



The Horsemen's f Newsletter t

December 2025

Vol. 34 • Number 12

120 Live Racing Days Approved for 2026

The Maryland Racing Commission at its November meeting approved a request from The Maryland Jockey Club for 120 racing dates in 2026.

The MRC dealt specifically with the Laurel Park winter meet, which will offer 33 programs from January 9 through March 29. In January, racing will be on Friday and Saturday each week, and in February and March on a Friday-through-Sunday schedule. First post time will be 12 p.m.

According to the document submitted to the MRC, the winter meet will be followed by the Preakness meet at Laurel (May 4-17), the summer meet (May 18 through August 30), and the fall meet (September 8 through December 31). Those dates are the windows for each meet, not the actual racing days.

It is expected that Laurel, as it did this year, will be dark for live racing in July and August as part of a partnership with Colonial Downs in Virginia that began in 2025. Specific dates will be announced in the future.

The Maryland State Fair at Timonium requested and was approved for 10 racing days, which it is permitted by statute, but the number of actual days listed in its submission to the MRC is seven (August 28-30 and September 4-7). Discussions are ongoing as to the length of the 2026 Timonium meet.

Fair Hill was approved for its statutory maximum of eight days but the actual number will be determined in the future. The Cecil County Breeders Fair successfully returned live racing at Fair Hill for the first time in six years in late August when it held six flat races on the turf course. Fair Hill intends to hold steeplechase races on Memorial Day weekend next year.

Caiazzo Selected as 2025 Bootstraps Scholarship Recipient

Madalyn Sadie Caiazzo, a second-year student at the University of Maryland College Park, has been selected as the 2025 recipient of the Ferris Allen Bootstraps Scholarship, which was created and funded by the longtime trainer based at Laurel Park.

Allen launched this scholarship program, which is administered by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, in 2023. The program provides a financial award of \$10,000 to one deserving individual each year to assist with college expenses. In 2024, Allen selected two candidates for the scholarship, and the MTHA Board of Directors agreed to provide the additional \$10,000.

"This scholarship is designed to encourage motivated young people to pursue a four-year college degree as part of their career path," Allen said. "We are delighted to have supported Alvaro Barajas, Julissa Sepulveda and Andrea Torzone with past scholarships and are certain Madalyn will make us proud as well."

Eligible applicants include those who themselves or their families have been

employed on the backstretch at Laurel Park or other approved equine facilities or have worked in a related support role in Maryland racing within the past three years. Candidates must also be enrolled—or planning to enroll—in a four-year college or university beginning in the fall of 2025 or shortly thereafter.

Allen said he welcomed the input and participation in the choosing of the 2025 award recipient.

Caiazzo, who pursuing two majors—Environmental Science and Technology, and Agricultural and Resource Economics—was raised on a private training farm with more than 60 horses in Darlington, Maryland. At age eight, she was riding her pony to and from the track with the racehorses, and later walked hots and performed other duties in the barn for her father, trainer Corby Caiazzo.

In high school, Caiazzo was in the Large Animal Science Magnet Program where she had the opportunity to pursue intern and research experiences as part of her



➔ **Continued on Page 2**

ACH Transfers Now Available for Owners' Horsemen's Accounts



The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and the Maryland Jockey Club are pleased to announce that owners' Maryland-based Horsemen's accounts managed through the InCompass Bookkeeping System can now process ACH (Automated Clearing House) transactions.

This new feature allows owners to transfer funds directly to their bank accounts safely and conveniently—eliminating the need for paper checks or in-person transactions. With ACH capability, owners can now request withdrawals from their horsemen's account directly to their personal or business bank accounts and enjoy faster, more secure processing with minimal delay compared to traditional check requests. ACH transfers typically take 1-3 business days to process.

The ACH enrollment form is available at mdhorsemen.com or in the MTHA office in the Laurel Park grandstand. Return the form to

the Horsemen's Bookkeeping Office to activate electronic processing.

This enhancement represents another major step forward in modernizing financial services for Maryland horsemen and improving efficiency across all racing operations.

Owners can view and manage their accounts through the InCompass Horsemen's Bookkeeping Portal (<https://hbweb.incompass-solutions.com>) once they have received an account number and an access PIN from the Horsemen's Bookkeeper.

The following is contact information:

Horsemen's Bookkeeper: Kathryn Size (ksize@marylandracing.com)

Assistant Horsemen's Bookkeeper: Haley Keller (haley.keller@marylandracing.com)

Hours are Thursday through Monday, 10:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. (or the last live race). The phone number is 301-725-0400 ext. 5659

Scholarship, Continued

coursework. Her experiences included shadowing work days at Foxhall Equine to research the occurrence of Osteochondritis Dissecans in Thoroughbred yearlings.

In May of this year, Caiazzo began working at the Fair Hill Equine Therapy Center, assisting with facilitating various therapies, hot walking, mucking stalls, organizing schedules and horse files, videoing breezes, and ponying on the track. She spends her breaks and summers working in the industry to raise funds for her ongoing educational pursuits.

"I am thankful to have the opportunity to work in this industry, making money to fund my own education," Caiazzo said. "Despite working to pay for college, I still rely on scholarships like this one. This scholarship will greatly help me in funding my education. It will help me cover costs such as my tuition, housing, textbooks, and more.

"I hope to pursue a career in the agriculture industry and look forward to paving my own path in agriculture, but I know the racetrack and horses will always be a significant part of my life. I am very grateful for this opportunity and to be receiving this scholarship."

