



The Horsemen's f Newsletter

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Celebration Of Life For Howard Wolfendale Set For Sept 9

The Maryland Thoroughbred community is invited to gather in remembrance of longtime trainer Howard Wolfendale at a Celebration of Life on Wednesday, September 9.

The memorial will be held in the second-floor sportsbook in the Laurel Park clubhouse beginning at 11 a.m. Friends, family and members of the racing community are invited to come together to celebrate Howard's life, career and contributions to the sport.

Howard began training in 1977 and recorded 1,525 victories during an accomplished career that spanned more than four decades. His horses earned more than \$22.1 million, and his lasting impact on Maryland racing extended far beyond his success on the track.

Howard's wife, Tammy, was an exercise rider and co-owner of many of his horses. His nephew, Scott, son of William Wolfendale, is a trainer based in Maryland.



Maryland's Horsemen Reap Rewards From Stakes and Bonus Programs



After a successful and lucrative launch in the summer of 2025, the Maryland-Bred Out-of-State Owner and Developer Bonus Program benefited from an increased financial outlay for 2026 that was shared by 150 unique owners and 140 unique developers.

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and The Maryland Jockey Club devised the program to provide financial benefits for the connections of registered Maryland-breds given a new partnership with Virginia designed to strengthen Thoroughbred racing in both states. In 2025 and again this year, Laurel Park was dark in July and most of August during the Colonial Downs meet, which has offered live racing four days a week.

This summer incentive program complements Maryland's existing Maryland-Bred Owner and Developer Bonus Program currently offered at Laurel, the Maryland State Fair at Timonium, and Pimlico Race Course when it re-opens. For live racing in Maryland, 30% bonuses (15% for owners and 15% for developers) are paid for most overnight races.

At Colonial but also at Delaware Park, where racing is held three or four days a week depending on the month, the summer bonus program is based on accumulated points depending on race classifications that are comparable to races

at Maryland tracks.

The race classifications and points system are explained in detail in the annual report that will be released soon.

The dark-period bonus program, which was in place from July 3 through August 23, began at \$600,000 last year, but this year the prize pool was increased to \$700,000. The dates for the program are based on the summer dates Laurel has traditionally held.

The bonuses are based on points earned by registered Maryland-breds for first-, second- and third-place finishes in open overnight races at the Colonial and Delaware. Stakes, Certified races and state-bred races are not included.

The owner and developer bonus pools each totaled \$350,000. The total value of one bonus point for either group was \$380.12 this year.

In all, 246 Maryland-breds qualified for out-of-state owner and developer bonuses in 2026. Delaware Park hosted 140 (56%), while Colonial registered 106 (44%), according to statistics in the annual report.

There were 12 owner and developer entities—some are both owner and developer—that earned between \$10,000 and \$23,000 in 2026. There were 16 with bonus earnings between

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Deadline Approaching For Bootstraps Scholarship

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association is seeking applicants for the Ferris Allen Bootstraps Scholarship, which supports individuals working in Maryland's Thoroughbred racing community who want to further their education.

One recipient will receive a \$10,000 scholarship following a thorough review of the applications. The deadline to apply is September 15. Applications may be submitted online at ferrisallenscholarship.com.

Eligible applicants must have worked on the backstretch at Laurel Park or Pimlico Race Course, or in a related support role within Maryland racing, during the past three years.

Applicants also must be enrolled or planning to enroll in a four-year college or university beginning in fall 2026 or shortly thereafter. The scholarship funds are intended to assist the recipient with college-related expenses.

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association established the scholarship program in 2023 with funding from longtime Laurel Park-based trainer Ferris Allen, who also serves on the MTHA Board of Directors.

"I believe our industry must do more to offer real and lasting educational support to members of our backstretch community," Allen said. "This program selects one exceptional candidate each year and provides meaningful financial assistance to help that individual pursue their goals and aspirations. We encourage everyone in the racing community to spread the word and support applicants."

Since the scholarship was established in 2023, four recipients—including two selected in 2024—have received awards. All four have enrolled in college programs.



