



# MEDIA RELEASE

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Assiniboia Downs  
May 7, 2009

## **Opening day: Will one brother honour another brother's memory?**

Will trainer Clayton Gray get the chance to honour his brother's memory by winning the Don Gray Memorial Purse, the first race on opening day?



He appears to have a top contender: Black Iris, a Kentucky purchase from the dispersal sale of a major horse owner, J. Mack Robinson, who was hit hard by a big bank failure in the U.S.

Don Gray, from Dominion City, passed away suddenly Christmas Day in 1993 at the age of 57. At the time of his passing he was the all-time leading trainer in Winnipeg with 879 wins. He trained 34 years at Assiniboia Downs and currently sits second in the all-time trainer standing. Gary Danelson sits first with 1074 wins in 49 seasons.

The 2009 edition of the Don Gray Memorial is a maiden allowance race for 3-year-old fillies going five furlongs.

Black Iris has started twice in her career – at Belmont Park and Aqueduct in New York. Dueling for the lead in both tries, she faded in the stretch each time.

Another prime contender figures to be Northern Promise, trained by newcomer Don Schnell, from Turf Paradise. Having last run in mid-April, Northern Promise finished a close second in a maiden claiming 5 ½ furlong event. Fitness could be this horse's edge.

Don Gray's primary owner, K5 Stable, will also have strong representation. Two of the six are owned and bred by Phil Kives – impressively-bred Glory Command and Regal Forest.

Trained by Emile Corbel, both fillies participated in last weeks open house training races to get a tightener. Last year as a 2-year-old, Glory Command finished a close second in open company and a distant third in the one mile Buffalo Stakes for Manitoba-breds.

## **Cinderella story 2008 – Prince Charming of 2009?**

2008 Sprinter of the Year, Rock'n USA, has had a career that has read like a fairy tale.

Trainer Tanya Lindsay could not even find anyone willing to pony up \$4,500 to take a chance on the potential she saw. "There was just something in his eye that told me I had to take a chance," said Lindsay. So she scraped together the cash with her mother and horse farrier Marvin Burnett and she bought him herself.

Lindsay is now sitting with one of the best sprinters Assiniboia Downs has seen, winning five straight races and almost \$50,000. "Last year we had no expectations of him. He was in awful shape when we got him," explained Lindsay. "We only hoped he would win a race or two."



2009 has the makings of continued success. "He is way better this year than last year." If all goes well, Rock'n USA will make his first appearance next week and have a date with the Free Press Stakes in June.

## **Assiniboia Downs lands spot on TVG.com**

As a result of the bold move to discontinue Sunday afternoon racing and replace it with Wednesday evenings, Assiniboia Downs, or ASD as it now is known, will appear on TVG.com.

TVG, one of America's leaders in televising horseracing, is making room for Assiniboia Downs at the request of several customers. Who are they? That is not known but the small Canadian track is glad it will be given the opportunity for this kind of exposure and will certainly run with it.