Caiazzo said she enjoys exposing other young people to the sport of Thoroughbred racing, and that it is vital to introduce new generations to the overall equine industry. She also brings attention to the usefulness of off-track Thoroughbreds and believes the industry must do all it can to show the public that racehorses can have successful second careers.



The Horsemen's Newsletter

Published by the

Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Assoc.

500 Redland Court – Suite 105,
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117;
(410) 902-6842; Fax: (410) 902-6841;
E-mail: info@mdhorsemen.com
Website: www.mdhorsemen.com





DECEMBER 16

MTHA

Christmas Party

& Toy Drive

6 P.M. – 10 P.M.

CORNER STABLE COLUMBIA

Tickets are \$25 – Purchase Online mdhorsemen.com,
stop in the MTHA Office or call 410-902-6844 for tickets




Nominations Still Sought for MTHA Backstretch Worker of the Year

Trainers at Laurel Park are encouraged to submit nominations for the MTHA Backstretch Employee of the Year for 2025.

The winner will be announced in early 2025 with a presentation at a later date. The deadline to submit nominations is Dec. 31.

The MTHA recognizes the contributions of backstretch workers who form a community dedicated to the daily care and well-being of our equine athletes seven days a week year-round. Many begin their day at 4 a.m. and return later in the afternoon to feed the horses in their care.

To submit a worker to be considered, email their name, position and a summary of why they deserve this award to info@mdhorsemen.com.



A sincere thank you to Maryland Jockey Club for donating hundreds of fresh pies to Backstretch workers this Thanksgiving.

Laurel Park Leads North America in Turf Races for 2025 Season

The Maryland Jockey Club announced that, according to statistics compiled by Horse Racing Nation, Laurel Park carded more turf races than any other track in North America from April 1 through the end of its turf season in 2025. This year's turf meet concluded on Thanksgiving Day—the latest date Laurel has raced on the turf since 2016.

Laurel also offered seven more turf programs than in 2024, underscoring the strength and resilience of the course throughout the season.

TMJC President and General Manager Bill Knauf credited Laurel's success to the dedication of the track's racing surfaces team.

"I'd like to thank our fantastic team of track maintenance staff, including Director of Racing Surfaces John Banno, Turf Superintendent Tony Gatto, Track Superintendent Daniel Finke Jr., and C6 Turf Management's Logan Freeman, for their hard work in keeping our turf course in excellent shape all year long," Knauf said. "The turf played safe and fair all year, and that's all we could ask."

Freeman, who has served as turf consultant for TMJC for several years and has assisted nu-

merous racetracks nationwide, noted the remarkable performance of the course throughout the season.

"Throughout the year, the turf course at Laurel supported large fields and multiple turf races a day," Freeman said. "Our maintenance crew now needs to shift focus to essential off-season work—aerification, seeding, soil amendments, rolling, and overall surface recovery—to prepare for winter and ensure a strong start to 2026. In fact, some of the preparations traditionally done on the Pimlico turf course will now be implemented at Laurel Park in preparation for hosting Preakness weekend 2026."

Maryland's strongest wagering days in 2025 were also driven by turf racing, with handle trending decisively upward on major stakes cards—including the 40th edition of Jim McKay Maryland Million Day.

"The turf course supported one of the heaviest turf race loads in the country during the fall," Freeman added. "This performance reflects several years of improved practices and management, combined with excellent communication among track management, maintenance staff, jockeys, and trainers."

MJC Security Reminder On Travel Policy

The Maryland Jockey Club, through its Security Department, would like to remind the community on policies related to dormitory rooms.

Any employee who leaves the backstretch for vacations, temporary relocation at another racetrack, or travel for visas and other immigration-related reasons, etc., is required to give the Security Department advance notice. Upon departure, all room keys should be left with Security.

For those who do not return within 21 days, their room will be cleaned and the contents of the room removed and placed in a storage trailer at Laurel Park.

Security has noted that given the increase in the number of backstretch employees since the closure of the Pimlico Race Course stable area, dormitory rooms are at a premium and there is a waiting list for occupancy. It is in the best interests of all residents who plan to be away longer than 10 days to make arrangements for storage of their belongings and to assure there is a room available upon their return.

Please note that trainers who plan to bring help to Laurel must notify Francisco Saez, the TMJC rooms officer, in advance to ensure that rooms are available. Rooms are not guaranteed.



Over 350 Meals Served

The Maryland backstretch community celebrated Thanksgiving Nov. 27 with free meals throughout the day at Laurel Park.

The Paz family, who operates the kitchens on the backstretch and in the jocks room at Laurel Park, served more than 350 full turkey dinners from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., which was open for live racing. The meals included stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans and corn.

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and Maryland Jockey Club shared in the cost of the meals. In addition, the MJC provided the kitchens with free pies that also were distributed to racing fans on Thanksgiving.

On Dec. 25, Christmas Day, the traditional free breakfasts will be offered at both kitchens courtesy of the MTHA and MJC.



SOUP & SANDWICHES



DECEMBER 8 AT NOON

FREE FOR HORSEMEN IN TRACK KITCHEN

Our dedicated backstretch workers can enjoy a free

HOLIDAY BREAKFAST

Christmas morning at Laurel Park in the
track kitchen compliments of MTHA & MJC.



Board of Directors

Katharine M. Voss, President
Linda S. Gaudet, Vice President
Timothy L. Keefe, Vice President
Michael F. Horning, Treasurer
A. Ferris Allen, III
R. Thomas Bowman
Lacey A. Gaudet
David Hayden
JoAnn Hayden
H. Graham Motion
Joseph P. Pons, Jr.
Charles J. Reed
Brittany T. Russell
Michael J. Trombetta
David H. Wade