Fall 2026 Stakes Schedule

Date	Race	Purse	Age	Sex	Distance	Surface
9/12/26	Sensible Lady Turf Dash	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	6 Fur	Turf
9/12/26	Laurel Dash	\$100,000	3YO & Up		6 Fur	Turf
9/19/26	Weathervane Stakes	\$100,000	3YO	Fillies	6 Fur	Dirt
9/26/26	Selima Stakes	\$125,000	2YO	Filles	1 1/16 mi.	Turf
9/26/26	Laurel Futurity Stakes	\$125,000	2YO		1 1/16 mi.	Turf
9/26/26	All Along Stakes	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies	1 1/8 mil	Turf
10/3/26	James F. Lewis III Stakes	\$100,000	2YO		6 Fur	Dirt
10/3/26	Smart Halo Stakes	\$100,000	2YO	Fillies	6 Fur	Dirt
10/3/26	Twixt Stakes	\$100,000	3YO & Up	Fillies and Mares	1 mi.	Dirt
10/3/26	Polynesian Stakes	\$100,000	3YO & Up		1 mi.	Dirt

Zoom Features Surface Update

In response to questions raised by trainers, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association in early August hosted a Zoom meeting to discuss the Laurel Park racing surface.

The Maryland Jockey Club Track Superintendent John Banno, who was hired in February 2025, said his primary focus has been improving the cushion on the dirt surface. The ongoing project has involved mixing in a blend of material to help the dirt of the cushion bind together.

"We will continue doing that now that's it working," Banno said. "It's a gradual, not overnight, process. I think we're in a better place that when I started working on it. The track can drain differently in different parts of the surface. As the cushion has been improving, we've been able to better squeeze off the water."

Banno also said the project has helped the pad—the material between the cushion and the base—form more efficiently.

The Racing Surfaces Testing Laboratory has scheduled its annual visit to Laurel for early September. Banno said he will share the results of the data with the MTHA for comparison with the data from 2025.

During the meeting, trainers were encouraged to be proactive and report any injuries or related equine issues to Dr. Libby Daniel, the Maryland Racing Commission Equine Medical Director.

Horsemen should pass on any concerns about racing surfaces via email at trackissues@mdhorsemen.com.

➔ MD Bred Bonuses/Stakes, Continued

\$7,000 and \$9,700. Many fell in the \$2,000 to \$6,700 range.

This summer incentive program complements Maryland's existing Maryland-Bred Owner and Developer Bonus Program currently offered at Laurel, the Maryland State Fair at Timonium, and Pimlico Race Course when it reopens.

This year's number of horses that participated in the bonus program was up about 25% from 2025. The MTHA, which oversees the Maryland Thoroughbred Purse Account, thanks all the owners and developers who participated in the 2026 program and made it a success following the pilot program in 2025.

In addition to the bonus program, Maryland

and Virginia again partnered on a joint stakes schedule for state-bred and state-sired horses in both states. Purses total \$1.4 million (\$750,000 from Virginia and \$650,000 from Maryland).

The program began June 20 at Laurel with a pair of stakes and runs through December, during which Laurel will host four stakes including the \$125,000 Juvenile and the \$125,000 Juvenile Fillies. Colonial Downs hosted six stakes from July 11 through August 29.

Through August, Maryland-bred or -sired horses had collected about 75% of the purse money in the stakes given the larger state-bred population in Maryland.

Health Fair Scheduled For Oct 5



The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, in partnership with MedStar Health and Adventist HealthCare LifeWork Strategies, will host its annual Health Fair on Monday, October 5, from 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Recreation Room at Laurel Park.

As in previous years, the event will offer flu shots, blood pressure screenings, and blood-work services performed by on-site phlebotomists. Blood test results will be mailed directly to each participant and shared electronically with the Maryland Horsemen's Health System for follow-up care.

MedStar physicians strongly encourage all backstretch workers—especially those who are regular patients in the Horsemen's Health System—to take advantage of this opportunity for preventative care, rather than waiting until a medical issue arises. In addition to improving health outcomes, this collaborative effort with Adventist HealthCare also results in significant cost savings for the MTHA.

