



Matthew Schera, left, with NYRA's Tony Allevato at Saratoga

ANNE M. EBERHARDT

GLORIOUS FORECAST

Matthew Schera reaches for the sky with Glorious Empire

BY BOB EHALT

WHENEVER MATTHEW SCHERA and his family visit Aqueduct Racetrack, they always make use of the clubhouse entrance.

There, as they walk in, they are flanked by parallel rows of jockey statues, each painted with the colors of some of the New York Racing Association's most renowned owners.

Two pay tribute to famed owners Alfred G. Vanderbilt and Ogden Phipps.

Others honor New York's leading owners for the calendar year.

In that group, in a statement that says as much about the owners' accomplishments as Aqueduct's state of disrepair, you will find the silks of New York's top 10 owners in 2016, and there next to the silks of the world-famous Godolphin Racing stands a statue with Schera's light blue and yellow colors.

"My three daughters (Allison, Alexis, and Jessica) love seeing that statue and taking pictures next to it," said Schera,

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2018 LEADING SIRES IN PENNSYLVANIA



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2018 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2018 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	WARRIOR'S REWARD (06, Medaglia d'Oro), WynOaks Farm	\$4,500	220/116	10/13	3/10	(Axelrod, \$710,080)	\$5,528,376	*459	16	1.09	1.37
2	JUMP START (99, A.P. Indy), Northview PA	\$10,000	164/94	6/6	3/6	(Renaissance Rosie, \$180,923)	\$5,446,544	*1369	47	1.43	1.29
3	WEIGELIA (01, Safely's Mark), WynOaks Farm	\$3,500	43/29	2/2	2/2	(Smooth B, \$214,778)	\$1,937,571	*112	7	1.50	1.02
4	DUBLIN (07, Afleet Alex), Mohns Hill Farm	Private	71/37	0/0	0/0	(Dr Blarney, \$188,570)	\$1,781,228	172	2	1.06	1.18
5	SMARTY JONES (01, Elusive Quality), Equistar Training and Breeding	\$3,500	76/39	2/2	1/2	(Midnight Poker, \$129,830)	\$1,643,967	*726	26	1.43	1.78
6	EL PADRINO (09, Pulpit)	Died, 2017	45/25	1/2	0/1	(Whereshetoldmetogo, \$231,320)	\$1,493,215	107	1	1.37	1.28
7	FAIRBANKS (03, Giant's Causeway)	Pnsd	47/19	1/1	0/1	(One Go All Go, \$363,550)	\$1,131,177	228	3	1.05	1.22
8	SILVER TRAIN (02, Old Trieste)	Died, 2013	63/31	0/0	0/0	(Devine Dental, \$131,370)	\$997,361	*539	12	0.99	1.26
9	TALENT SEARCH (03, Catienus), Diamond B Farm	\$2,500	49/25	0/0	0/0	(Tara's Talent, \$100,510)	\$992,534	*145	2	1.01	1.21
10	UPTOWNCHARLYBROWN (07, Limehouse), Diamond B Farm	\$4,500	16/11	2/2	0/2	(Dixie Serenade, \$221,750)	\$937,903	27	2	1.16	0.78
11	LORD SHANAKILL (06, Speightstown), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$3,500	72/30	2/2	0/2	(Time Shanakill, \$121,460)	\$912,086	188	3	1.12	0.92
12	BULLSBAY (04, Tiznow), Northview PA	\$3,000	33/18	0/0	0/0	(Dancing Bull, \$97,700)	\$844,928	73	3	1.30	1.22
13	CROWN OF THORNS (05, Repent), Equistar Training and Breeding	\$2,000	29/16	1/1	1/1	(Swagger Jagger, \$92,319)	\$679,293	52	1	0.86	1.08
14	FLASHBACK (10, Tapit), Diamond B Farm	\$3,500	33/11	0/0	0/0	(Boujie Girl, \$105,600)	\$554,389	90	0	0.80	1.32
15	CAL NATION (08, Distorted Humor), Kingfisher Lane Farm	\$2,500	24/10	0/0	0/0	(Pal Cal, \$98,174)	\$540,100	45	0	1.03	1.19
16	MEDALLIST (01, Touch Gold), Northview PA	\$2,000	22/7	0/0	0/0	(Hashtag Selfie, \$100,758)	\$539,886	198	7	1.27	1.33
17	RIMROD (00, Danzig), Castle Rock Farm	\$1,500	17/9	0/0	0/0	(Checkbouncin Billy, \$161,950)	\$519,443	111	2	1.27	1.14
18	MAD FLATTER (05, Flatter)	Died, 2016	27/12	0/0	0/0	(Abuela Loca, \$74,823)	\$435,126	44	0	0.81	1.34
19	ALBERT THE GREAT (97, Go for Gin)	Pnsd	22/9	1/1	1/1	(She's Chubs, \$78,814)	\$378,590	*410	9	1.11	1.11
20	GOT THE LAST LAUGH (04, Distorted Humor), Diamond B Farm	\$2,500	12/8	0/0	0/0	(Grady, \$102,320)	\$369,929	51	0	1.23	1.14

