


# JUNE 26 Youth Beats

The harness racing 'zine for teens

## A NEW ERA



Young reinsmen taking  
Maryland by storm

Meet Christina Grubich  
page 2

Horse of the Year Beau Jangles  
page 6

A Fabulous Filly  
page 12

# INSTILLING CONFIDENCE, ONE RETIRING RACEHORSE AT A TIME.

Begun by industry stakeholders in 2018, the **Standardbred Transition Alliance** is a charity that inspects, accredits and awards grants to reputable racehorse adoption organizations, ensuring peace of mind to owners, breeders and enthusiasts seeking a safe future for their retired racehorses and our sport.

10 ACCREDITED FACILITIES

IN 5 STATES

\$425,000 GRANTED

IN 4 YEARS

500+

STANDARDBREDS ASSISTED

  
**STANDARDBRED**  
TRANSITION ALLIANCE

Find an accredited organization and learn how you can support the STA at [standardbredtransition.org](https://standardbredtransition.org)



SCAN ME

# Youth Beats



Cover

Young drivers are making their mark in Maryland.



**JAMES WITHERITE**  
*Youth Beats editor*

TREVOR EARLEY PHOTO

## Letter from the Editor

It's always heartening to me to see young people doing great things in this sport — the success of the next generation gives me hope for the industry's future. And this issue of *Youth Beats* takes a look at some up-and-coming industry participants already doing some great things.

In "Young Blood," which appears on page 10, I sat down with a few members of the driving colony at Rosecroft Raceway, which concluded its winter-spring season last month. Of the top 12 drivers at the meet, four of them have yet to turn 25. And as fun as it's been for me to watch them gain experience and find their way to the winner's circle from my perch at the top of the grandstand for the past few months, getting to chat with them about their journeys and the driving forces (pun intended!) that have helped launch their fledgling careers has made them all the easier to root for.

Heading west on Interstate 70 to Indiana, 31-year-old Christina Grubich is thriving in her multi-faceted racing career, as profiled by Jessica Hallett in "From the Ground Up," and our friends at Harrah's Hoosier Park recently opened the doors to hundreds of fourth-grade students to introduce them to harness racing and the Standardbred breed.

As always, thank you for reading!  
Cheers, James

## Inside this issue

### Christina Grubich p.2

Thriving in a multi-faceted racing career  
BY JESSICA HALLETT

### Up Close And Personal p.4

Harrah's Hoosier Park introduces hundreds of youngsters to harness racing

### Pull-out Poster p.6

2025 HOY Beau Jangles seeks to continue his dominance at three

### Young Blood p.10

Under-25 drivers serving notice in the Capital Region  
BY JAMES WITHERITE

### A Fabulous Filly p.12

Young writer reflects on Atlanta's historic Hambletonian victory  
BY REGINA STOLTZFUS

James Witherite  
Editor, *Hoof Beats*

# From The Ground Up

*Christina Grubich thriving in multi-faceted racing career*

BY JESSICA HALLETT

Long before she ever took the lines and went behind the gate, Christina Grubich learned the sport of harness racing from the ground up, learning horses in the rhythm of early mornings and late nights.

Now 31, the Ohio native started at her aunt's farm, where she cleaned stalls. Later, she ventured out on her own, working for various trainers in Ohio before finding her current job with Trent Stohler at his stable in Ohio.

When Stohler relocated his operation to Indiana, Grubich made the move with him, in a decision that proved to be a new challenge.



“The first winter I was here, I grew up a lot,” Grubich said.

With Stohler traveling between Indiana and Florida, more responsibility shifted onto her shoulders. What began as barn work turned into jogging miles, then learning the ropes to training, and eventually managing a larger role within the stable.

“We have some of our horses stabled at Hoosier. I start my mornings there jogging and training them before I head to the farm,” Grubich added. “I take care of a few of my favorites, and I own parts of two horses that we have in the barn.”

Her days now stretch across the racetrack and farm, often shipping out of state, including regular trips to The Meadows, in western Pennsylvania, as part of a demanding full-scale operation.

The workload, however, has been no challenge.

A former athlete, Grubich found something familiar in the competitive nature of racing.



Grubich hopes to incorporate an event like the Meadowlands' International Women's Day Race into racing at Hoosier Park in October in support of breast cancer awareness.

As far as personal goals, Grubich always wanted to win a pari-mutuel race.

"I accomplished that goal, so for now, I'd say my goal is to make a living in this sport that I love and to be the best that I can," she said. "If I had any advice to give the next generation of girls, it would be to work hard and to let your work speak for itself."