To meet demand, the MTHA has expanded the event last year to accommodate up to 100 blood draws. Services are available on a first-come, first-served basis, so early arrival is advised.

"We encourage all members of the backstretch community to use this important event to get their annual bloodwork done," said Dr. Kelly Ryan of MedStar Health. "It's a simple step that can make a big difference."

To help streamline the process, Adventist LifeWork Strategies again has requested that the MTHA submit a list of individuals planning to have blood drawn. Providing this information in advance helps staff prepare paperwork and reduce wait times.

Sign-ups are available via Google Sheets. You can access it at <http://mdhorsemen.com/healthfair>

As a thank you, all participants who receive a blood draw will receive a lunch ticket for hamburgers and hot dogs in the Laurel Park track kitchen.

MTHA encourages all horsemen to promptly report any feedback involving the racing or training surfaces at Laurel Park by emailing

trackissues@mdhorsemen.com



HISA Seeking Input

Maryland horsemen are encouraged to participate in an industry-wide survey soliciting comments regarding ways to promote greater consistency in scratch procedures nationwide and to improve the quality of data used to understand and support equine welfare.

The survey is part of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority's comprehensive review of Veterinarians' List and Stewards' List categories across Thoroughbred racing.

Responses will be accepted through September 11, 2026. The survey has been distributed via email to attending and regulatory veterinarians, trainers and owners registered in the HISA portal with a valid email address. Individual copies can be obtained by emailing comments@hisaus.org.

"We're pleased to invite everyone in the industry to participate in this survey," said Dr. Jennifer Durenberger, HISA Director of Policy & Industry Initiatives. "Developing more consistent and transparent scratch procedures can simplify processes for trainers and help reduce race-day uncertainty. Stewards and veterinarians play an essential role

in safeguarding the sport, and it is important that their decisions are aligned and clearly understood throughout the industry."

Over the past six months, HISA has surveyed stewards and regulatory veterinarians at covered racetracks to better understand the list categories in use and the factors that determine how horses are placed on those lists.

The survey findings revealed significant variation in the classification and management of list placements across racetracks, resulting in different outcomes in similar circumstances. The review also found that, at some racetracks, field size can influence whether a scratch is recorded as a trainer scratch or veterinary scratch, potentially affecting the accuracy of data regarding the reason for the scratch.

At the conclusion of the review, HISA will publicly release its findings and outline a proposed framework for modernized scratch procedures and veterinarians' list categories designed to support greater national consistency and transparency.

Golf Tournament, Cookout Upcoming



Make plans now to attend the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association's Backstretch Appreciation Cookout, which is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 21, beginning at 11:30 a.m. under the tent on the apron at Laurel Park.

The catered event will feature chicken, beef, pork, salads, water, soda and special dishes from Hideaway Catering, which has provided the food for many years. There will be music and drawings for prizes.

All members of the backstretch community and staff of The Maryland Jockey Club are invited to attend.

The always-popular MTHA Golf Tournament is set for Tuesday, Sept. 29, at Walden Country club beginning at noon. The cost is \$65 per person, and it includes lunch.

Please contact tournament organizer Dan Mangum at 410-802-5798 to register.

Maryland Racing Community WhatsApp Groups:

Maryland Jockeys



MJC Racing Office



Laurel Park Trainers



FLU SHOTS, BLOODWORK, BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING AND MORE



MedStar Health

OCTOBER

5

9AM to 2PM

Free Health Fair

FREE HAMBURGERS & HOT DOGS SERVED



MTHA GOLF TOURNAMENT

**Monday, September 28, 2025
Walden Country Club**

Entry Fee \$65 Per Person Includes:

- 18-Hole Tournament with Cart
- Two Drink Coupons with Prizes
- \$500 Team Awards
- Two \$50 Closest to the Pin Awards
- One \$50 Longest Drive Award
- Call Dan Mangum at (410) 802-5798



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