who finished in a tie for the 10th spot with 17 winners at New York Racing Association tracks that year. "It's amazing that it's there with New York's biggest stables, and I'm sure most people wouldn't expect to see our stable there. I'm an underdog in this sport. I'm not a typical owner. I'm not a billionaire. I'm really a blue-collar-type person, even if my job says otherwise. The great part about horse racing is that anything is possible."

In a sport where fantasy and reality can merge, Schera and his family are already counting down the months until that summer day when the circle of jockey statues in front of Saratoga Racetrack are re-painted with the silks of the owners whose horses

captured the Spa's 2018 grade 1 stakes.

Like Aqueduct, Schera's colors will be on display at the Spa for all to see in celebration of Glorious Empire, who provided Schera his first grade 1 victory.

"My wife (Janine) and I can't wait to take our daughters' picture in front of that statue," the 43-year-old Greenwich, Conn., resident said. "I want to know when it's painted so I can take the picture as quickly as possible."

The statue will commemorate Schera's most treasured moment in a relatively brief, yet highly successful involvement in horse racing.

For a stable new to the spotlight, it was rather fitting that its initial grade 1 win

came courtesy of Glorious Empire, a then-7-year-old gelding who raced in an allowance optional claiming race just two starts before. On the grand stage of the Aug. 25 Travers Day card at the Spa, the Irish-bred son of Holy Roman Emperor posted a 1¼-length victory in the \$1 million Sword Dancer Stakes (G1T) to give both Schera and trainer James "Chuck" Lawrence II their initial victory in a grade 1 stakes.

"I'm still riding the wave with Glorious Empire," Schera said. "I'm still on Cloud Nine. It sounds strange to say that a horse can make you a happier person every day, but I'm so happy about everything. It's everything I wanted when I got into the game. I had a vision of having a champion who was not a million-dollar yearling. It feels so good."

Schera's emotions mirror a bona fide feel-good story about a gelding whose career was put on hold a few times because of bleeding eventually becoming an Eclipse Award candidate, rewarding a trainer for his patient care of the animal and an owner for acting in the best interests of his horses, even when their career is at an end.

"He has a heart of gold," Lawrence said about Schera. "There are not too many people like him left in the game."

For someone who bought his first horse in 2013, Schera possesses a level of love and concern for his horses that far exceeds his limited time in the sport.

