
- ▶ Filly by MEDAGLIA D'ORO, \$650K ('12 FT/SAR)

Other Sale Graduates include:

- ▶ SOLD - second-highest-priced CONGRATS filly, \$260K ('14 OBS/APR)
- ▶ SOLD - Co-session topper ('13 OBS/JUN), PIONEEROF THE NILE filly, \$90K
- ▶ SOLD - select session-topping weanling by LOOKIN AT LUCKY, \$87K and session-topping broodmare, Moored, I/F to CROWN OF THORNS, \$57K ('14 OBS/OCT)
- ▶ SOLD - highest-priced SIDNEY'S CANDY weanling of the year, \$200K and highest-priced BIONDETTI weanling of the year, \$150K ('14 KEE/NOV)
- ▶ PURCHASED - **STOPCHARGINGMARIA (G1)**, \$1,564,000 as a yearling for \$47K and pinhooked for \$220K ('13 OBS/MAR)
- ▶ CONSIGNED - **QUALITY ROCKS (G3)**, \$245,200 at '13 OBS/AUG



Sale entry deadlines:
Fasig-Tipton — The Saratoga Sale
(Closing May 1)
Keeneland September
(Closing May 1)
OBS Open Sale of Yearlings
(Closing June 5)



Now accepting
candidates for upcoming
yearling sales