



Ohio State Racing Commission

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Fillies featured in Ohio Sires Stakes

Weaver Brusceumi partnership excited by Ohio's rich program

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by Kimberly Rinker Ohio State Development Fund Administrator

A total of 29 Ohio-bred fillies will compete in a quartet of Ohio Sires Stakes contests at Miami Valley Gaming & Racing on Friday night, May 3. Post time for the first race is 6:05 pm.

Each of the four divisions carry a purse of \$50,000, with two races each for 3-year-old pacing fillies and 3-year-old trotting distaffs. The events for sophomore sidewheelers are races four and six, while races seven and nine have been set for the diagonally-gaited state-bred females.

To be eligible to the rich Ohio Sires Stakes (OSS), horses nominated to the program must be sired by a stallion registered with the Ohio State Racing Commission (OSRC) and standing in the state of Ohio throughout the breeding season of the year of foaling.

Of the 11 fillies in the two pacing divisions, three are by the ill-fated Dragon Again and two are sired by McArdle, with the following stallions represented by one contestant each: Beachtree, Big Bad John, Pet Rock, Rockin Amadeus, The Panderosa and Yankee Cruiser. Of those 11, four are trained by Pennsylvania-based and national leading conditioner Ronnie Burke and three by Ohio's top colt man Brian Brown.

From the 18 fillies in the two OSS trotting races, Ohio-based stallions Triumphant Caviar and Uncle Peter are represented by four progeny each, while Broadway Hall, Manofmanymissions and Wishing Stone have two foals each. Stallions with one contestant each include: Cash Hall, Dejarmbro, Dontyouforgetit and Southwind Spirit.

The ownership team of Mark Weaver and Mike Brusceumi have joined together on more than 2,200 Standardbreds thus far in their several decades of owning racehorses. They were first recognized as leading owners in the sport in 2013, when Foiled Again—harness racing's richest Standardbred of all time—was feted as the Dan Patch Award winner in the pacing horse division. The gelded son of Dragon Again made headlines throughout his career, and especially in 2018, when at age 14, he went on a fairwell tour throughout North America that garnered newspaper headlines almost everywhere he went. As a result, along with Burke Racing, Weaver Brusceumi was named 2018 Owners of the Year by the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA). Foiled Again is just one on a long list of top horses that include Breeders Crowns, invitationals, free for alls and countless stake finals winners.

The fact that Weaver Brusceumi began participating in the Ohio Sires Stakes a few years ago, and their trainer Ronnie Burke has invested several million dollars annually at the Ohio yearling sales, bodes well for the Buckeye

State's richest stakes endeavor. Burke conditioned Baron Remy to win the \$275,000 Championship for 3-year-old pacing fillies; the \$275,000 Championship winner Impinktoo in the 3-year-old trotting filly division; and the \$275,000 Championship with Wittyville in the 2-year-old trotting colt division in 2018.



Mark Weaver, Mike Brusceci & trainer Ronnie Burke

As well, the Burke/Weaver Brusceci team slayed all four of the Championships for older Buckeye-breds—with Party At The Banks (Veteran Trotting Mares); Lady's Pride (Aged Trotters); Dancin Yankee (Aged Pacers); and Rosemary Rose (Aged Pacing Mares). To date Burke has collected 14 OSS Championship trophies.

“That (winning all of the OSS veteran divisions) became a pet project of mine last year,” said Mark Weaver.

“Throughout the year I was determined to buy a lot of Ohio bred. The slots were created to incite interest in the

Ohio Sires Stakes and other stake opportunities in Ohio, and as we're based at The Meadows, it just made sense to be a participant.

"Geographically, most of the larger stables are non-Ohio stables and most are based further East so it's tough for them to come to The Meadows or Ohio tracks," Weaver continued. "The fact that the Ohio stakes purses have increased phenomenally is a huge draw and the long-term contract is also a huge incentive to invest here. I don't know of any other state that has a situation like that. As owners, we don't have to worry with the contract between the horsemen and the racetracks being in place for ten years as to where to invest."

In the first (Race 4) OSS pacing division Weaver Brusceci share partnership in stablemates **Avaline Hanover** and **Twinsburg**. Both fillies are lightly raced, with Avaline Hanover—a daughter of Dragon Again—getting the slight edge over the McArdle lass Twinsburg. The former has 11 career starts, with four wins, five seconds and a third with \$58,490 in her coffers, while the latter has career earnings of \$51,130 from one win, one seconds and two thirds in ten tries. In their last start, Avaline Hanover was second best of the winning Queen Of The Pride, while Twinsburg was seventh in the \$50,000 Scarlet & Gray on April 26 at Miami Valley. As well, Avaline Hanover has been plying her wares over the Miami Valley Surface since early March, while Twinsburg raced in Canada just once before shipping to Ohio in mid-April.

Rose Run Uptowngal had the misfortune to draw in against **Queen Of The Pride**, the 2018 OSS \$275,000 Championship winner, in the second OSS pacing division (Race 6). The winner of \$75,600 lifetime is a daughter of Dragon Again, out of the Western Terror mare Victoria Gallery and was a strong contender in last year's OSS program, earning \$32,100 in those contests. Her last two starts for Weaver Brusceci and partners at Miami Valley have been disappointing, but she did begin the season with a well-fought 1:54.1 triumph as the public's choice at The Meadows on March 27.

In the first OSS trotting test (Race 7), Ronnie Burke will harness **Well I'm Fancy** for the Weaver Brusceci brigade and partners from post seven. This one mile event for the diagonally-gaited sophmores features a full field of nine and pits her against 2018 Ohio Sires Stakes Champion **Only Take Cash**, who won a \$50,000 Scarlet & Gray division at Miami Valley on April 26. Well I'm Fancy finished third in that race, clocked in 1:55.1. To date she's earned \$31,855 and will be trying for her first victory of her 3-year-old career.

Weaver Brusceci also own a slice of **Tu Eres Mi Corazon**, a daughter by Uncle Peter who has had breaking issues. Unraced at two, the brown filly has drawn the nine-hole in the second OSS division (Race 9), but did have a flat qualifier on April 26 at the Meadows.

"We never bought an Ohio-bred yearling as it didn't make sense six years ago," Weaver stressed. "Now, for the previous few years we've been spending a lot of money on Ohio-bred yearlings—in fact, we spent \$150,000 on one last year—as are a lot of people from both in and outside the state of Ohio."

This year the Ohio Sires Stakes offer \$300,000 Championships at Northfield Park on Sept. 1, with \$75,000 Consolations to be race on Sept. 7 at Scioto Downs. As well 4-year-olds and up will race for \$75,000 Championships: pacers-Sept. 7 at Scioto Downs & trotters-Oct. 12 at Northfield Park.

"Six years ago, we were only buying an Ohio Sires Stakes quality horse at the start of the season, and at the end of the year we were looking to get rid of them," Weaver concluded. "Now, I love buying Ohio-breds because the breed is getting so much stronger with all the new stallions. We can buy an Ohio-bred and plan on being competitive on the Grand Circuit which we couldn't even dream of doing previously."