It could be found two years ago, when he saw that Mav, a horse he previously



SKIP DICKSTEIN

Schera's Glorious Empire winning last summer's Sword Dancer at Saratoga

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2018 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2018 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative Sits Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	FREUD (98, Storm Cat), Sequel Stallions New York	\$7,500	154/68	7/11	2/7	(Fourstar Crook, \$931,400)	\$5,540,058	*1228	51	1.56	1.24
2	BELLAMY ROAD (02, Concerto), Irish Hill & Dutchess Views Stallions	\$5,000	169/87	5/7	2/5	(Diversify, \$1,190,000)	\$4,731,261	*630	31	1.20	1.17
3	FROST GIANT (03, Giant's Causeway), Irish Hill & Dutchess Views Stallions	\$2,500	125/64	4/4	4/4	(Giant Expectations, \$725,900)	\$3,673,100	*412	13	1.20	1.27
4	MISSION IMPAZIBLE (07, Unbridled's Song), Sequel Stallions New York	\$7,500	84/48	3/3	3/3	(Starlite Mission, \$179,635)	\$2,758,671	144	5	1.30	1.10
5	BIG BROWN (05, Boundary), Irish Hill & Dutchess Views Stallions	\$5,000	142/61	2/3	0/2	(Somelikeithotbrown, \$201,813)	\$2,543,004	*722	21	1.07	1.52
6	COURAGEOUS CAT (06, Storm Cat), Questroyal North	\$2,500	104/52	4/5	3/4	(Unbridledadventure, \$192,083)	\$2,370,242	195	5	1.00	1.12
7	DESERT PARTY (06, Street Cry), Irish Hill Century Farm	\$3,000	95/53	2/2	2/2	(Orchid Party, \$152,305)	\$2,133,113	226	6	0.95	1.36
8	BUSTIN STONES (04, City Zip), Waldorf Farm	\$5,000	78/48	1/1	1/1	(Fair Regis, \$172,175)	\$2,044,262	199	7	1.30	1.38
9	BOYS AT TOSCONOVA (08, Officer), Questroyal North	\$2,500	36/24	2/3	2/2	(Playinwiththeboys, \$153,650)	\$1,308,817	62	2	1.33	1.22
10	DISCO RICO (97, Citidancer)	Died, 2014	26/13	1/2	0/1	(Disco Partner, \$467,250)	\$1,095,193	268	12	1.40	1.20
11	CENTRAL BANKER (10, Speightstown), McMahon of Saratoga Tbreeds	\$7,500	36/10	2/4	2/2	(Bankit, \$329,625)	\$1,023,308	73	2	1.22	1.26
12	TEUFLESBERG (04, Johannesburg), McMahon of Saratoga Tbreeds	\$5,000	41/17	0/0	0/0	(Beautiful Buzz, \$93,888)	\$745,129	130	4	1.30	1.10
13	D' FUNNYBONE (07, D'wildcat)	N/A	34/19	0/0	0/0	(Wegetsdamunnys, \$88,770)	\$726,668	*77	2	1.07	1.25
14	SOARING EMPIRE (07, Empire Maker)	Died	29/15	0/0	0/0	(Reason to Soar, \$110,675)	\$717,496	56	0	0.95	1.11
15	COSMONAUT (02, Lemon Drop Kid)	Pnsd	31/14	2/2	2/2	(Kreesie, \$168,608)	\$662,619	97	4	1.02	1.04
16	NOBLE CAUSEWAY (02, Giant's Causeway)	Died, 2014	33/8	1/3	1/1	(Altissimo, \$320,875)	\$641,819	244	10	0.79	1.03
17	FORTY TALES (10, Tale of the Cat), McMahon of Saratoga Tbreeds	\$3,000	25/10	0/0	0/0	(Transistor, \$120,751)	\$568,962	*57	0	0.91	1.19
18	GIANT SURPRISE (09, Giant's Causeway), Rockridge Stud	\$3,500	19/11	0/0	0/0	(Sudden Surprise, \$108,540)	\$518,320	49	2	1.73	1.25
19	HERE'S ZEALOUS (97, Dehere), Kaz Hill Farm	\$1,000	17/12	0/0	0/0	(Mighty Zealous, \$136,964)	\$430,609	193	1	1.06	0.94
20	BANK HEIST (07, Maria's Mon)	N/A	22/11	0/0	0/0	(Merger of Banks, \$63,580)	\$392,948	44	1	0.93	1.34

owned, was claimed for \$30,000 but was vanned off after finishing fourth at 2-5 odds in a Jan. 27, 2017, race at Fair Grounds Race Course & Slots. With Lawrence's help, Schera reached out to trainer Joe Sharp and purchased Mav so that he could be retired and given a new home away from the racetrack.

There was a similar tale a few months ago when Syntax, one of five horses Schera races in California with trainer Phil D'Amato, went into a tailspin. A grade 3 winner earlier in his career, Syntax finished sixth in the Charles Whittingham Stakes (G2T) at Santa Anita May 26. D'Amato advised dropping the then-6-year-old into a claimer, but Schera had a different idea.

"Syntax started going the wrong way for us and we knew he could not compete at a high level anymore. Instead of running him for a tag, Matt loves his horses so much that he retired him, and we're working to get him a second career as a pleasure horse or a dressage horse for some lucky person," D'Amato said.

"If there's something that will benefit his horses, be it rest or therapy, he'll do it. He wants to do what's right for the horse. He's into each and every horse and what's best



Schera with his wife, Janine, and daughters, from left, Alexis, Allison, and Jessica

for them. If a horse needs time, he's the first one to say give it to them. He's a great person to work with. He always puts the horse first, and he's been rewarded for it."