Starting from the ground up — learning stalls and barn chores before jumping on the jog cart behind a horse — is a very standard practice in the Standardbred world. Christina Grubich's roots were woven into the fabric of harness racing, and she continues to work towards her dream to be involved in racing in whatever way she can.

Her favorite part of harness racing is being able to train horses, many different horses on different training trips.

"I'm just an old washed-up athlete that loves to compete, and I think that is the main reason I wanted to drive. I just really have a deep appreciation for how athletic horses are," Grubich said.

Every year since 2023, Grubich has made just a handful of starts to the track herself behind the gate.

In August 2023, she scored her first driving win, doing so at the Darke County Fair, in Greenville, Ohio, with Stohler's Who Dey Bengal. So far this year, she has made four trips behind the starting gate, returning as a winner twice — both in United States Harness Driving Club (USHDC) series events at Oak Grove in Kentucky.

In addition to three starts at Oak Grove, Grubich made a trip to New Jersey in March to participate in the International Women's Day festivities at the Meadowlands. It was her second trip to compete over the storied Big M oval after having also participated in the 2025 installment.

"I love the International Women's Day Race at the Meadowlands," Grubich said. "I think it is awesome the show they put on to honor us. While I haven't had much luck on the track there, I do really enjoy getting to see my friends from all over that also come to drive."



# Up Close and Personal

## Harrah's Hoosier Park introduces hundreds to harness racing

*from Harrah's Hoosier Park*

**Harrah's**  
HOOSIER PARK

In partnership with the Harness Horse Youth Foundation, Indiana Standardbred Association, and Indiana Horse Racing Commission, Harrah's Hoosier Park played host to over 400 fourth-grade students from the Anderson, Ind., community on April 15 and 16.

"It was a pleasure to host over 400 local youth and introduce them to our wonderful sport," said Gabe Prewitt, vice president and general manager of racing at Harrah's Hoosier Park. "Watching so many of the kids get to be up close with the horses for the first time was rewarding for all of us involved and a memory that will be with them for a very long time."

Each day featured four interactive stations, designed to both educate and engage the children with the sport of harness racing. "It's All Related" educated kids in the economic impact of horse racing, which has a \$2 billion economic impact on the state of Indiana. "Pacing Boards & In the Bike" provided a hands-on opportunity to learn about the different gaits in harness racing, utilize teamwork to demonstrate the act of pacing, and provide kids the opportunity to explore both a race bike and jog cart.

Two stations took place in the Hoosier Park barn area, allowing children the



opportunity to explore the Ron Burke, Ernie Gaskin, T Tetrick and Melanie Wrenn stables on property. After meeting Indiana champions such as On To Norway and Odds On Mr Mamba, children learned about the equipment Standardbreds use with "Dressing The Racehorse," complete with a full display demonstrating how to harness a horse.

During lunch both days, classes were treated to a front-row seat to the action in the Harrah's Hoosier Park clubhouse. Wednesday classes took in morning qualifiers, which featured heavy-hitting names such as Rock Shines Again and Breeders Crown champion Coach Stefanos on the racetrack. The Thursday group enjoyed a mock race before drivers Marcus Miller and Brandon Bates, who have combined for over 7,000 career victories on the racetrack, were interviewed about their experience in harness racing and their role as drivers and participated in a Q&A session with the students. Other drivers, including Trace Tetrick, John DeLong and AJ Wright, were present to assist with the presentation of stations and answer questions throughout the day.

"The Fourth Grade Field Trip is a grand example of working together to accomplish great things," said Ellen Taylor, executive director of the Harness Horse Youth Foundation. "Hoosier Park, The ISA and HHYF worked hard to bring the event to fruition. From the student's first touch on a horse's nose to the plethora of excellent questions to the deafening cheers for 'their' horse during the mock race, this field trip definitely renews one's sense of positivity in harness racing's future."

Harrah's Hoosier Park extends its gratitude to the more than 30 volunteers who joined the fray to these field trips come to fruition over the two days. Students left each day with a gift bag supplied

by the Indiana Standardbred Association, with harness racing swag and information on the HHYF's summer camps, as well as information on the remaining schedule for the 2026 race season at Hoosier Park.



## We want to hear from you!

Have a harness racing-related experience to share?  
A photograph of your recent trip to the barn or the racetrack?  
Something about the sport you've always been curious about?

Your submissions and story ideas are welcome!

