A WINNING COMBINATION
You and Harness Racing

Inside: How to become a harness racehorse owner!
Introduction

A Winning Combination: You and Harness Racing

Simply stated, owning a Standardbred racehorse can be the most exciting investment you’ll ever make. You might buy a Standardbred because you want to become intimately involved in a great sport you’ve enjoyed as a bettor or fan, or because you’ve have been asked by a friend or business associate to be part of a racing stable.

Standardbred ownership, no matter what form it takes, is just plain fun!

And while Thoroughbred racing is known as the “Sport of Kings,” due to the high costs associated with ownership and participation, harness racing is known as the “Sport of the People,” for its affordability, accessibility and family-like feel.

For most prospective owners, two questions arise: “How do I get started?” and “How much will it cost?” In these pages we will break down your ownership options and what you can expect from your involvement in the sport so you, too, can harness the excitement of harness racing!
Partnership

Most successful ventures start off with a strong partnership, and one of the best relationships in harness racing is that of an owner with his trainer. When you select a trainer, you’re getting a manager, advisor and expert. He’ll make the day-to-day decisions that will have a direct bearing on your investment.

Selecting a trainer is the most important decision you’ll make at the outset. His or her judgment and expertise will be invaluable—now and in the future—and it’s best to choose your trainer before you buy a horse.

Many owners find trainers through a referral from someone they know who owns a trotter or pacer, or by attending the races and approaching some of the leading trainers listed in that track’s program. But newcomers may not have either of those options. Listed at http://owners.ustrotting.com is a state-by-state compilation of racetrack contacts and horsemen’s organizations, which will help you contact a trainer in your area.

It’s best to meet with a potential trainer at his or her stable to see how he or she does business.

Some questions to ask include:

• What type of horse do you specialize in — claimers, “babies,” trotters, pacers, etc.?

• How do you communicate with owners?

• What is your daily rate; what does this include and what is additional?

• What is your view on medication?

• What is your average vet bill per month?

• Where do you primarily train, stable and race?

• What will be my up-front financial obligations?

Ask to see bills sent to other owners, so you can understand the types of charges assessed. Look around the stable; is this a place you would feel comfortable bringing your family and friends? How might you handle a situation in which you both evaluate a horse and you like it and your trainer doesn’t—or vice versa?

There are many aspects of horse racing which an owner must take on trust, and you must feel comfortable enough with the person caring for your investment to talk about anything.

After you have done your research, talked to informed people and met with several trainers, you should have a good indication of what type of person would best suit your needs and personality. Then select a trainer and remember, while you will give input, trust the trainer’s judgment. If you hire a plumber, you sure wouldn’t tell him how to fix your sink!

FAST FACT: In addition to their standard fees and expenses, trainers and drivers each receive 5 percent of the purse money your horse wins.
When buying a car you might drive it to your mechanic so that he can tell you what’s right or wrong with it. An expert opinion is important in buying Standardbred horsepower, too.

Since you can spend between several hundred and several hundred thousand dollars when buying a horse, the expertise of your trainer and a veterinarian will be invaluable. In evaluating whether a horse is worth the asking price, or how high you should bid at auction, they will look at two important factors: breeding and conformation.

As a general rule, the best racehorses are the product of the best breeding; a prominent and productive stallion mated to a well-bred mare with a history of producing exceptional horses. Now and again, the farmer’s old mare is crossed to an unknown stud and a champion is born, but it doesn’t happen often.

No animal, however, is judged on breeding alone. Conformation—how a horse is physically “put together”—is equally important. Experienced buyers look for many things: wide-set eyes are said to indicate intelligence; a wide jaw, long and massive neck, and powerful chest mean good lung capacity; straight legs and feet suggest a good stride, which lessens the possibility of injury and lameness.

Excellent breeding or conformation—alone or together—still does not ensure success. Individuals who know about them are as much seers as they are scientists. Paying careful attention to these things, along with the wise counsel of your trainer and veterinarian, however, can maximize the possibility of getting a return on your equine investment.

How do you know if the price, whether determined by the bidding at an auction, a claiming price, or the price quoted for a private sale, is right? If you were buying a car you’d look at a copy of the Blue Book, but there is no such thing for Standardbred horses.

Again, the expertise of the trainer will be invaluable. He or she has bought many horses over the years, and can evaluate a quoted price in light of market forces and other criteria.

**Trotters or Pacers?**

**Trotters**, which constitute only about one in four Standardbreds, can be a source of great joy for owners. They are beautiful to watch and sometimes race for higher purses than their pacing brethren because there are fewer of them. But they have challenges. They may take more time and patience to develop, and may be more prone to gallop in a race, known as going “off-stride.”

**Pacers** are more prevalent in harness racing, so it might be easier to find one that is successful at a lesser price. Since they race with the aid of hobbles, they are less likely to break stride. But there has been a speed explosion among pacers in recent years, and competition among pacers is often quite keen.

**FAST FACT:** Breeding and conformation, while key factors, aren’t the sole predictors of success; every trainer knows of an unfashionably bred horse or one with a physical defect who has become a winner. Performance counts, more than blood and looks, when buying a racehorse.
Making the Purchase

There are several ways to buy a Standardbred racehorse: at an auction, through a private sale, or by “claiming.”

Auctions

At an auction the horses are sold to the highest bidder. Some sales feature only yearlings (1-year-old horses). Other types of sales include “mixed” sales, which offer active racehorses, broodmares, stallion prospects, and yearlings.