Glorious Empire has surely been a reward for Schera. He won four of six starts in 2018, featuring wins in the Sword Dancer and Ft. Lauderdale Stakes (G2T) at Gulfstream Park and a dead-heat for first in the Bowling Green Stakes (G2T) at Saratoga. Since Schera claimed the speedy gelding as a 6-year-old for \$62,500 May 7,

2017, at Belmont Park, he has earned more than 10 times his purchase price, amassing earnings of more than \$800,000, with \$767,830 of it coming in 2018.

"I said, 'Wow,' the first few times I galloped him," said Lawrence, a former steeplechase rider. "The horse has incredible talent and speed. He's matured and everything has clicked. In the Sword Dancer and Ft. Lauderdale, he just floated over the course."

Schera's expectations for Glorious Empire were limited at best when he claimed him through trainer Carlos Martin. The gelding bled while finishing 12th in that \$62,500 claimer and the best option for the Pennsylvania native seemed to be cutting his financial losses and running his new acquisition in a significantly cheaper claimer.

Instead, Schera decided to give Glorious Empire about two months off and received a quick dividend for his patience when the gelding romped by 7½ lengths in a \$50,000 claimer at Saratoga.

Two starts later, Glorious Empire bled in the 2017 Baltimore/Washington International Turf Cup Stakes (G2T) at Laurel Park and Schera gave serious consider-

Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the states featured in this section (stallions that are dead or exported prior to 2014 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through December 31, 2018. As supplied to *BloodHorse* by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., lists 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 2017 is \$22,593 or 47% of the 2017 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 47% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 15%; Singapore by 68%. Current year stakes winners include all Northern Hemisphere black-type stakes results from all available countries. *Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners include all countries.

*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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Race Day winning the grade 2 Oaklawn Handicap in 2015

ation to retiring him. Instead, he shipped the gelding to Lawrence's barn at Fair Hill (Maryland) for a last chance at reviving his career.

"I warned Chuck that if Glorious Empire bled one more time, I would retire him," Schera said.

With Lawrence using long gallops in the Maryland woods to relax Glorious Empire and give his lungs the proper time to heal, Glorious Empire returned to the races in 2018 in career-best form. After holding on for a dead-heat victory at 22-1 in the Bowling Green in his third start at 7, Schera leaned toward running him in a

high-priced claimer.

"Who was going to claim him at his age and his history of bleeding?" Schera recalled.

But Lawrence convinced him to remain in graded stakes company and the underdog saga continued when Glorious Empire recorded an unforgettable, front-running victory at 15-1 in the Sword Dancer.

"It was a huge accomplishment for us," Lawrence said. "When you get a horse like him, it shows that there are indeed diamonds in the rough."

Glorious Empire then finished 13th and last in the Longines Breeders' Cup Turf

(G1T) after setting a relatively quick pace on the deep inside portion of Churchill Downs' turf course, but bounced back into the Eclipse Award picture with a convincing 2½-length win in the Dec. 15 Ft. Lauderdale against a solid field.

There were thoughts of returning in the \$7 million Pegasus World Cup Turf Invitational (G1T) Jan. 26 at Gulfstream, but the gelding emerged from the Ft. Lauderdale with an ankle injury that is expected to sideline him until the summer. In the meantime, Schera is hopeful a majority of Eclipse Award voters will back Glorious Empire in what is expected to be a tight race for the male turf championship.

"I couldn't put what an Eclipse Award would mean to me into words," Schera said. "It would mean so much, not just to me, but to Chuck and his grooms and the whole staff. I'd be thrilled if he wins, but those are the guys that did the great work with him, and I just hope it helps Chuck's business."

Owning an Eclipse Award candidate was just a daydream when Schera bought his first horse in 2013. A portfolio manager for Tudor Investment Corp. in Greenwich, Schera was introduced to the sport as a teenager growing up in Berks County when he visited Penn National with his family.

