



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Handle at Assiniboia Downs soars almost 30%



The switch by Assiniboia Downs from Sunday racing to Wednesday racing has proven to be an unqualified success. The track showed a huge 29.2 per race increase in handle despite five fewer race days. The 63-day meet ended Sunday.

The mutuel handle increased \$2 million. This year's handle was \$8.8 million compared to last year's \$6.8 million.

"We were confident we would see an increase," general manager Sharon Gulyas said, "but this definitely exceeded our expectations."

Assiniboia Downs changed from Sunday racing to Wednesday racing to attract more wagering from bettors at other North American tracks. There is less competition for the wagering dollar on Wednesday compared to Sundays.

This year's schedule was Wednesday-Friday-Saturday compared to last year's Friday-Saturday-Sunday.

For example, last Wednesday's handle was \$238,000 compared to an average Sunday handle last year of \$92,000

Such increases in the industry are virtually unheard of, especially in these more difficult economic times. U.S. tracks have generally reported declines in handle, some as substantial as 25 per cent.

Patron surveys have shown the majority of those who attended on Sundays in previous years have been coming on Wednesdays and many said they found it "better than expected."

Local bettors have appreciated the larger pools, too, because that has meant larger payoffs. One large bettor said he was betting up to \$200 on a horse this season at the Downs compared to only \$50 last year when the pools were smaller.



Live racing may be over but big-league racing from major race tracks in North America and Australia continues every single day in the Race Book at the race track, at off-track betting outlets and at home on cable TV (Shaw 87, MTS 179-180).

Special dining themes on Thursday nights, daily VLT play and regular trade shows, including the very popular "Scattered Seeds" show in October and the "Love & Romance Expo" in November will add to the entertainment.

The "horseplayer of the year" has yet to be crowned. That person will earn a trip to Las Vegas to compete in a rich horseplayer contest.

The biggest and richest racing event of the year, the Breeders' Cup World Championships with \$25.5 million in purse money, will be run Friday, Nov. 6 and Saturday, Nov. 7 from Santa Anita race track in California.

Photo 1: Wednesday evening racing helped Assiniboia Downs wagering soar (Rob Bye photo)

Photo 2: Fans enjoyed live racing in 2009 (Hannah McPhee photo)

One On One, one big upset!

One On One, winner of last year's CTHS Sales Stakes, pulled off one big upset under the Friday night lights. All year long, Percolating, owned by AZ Stables, dominated the 3-



year-old Manitoba-bred division winning the Frank Arnason and the Gold Strike Mile earlier in the year, and Friday night's JW Sifton Memorial looked to be a coronation of sorts.

One On One, ridden by Tim Gardiner, sat behind a four-horse duel that included favourite Percolating, Freds One Cool Cat, Airen and Thunder Command.

“That was not the original plan,” said Gardiner. “The horse didn’t get into it the first part of the race but I knew my horse was more tested than the others.”

Watching the four-horse speed duel disintegrate in front of him, Gardiner moved One On One outside Thunder Command going into the final turn. Midway through the turn, One On One had the lead but still had to deal with Copper Badges who rallied up the rail.

At the top stretch, the dark bay gelding by Prized wrestled the lead from Copper Badges and pulled away to win by three lengths. Owner Ken Lee and Dennis Mitchell and trainer Carl Anderson smiled all the way to the windows. One On One paid \$10 to win.

Copper Badges, trained by Blair Miller, sat to the inside of the winner through the backstretch and used the rail to his advantage around the final turn. The winner of the North Dakota Derby earlier in the year, Copper Badges battled for the lead turning for home, but came up second best.

The overwhelming favourite, Percolating, trained by Chad Torevell, got strung four wide going into the first turn. Jockey Rohan Singh settled the big bay gelding just off the lead but down the stretch could not catch the winner.

Photo 3: One On One upsets in JW Sifton Memorial (Gerry Hart photo)

Disqualification gives Buffalo to Buffalo

Trainer Marvin Buffalo’s There’s A Place got lucky and was placed first after the runaway winner Applicant was disqualified and placed fifth for interference in the final turn.

There’s A Place, ridden by Tyrone Nelson, battled for the lead throughout the backstretch with Battle Advance. Going into the far turn, Applicant was engulfing the leaders but squeezed a rallying Wiskey Bandit into Battle Advance on the rail as he went by, thus causing the disqualification.

“We thought she could carry a route of ground because her family all could,” said owner Clarence Marzolf of Little Rock Acres, holding his third Buffalo trophy.

Little Rock Acres also owned Black Knicker – a full sister to There’s A Place – and Cache Lake. Both are past winners of the Buffalo Stakes, a race for 2-year-old Manitoba-breds.

Wiskey Bandit, trained by Emile Corbel, finished third and was placed second. Wiskey Bandit sat behind the leaders and moved between horses going into the turn. Wiskey Bandit battled There’s A Place down the stretch but came up short at the wire.

Battle Advance, ridden by Rohan Singh, finished fifth. Singh was the jockey who declared interference against Applicant and jockey Darren Delorme.

Gardipy vs. Anderson for trainer title

The biggest race of the weekend was for leading trainer. Both Tom Gardipy Jr. and Carl Anderson were looking for their first-ever trainer titles at Assiniboia Downs.

Going into the weekend Gardipy was one race ahead of Anderson. After Friday’s races were in the books, Gardipy was still



one win ahead. But a hat trick on Saturday's card gave Anderson a one race advantage going into the last live race day.

Gardipy took the first race with Druid's Lodge, tying up the competition early in the day. And with three race left for Anderson and two for Gardipy, it came down to Reb's Silver Siren in the last race of the day to determine if it was going to be a tie or a solo win for Gardipy.

Gardipy's Reb's Silver Siren rallied well in the stretch but could only come up with a fifth place finish.

This is the first tie for leading trainer since 1980 when Clayton Gray and John Gray (no relation) tied with 57 wins. Carl Anderson and Tom Gardipy Jr. each finished with 45 wins.



The leading rider title went to Larren Delorme. Delorme, 24, had the jockey title sewn up five weeks ago. Delorme finished the season with 86 wins. He replaces three-time leading rider and oldest jockey in the business Alan Cuthbertson, 62, who left several weeks ago to ride in Vancouver.

For the first time in Assiniboia Downs' history members of the aboriginal community won both trainer and jockey titles in the same year. Tom Gardipy Jr. is the first aboriginal trainer since Walter Adams in 1984 to lead all trainers. An aboriginal has not won the jockey title since 1997 with Niki Goodwin.

Photo 4: 2009 Leading trainers Carl Anderson and Tom Gardipy Jr. (ASD photo)

Photo 5: Leading rider for 2009 – Larren Delorme (Rob Bye photo)