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Champions return for 2019 Ohio Sires Stakes

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by Kimberly Rinker, Ohio Standardbred Development Fund Administrator

The 2019 Ohio Sires Stakes season begins one week from tonight at Miami Valley Gaming & Racing, spotlighting 3-year-old filly pacers and trotters on May 3 (6:05 pm post), while the males in this same age group will be tested on Sunday, May 5 (2:05 pm post).

Last year's 2-year-old championship and freshmen consolation winners in their respective divisions have all been nominated as sophomores to this year's rich program. For the first time, Ohio-breds will vie for a \$300,000 Championship purse, while the consolation sport a \$75,000 purse. The four legs of the Ohio Sires Stakes feature a sliding scale again this season: \$40,000 per division if three or more races are contested: \$50,000 purse for two divisions; \$60,000 for one division.

Owners had to nominate their Ohio-eligible horses with a March 15, 2019 payment of \$500 making them eligible to all four legs in the series. The starting fee per leg is \$500.

Returning champions include 2-year-old pacing champion **High On Paydaze**, a homebred son of Nob Hill High conditioned by Ohio's top colt man, Brian Brown and owned by Scott Hagemeyer of Clarksville, Robert Mondillo of Delaware and Donald Robinson of Cardington, Ohio.

High On Paydaze captured the \$275,000 Ohio Sires Stakes Championship for 2-year-old pacing colts last fall at Scioto Downs in an engaging, come-from-behind 1:53.2 clocking for driver David Miller at the lines after sweeping the first three OSS Legs handily and finishing third in the fourth leg. He wrapped up the season with \$220,700 in freshman earnings.

High On Paydaze spent the winter months at Spring Garden Ranch, qualifying at that Florida training center twice in March before finishing second at Miami Valley Gaming & Racing in a \$15,000 Hackett elimination. However, he was a disappointing seventh in the \$40,000 Hackett final at Miami Valley on April 20 as a result of having a grade three pharyngitis ailment, according to co-owner Hagemeyer.

"We had him scoped right after the race and he was sick," Hagemeyer confirmed. "He didn't bleed, but that's why we didn't enter him in the Scarlet and Gray. He seems to be feeling better now and he'll train back and we'll scope him before we have to enter him in the Ohio Sires Stakes events."

“Brian (trainer Brown) is going to switch up his equipment and change his overcheck bit in order to help him out in the breathing department,” Hagemeyer offered. “In every other aspect, the colt is good and sound and we hope he’s ready for the Ohio Sires Stakes. We’d never want to race him sick.”

Hagemeyer explained that High On Paydaze has remained as professional as ever, but that at times he still shows that he’s all boy.

“He’s still a colt, and he’s started acting a little more study this year,” Hagemeyer admitted. “He’s matured a bit overall, and in the end, he’s still the ultimate professional. Brian (trainer Brown) seems to think that he’s on the right path and that he’ll do well this season, so we will just hope and pray that he’s in good shape for this first leg of the Sires Stakes next week.”

High On Paydaze is the fourth of seven foals out of The Panderosa mare Myell p,4, 1:56.1h (\$34,688). He is a half-brother to the \$155,491-winning gelding Myell’s Rockstar (by World of Rocknroll) p,4,1:52.1f; Pacing To Paydaze (by World of Rocknroll) p, 4, Q1:54f (\$62,332); and also has an unraced 2-year-old and Ohio Sires Stakes eligible full sister named Dr Lyndsay; a yearling half-sister named Gotta Luv Paydaze (by Allamerican Native); and a suckling half-sister christened Party On Paydaze (by Western Terror).

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High On Paydaze winning the \$275,000 Ohio Sires Stakes Championship for 2-year-old pacing colts at Scioto Downs on Sept. 8, 2019 with David Miller driving. *Photo by Brad Conrad*