



MEDIA RELEASE

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Assiniboia Downs marks new direction with open house on Sunday

Assiniboia Downs will hold an open house Sunday to embrace local fans while, at the same time, marking a new direction in the 51-year history of the track.

As general manager Sharon Gulyas put it, Assiniboia Downs wants to say "welcome back" to local fans as it changes its traditional race days and embarks on an aggressive campaign to sell its racing product to race fans throughout North America and to corporate Winnipeg.

To make its races more recognizable at U.S. tracks, the Downs has simplified its name to ASD. And the track has embarked on a marketing program in which everyone is urged to remember WEDFRISAT as a "fun password." WEDFRISAT refers to Wednesday, Friday and Saturday when racing begins at 7 p.m. Traditional Sunday afternoon racing was replaced with Wednesday evenings because that's a night in which many other racetracks signed up to "buy" Assiniboia's races to show at their tracks. The Downs will also add Tuesday racing through most of June and all of July. The only 1 p.m. afternoon cards will be opening day--Mother's Day Sunday, May 10--and on all the holidays: Victoria Day, Canada Day, August Civic holiday and Labour Day.

"We believe we'll see a spike in our betting pools with our new schedule," said general manager Sharon Gulyas. "It's a new world out there and we're responding to it. At the same time, we're throwing a big open house party to say "welcome back" to the fans that have been supporting us all these years--and to kick off our 51st season in grand style. "

Normally restricted areas of the track will be thrown wide open at the open house Sunday, which lasts from noon to 4 p.m. There will be visits to the stables, to the press box and to the jockey's quarters. Patrons will receive \$40 in play money to bet actual training races and be eligible for valuable prizes. They'll get to meet jockeys and trainers and get the scoop on specialized horse equipment. The first

1,000 will receive a free hot dog, bag of chips and canned drink. Kids will be able to enjoy a petting farm pony rides and bouncy inflatables. Admission and parking are free as always.

"We just want everyone to come out and have a great time--and see what makes a race track tick," Gulyas said.

Saturday will be special, too, because it's Kentucky Derby day. The Downs will be giving away 250 souvenir Derby glasses at the track and at off-track betting sites throughout the city.

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