In 2013 he bought two yearlings for roughly \$400,000. The first was Cat Fif-

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1st Wood Memorial S.-G2 by 3 1/2 lengths
(101 Beyer) defeating Cloud Computing
2nd Belmont S.-G1 by 2 lengths, after
setting a pressured pace to 1/16th pole
- AT 4** **1st Pimlico Special S.-G3** by 4 1/2 lengths



By CURLIN

Sire of Eight GSWs in 2018, including Haskell S.-G1 winner and Champion GOOD MAGIC; Jim Dandy S.-G2 winner TENFOLD, Wood Memorial S.-G2 winner VINO ROSSO, and Ruffian S.-G2 winner PACIFIC WIND

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2018 LEADING SIRES IN MARYLAND



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2018 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2018 Earnings	2018 Foals	Cumulative Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	GREAT NOTION (00, Elusive Quality), Northview Stallion Station	\$5,000	99/58	9/12	6/9	(Ruby Notion, \$316,380)	\$3,767,922	313	21	1.53	1.22
2	FRIESAN FIRE (06, A.P. Indy), Country Life Farm	\$4,000	102/58	4/6	1/4	(Call Paul, \$279,500)	\$3,294,658	176	5	1.23	1.27
3	NOT FOR LOVE (90, Mr. Prospector)	Died, 2016	71/39	0/0	0/0	(No More Talk, \$114,333)	\$1,666,855	975	81	1.65	1.43
4	ORIENTATE (98, Mt. Livermore)	Pnsd	65/37	0/0	0/0	(Sonic Boom E Jet, \$105,262)	\$1,518,717	*834	32	1.23	1.58
5	STREET MAGICIAN (04, Street Cry), Legacy Farm Stallions Standing at Roland Farm	\$3,000	59/29	0/0	0/0	(Up Hill Battle, \$86,803)	\$1,442,382	127	3	1.13	1.30
6	REDEEMED (08, Include), Northview Stallion Station	\$3,000	42/22	0/0	0/0	(Friday Mass, \$125,592)	\$1,069,440	76	0	1.04	1.07
7	FREEDOM CHILD (10, Malibu Moon), Country Life Farm	\$2,500	27/18	2/2	1/2	(Limited View, \$89,750)	\$908,836	55	2	1.45	1.39
8	PETIONVILLE (92, Seeking the Gold)	N/A	51/28	0/0	0/0	(Graves Island, \$96,416)	\$882,259	*741	42	1.26	1.25
9	DESPITE THE ODDS (06, Speightstown)	N/A	26/17	0/0	0/0	(Odds On, \$63,410)	\$596,340	49	0	0.94	1.25
10	TRITAP (09, Tapit)	Died, 2016	17/10	1/1	1/1	(Belial, \$119,169)	\$591,049	30	1	1.50	1.46

tifive, a Virginia-bred son of Tale of the Cat purchased for \$185,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga select yearling sale who earned \$87,980 in his career. He also partnered on a \$400,000 yearling who never raced. But his interest gained momentum in 2014 when he paid \$280,000 to acquire Race Day in a private purchase and trainer Todd Pletcher won a trio of graded stakes with him the following year.

“When I hit it big with Race Day and sold him to Spendthrift Farm as a stallion, I felt like it was an easy game. I went in big,” said Schera, who had about 70 horses at one point. “When I sold him, I got too big, too quick, and got too aggressive.”

While Schera won 111 races and took in about \$6 million in earnings during 2015-16, he found himself in the red due to training bills and an expenditure of several million at sales for yearlings and 2-year-olds,

and decided to chart a new course.

“I started looking at the results,” said Schera, whose career totals are 179 wins from 1,086 starts with earnings of \$10,014,385 and 10 graded stakes wins through Jan. 2, 2019. “I was getting killed with the yearlings. I can’t sugarcoat it. It started not being fun anymore in 2016. At the start of 2017, I told my trainers that we need to be profitable. I could still enjoy handicapping races and being a fan. I didn’t have to be an owner, so I started cutting down.”

With a core group of five trainers, Schera now has a stable of 35, comprised mostly of claimers, private purchases, and homebreds from his four mares in Virginia and says he’s operating in the black.

It’s a comfortable financial climate for him that matches his line of work. Schera has made a name for himself in financial circles by using his lifelong interest in me-

teology to make commodity trades based on weather patterns. Aside from funding his involvement in horse racing, his unique profession has made him indirectly famous on a different front. As fans of the hit NBC drama “This Is Us” will note, Randall Pearson, one of the show’s main characters, had a job that was very similar to Schera’s.

It’s not a coincidence. A trader who works with Schera has a friend who is a writer for the show and was intrigued by their work.

“Yeah, Randall is based on us,” Schera said.

So don’t be surprised in future episodes if Randall claims a horse and wins a \$1 million race with him. If they are borrowing pages from Matthew Schera’s life, it’s definitely in the script. **BH**

Veteran Turfwriter Bob Ehalt writes for America’s Best Racing.

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