Email them to *Hoof Beats* and *Youth Beats* editor James Witherite at

**[james.witherite@ustrotting.com](mailto:james.witherite@ustrotting.com)**





# *Spring* **TRAINING**



*2025 Horse of the Year BEAU JANGLES preparing for his*



*sophomore season together with trainer Dr. Ian Moore*

# Shop Merch Today!



# 50



<https://smalltownstyleindiana.com/collections/harness-horse-youth-foundation>

# STRONGER TOGETHER, UNSTOPPABLE AS A TEAM.

HARNESS HORSE YOUTH FOUNDATION



[hhyf.org](http://hhyf.org)

# YOUNG BLOOD

## *Under-25 drivers serving notice in the*

BY JAMES WITHERITE

In a sport that often sees its participants enjoy careers that stretch four decades or longer, new blood can seem an anomaly. But a cadre of young drivers has turned heads at the recently concluded winter-spring harness racing meet at Rosecroft Raceway, just outside Washington, D.C.: Of the 12 drivers who have won the most races throughout the 33-night stand, four of them are under the age of 25.

William Carter, a Philadelphia native who turns 22 in August, banked over \$1 million in purse earnings each of the 2024 and 2025 seasons, and drove 181 winners last year, his most ever in a single season since he first drove in 2021. He ended the Rosecroft meeting third in wins, trailing only Maryland mainstays Jonathan Roberts and Russell Foster.

"This season has been good, my best start so far," said Carter, a second-generation horseman who has amassed 62 wins and over \$445,000 in purse earnings this year through mid-May while also driving at Monticello Raceway, in New York, and Shenandoah Downs, in Virginia, in addition to the Maryland circuit of Rosecroft and Ocean Downs. "I'm definitely racking up a lot of miles on my little Honda Civic!" he quipped.

Like Carter, 23-year-old Justin Walters is plying his trade at multiple tracks, with his 18 wins at the winter-spring Rosecroft meeting good for a Top 10

finish. His early-career accomplishments at the Capital Region oval are all the more impressive considering he only drives a partial schedule there, making his primary base of operations at The Meadows, just outside Pittsburgh and four hours to the west of Rosecroft.

Walters is likewise building on the strength of a million-dollar season in 2025, having driven a career-high 105 winners last year and on pace to eclipse that figure in 2026.

"My dad, Steve (who trains at The Meadows), taught me a good work ethic, and my uncle Jason (who trains in Maryland) has given me an opportunity to drive horses that are competitive in their classes," said Walters, a third-generation horseman born in New Jersey. He further feels that cutting his teeth on the track against the likes of Dave Palone and Aaron Merriman, who rank first and third respectively in all-time wins, at The Meadows has contributed to his early success at Rosecroft.

"Driving at The Meadows full-time helps because I drive with some of the top guys in the sport and can learn from them," he said.



**WILLIAM CARTER**  
*James Witherite photos*



**JUSTIN WALTERS**  
*Chris Gooden photo*

# Capital Region



Another western Pennsylvania-based horseman making a splash at Rosecroft is 22-year-old Lucas Myers, who had 16 wins — 11 for trainer Jerry Nock — for the meeting and also drives at The Meadows and Shenandoah.



**LUCAS MYERS** *Chris Gooden photo*

Rounding out the quartet of youthful up-and-comers is 20-year-old Delawarean Shane Griffith, who has burst onto the scene this season after gaining some valuable experience behind the scenes in the Midwest last summer.

"I took off on an adventure last year and worked for Erv Miller," said Griffith. "I wasn't getting to drive as much as I wanted but in return learned a lot from him. Then, I ventured back to Delaware in hopes to get started."

Griffith seemed destined for a career in harness racing after being adopted at a young age by trainer Brenda Teague, sister of Hall of Fame conditioner George Teague Jr.

"I had a rough childhood," recounted Griffith. "When I was around 7 years old, my brother and I were up for adoption. Brenda Teague stepped up and gave my brother and I a life better than most can ask for, and fortunately, it led to my love for harness racing."

After winning twice in 2025 — once for Miller at the Charleston, Ill., fair, and once for Teague at Harrington Raceway — Griffith has taken off in 2026, winning 18 races through mid-May, all but three at Rosecroft. He scored his first-ever hat trick on May 14, winning twice for trainer Ronald Short, someone Griffith credits for contributing to his early success.

"He has been a crucial part of me getting started as a driver," said Griffith. "I can't thank him enough for getting me started, and all the trainers that have allowed me to drive their horses thus far. Without them, I don't get to do what I love."

As far as driving at Rosecroft, Carter thoroughly enjoys the camaraderie and competition.

"Rosecroft has a bunch of great and underrated drivers — young and older," he said. "They're good to drive with, and the older guys will teach you a lot, too. It feels like every few months there's new young drivers coming along and really making an impact on the track. It's a good place to learn."

