



MEDIA RELEASE

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Opener is a close one!

One of the biggest opening day crowds in the recent history of Assiniboia Downs, with more than 4000 race fans on hand, enjoyed a nailbiter in the first. It came down to a whisker to determine the winner of the first race of the 2009 season.

Inspeightofsuccess nosed out Northern Promise in the final strides to claim the Don Gray Memorial, the traditional first race of the year, for trainer Carl Anderson and owners Lambert, Matthews and Hill.

Sitting in behind early leader Black Iris, both Inspeightofsuccess and Northern Promise were able to run down the New York invader in mid-stretch and battled down to the wire. Northern Promise, trained by newcomer to Assiniboia Downs and former Alberta trainer, Don Schnell, almost got the job done, but lost the head bob in the final strides.

Black Iris, trained by Clayton Gray, set quick early fractions going into the homestretch but could not hold off the final charge of the winners.

Best opening day since 1990's

"We haven't seen such a successful opening day since the 1990's," says general manager Sharon Gulyas. "The huge crowd at the open house last Sunday with almost 2000 people in attendance and now this, gives the impression of a resurgence of interest in live racing."

Wagering was up 19 percent over opening day of 2008. Great weather and a sold out Mother's Day brunch created the "perfect crowd" at the track. And the horse racing did not disappoint with a competitive afternoon on all fronts.

Competitive Jockey Colony sets the stage

The grandstand was buzzing about the depth of the 2009 jockey colony. It was made evident to the impressive Mother's Day crowd with no one jockey outshining the other. Gary Baze, in his first season at Assiniboia Downs, captured two on the day with back to back winners, Wonforrosie and City Celebrity.

The three-time leading rider Alan Cuthbertson captured his first of the season in the third aboard Fourth Top trained by Clint Willson. Cuthbertson will be attempting to capture his fourth straight riding title in 2009.

Members of the Bajan Invasion, Rocco Bowen and Renaldo Cumberbatch won the first two races and Larren Delorme, Rohan Singh and David Lopez each captured one win as well.

Ardell Sayler gets his first of 2009.

Nine-time leading trainer Ardell Sayler was one of eight different trainers to capture a win on opening day 2009. Ardell will be going for a record-setting ten training titles at Assiniboia Downs. Time to Act in the seventh got the South Dakota trainer on the board opening day.

Allan Gray
Media & Promotions Coordinator
Assiniboia Downs
3975 Portage Ave
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2K 2E9
Phone: (204)885-3330 ext. 206
Fax: (204)831-5348
agray@assiniboiodowns.com