"Competing with the other young guys makes it fun because we can all relate to each other," added Walters. "We're all trying to make the most out of our opportunities."



**SHANE GRIFFITH** *Quenton Egan photo*

# FIRST-PERSON: Looking Back

*Young writer reflects on historic Hambletonian*

by Regina Stoltzfus



*This piece, written by 14-year-old Pennsylvanian Regina Stoltzfus, is a first-person account of her experience attending the 2018 Hambletonian Stakes, famously won by filly Atlanta.*

*The Hambletonian, harness racing's annual premier event for 3-year-old trotters, will take place for the 101st time Aug. 8, at the Meadowlands, in East Rutherford, N.J.*

*This piece originally appeared in the April 2026 issue of East Coast Equestrian and is reprinted here with permission.*



With the 100th Hambletonian come and gone back in August, I found myself thinking about another Hambletonian — not that long ago.

It was Saturday, Aug. 4, 2018. To most of the world, it felt like just another ordinary, humdrum summer day. But to those of us who knew, it was anything but ordinary. The horses felt it, too. Grooms hurried. Owners spoke carefully, trying to keep tension from creeping into their voices for the sake of their horses — but how could they? So many dreams were built on this race: the Hambletonian Stakes, one of harness racing's greatest events, the first jewel of the Trotting Triple Crown.

"Let's go, let's go! We don't want to be late," you said — but everything was already set. Still, we couldn't get there fast enough. All good things take time, and if a day with horses and friends isn't good, then I can't think of what is.

Finally, we were there. Horses whinnied. The announcer's voice crackled over the loudspeaker. The races were about to begin.

Who did we think would win? Crystal Fashion had taken the first elimination. Tactical Landing won the second. Alarm Detector had won the O'Brien Award as a 2-year-old. The filly, Atlanta, was daring to take on the boys.

People milled about, choosing favorites. You could catch snippets within the background din.

"Did you hear Six Pack got disqualified?"

"Yeah. He locked wheels with Classichap, didn't he?"

"Too bad — he's a good horse."

"I like Crystal Fashion."

"I'm cheering for the underdog, Met's Hall."

"Wolfgang's not running; he got eliminated!"

As the conversations drifted, so did my mind. I thought about the history of the Hambletonian, a yearly event for 3-year-old trotters held in honor of Hambletonian 10, the "Daddy of all Standardbreds." First run in 1926 at the New York State Fair in Syracuse, it moved in 1930 to Good Time Park, in Goshen, N.Y., whose triangular track gained fame from the race.

When the Hambletonian relocated to Du Quoin, Ill., in 1957, Good Time Park declined and eventually faded from use. In 1981, the race found its home at the Meadowlands, in East



Rutherford, N.J., where it has remained ever since.

Depending on entries, two or three elimination races are always held about a week prior, with the top 10 advancing to the final on the first Saturday in August. (In 2018, the eliminations and final were held the same day as the final.)

"I bet you a soda that filly's going to win," you broke into my thoughts.

"What makes you think that?" I replied. "She's got some good wins, sure — but she didn't even win her elimination."

But Atlanta *did* win.

From post 7, she swept to the lead and held it, her tail seeming to say, "Catch me if you can." But they couldn't. The crowd roared. Atlanta became the 14th filly to win the Hambletonian — and the first in 22 years.

Met's Hall finished second, a length back. Tactical Landing was a close third. The rest trailed behind.

Scott Zeron, driving for his father, Rick — Atlanta's trainer at the time — had persuaded him to enter her in the Hambletonian Stakes, open to colts and fillies, rather than the Hambletonian Oaks, restricted to fillies.

That year, Atlanta earned the Dan Patch Award and captured the hearts of countless fans.

In 2019, she again received the Dan Patch Award, along with the O'Brien Award. And she wasn't finished. In 2021, in the Allerage Farms Open Mare Trot at the Red Mile, she earned another distinction — world's co-fastest female trotter — going a 1:49 mile with driver Yannick Gingras. She thrilled her audience.

She was, undeniably, a horse to be reckoned with.



**FREE**

## Getting your own subscription is easy!

Just fill out this subscription form and send it back to us. Each magazine is filled with photos, stories and posters of your favorite harness racing stars.

*Youth Beats is free to all subscribers 17 years old and under.*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL (OPTIONAL): \_\_\_\_\_



Send subscription forms to: Youth Beats  
6130 S. Sunbury Rd., Westerville, OH 43081  
or email [james.witherite@ustrotting.com](mailto:james.witherite@ustrotting.com)