**Pluses:** Sales offer large numbers of horses, and most at mixed sales are ready to race. You and your trainer will have the opportunity to physically inspect each horse before it goes through the sale ring.

**Challenges:** They are held infrequently, so if you’re ready to “go to the races” you might have to wait weeks or months for the next auction.

Private Sale

A private sale brings one buyer together with one seller. An owner may want to sell for a number of reasons: he wants to buy a different horse, to dissolve a partnership, to sell his racing stock when it turns age four, or just because he feels like it.

**Pluses:** These sales are immediate, and since horses are “traded” frequently, your trainer probably already knows of a few that might be for sale now.

**Challenges:** If you are buying a horse at another location it’s a bit more difficult to inspect that horse, although your trainer might ask another trainer, located where the horse is, to inspect it for you.

Claiming

A claiming race is one from which a horse can be purchased for a pre-determined price right out of the race. A qualified buyer—who must first employ a trainer—puts in the claiming price before the race, and the title to the horse changes at the start of the race. The “old” owner gets the purse and the “new” owner gets the horse at race end.

Claiming is often the best option for novice horse owners, because it permits them to get in the game immediately.

**Pluses:** Racetrack programs are full of claiming races, making each printed racing program like a catalog of racing prospects—priced at various levels. Also, a claiming horse is already racing, and can start in a race for you the very next week.

**Challenges:** You won’t have the opportunity to inspect the horse, close-up, before you claim it; your trainer’s powers of observation are the key. Also, since title to the horse passes to you at the start of a race there is a very small chance that it might be injured during the race.

Breeding Your Own

Beyond purchasing a racehorse, there is another way to enter the Standardbred business—buying a broodmare, mating it to a stallion, and raising your own horse. The top young racehorse prospects are sold at auction each year for handsome sums, which gives the possibility of breeding a potential star its allure.

Any profit from the sale of a yearling (if you choose to sell it), and the enjoyment of winning races and purses (if you choose to keep and train it) are a long way off. For these reasons breeding horses is often less appealing to a new owner.

The challenges of breeding include the fact that a horse can’t race until it is 2 years old, and expenses before it ever races include the payment of stud fees, stakes payments, and pre- and post-natal veterinary care.

Some rewarding advantages, however, include having a hand in the foal’s destiny—from conception to his racing career, and some consider this mating, foaling, raising, training, and winning process the ultimate thrill.

Most, however, purchase a “ready-made” racehorse and get right to the business of racing and winning!

**FAST FACT:** Almost every racehorse, whether in a claiming race or not, is for sale; sometimes trainers simply approach each other to inquire whether a horse might be available for sale.
Types of Ownership

Owning a Standardbred racehorse must be approached as a business. There will be revenues and expenses, risks to be managed, and tax and regulatory considerations. Thus, you will want to structure your racing business in one of several ways:

Individual Ownership
In this case you pay all the bills and take all the risks, but you also reap all the rewards—and the purses your horse wins.

Partnerships
In a partnership, you and your partner(s) share paying the bills and assuming risks—and each takes a cut of the purses. Partnerships can also be “unbalanced,” in which each partner owns a different percentage, and thus pays a different percentage of the expenses and earns a varying cut of the purse. Your trainer, of course, can also be your partner.

Leasing
Horses, like any business asset, can also be leased. In a lease, you (the lessee) will have control of the horse for a fixed period of time—in exchange for a stated percentage of the purses won. During the term of the lease the lessee generally pays all the expenses associated with racing. The benefit is that it’s usually cheaper to lease a horse than pay what might be a high cost of buying one. The U.S. Trotting Association mandates that copies of the lease be registered with the USTA (to divulge true ownership).

Limited Partnership
A growing number of people, especially those with limited amounts to invest, or who fear losing more than what they have budgeted, have invested in limited partnerships. It’s a common investment form: In a limited partnership you put up a fixed amount toward the management of a horse’s racing career. A “general” or “managing” partner makes all the decisions about acquiring a horse, including selecting a trainer, and making stakes payments. You will share proportionately in the purses won, when they exceed expenses, and in a worst-case scenario will not lose more than what you have invested. Such partnerships are widely advertised in trade publications and online.

Corporation
Racing corporations, just as in the business world, are entities that are legally separate from its owners or stockholders. They offer their owners legal and tax advantages not enjoyed by sole owners, partners, lessees, or limited partners, but are heavily regulated.

Limited Liability Company
These are partnership and corporation hybrids, combining features of both. It offers the company members the legal protection afforded to corporations, but frees them of the considerable regulatory hurdles placed before corporations.

Get legal and accounting advice! Your legal and tax advisors will be key members of your stable.

FAST FACT: Many owners like to have their trainer as an ownership partner. Your trainer, given more substantial financial interest, will certainly be motivated!
Where Will You Race?

Just as there are major leagues and minor leagues in baseball, there are varying levels of competition in harness racing.

Tracks located in major metropolitan areas have greater followings among fans, draw more betting interest and pay larger purses. They also feature the top levels of equine, driving and training talent, which means your horse and your training and driving team will have to be at the top level to compete for your share of those large purses.

Where you choose to race will affect some of your decisions as an owner:

Racing at your local track: You’ll likely want to race at a track where you can watch your horse race in person and take family, friends and business associates to the track to watch. It’s probably the first place where you saw a harness race—and first dreamed about owning a racehorse. There may be bigger purses at tracks in distant cities, but there may be bigger labor, feed and housing costs associated with racing at them.

Racing at tracks in your region: Often, your local track will have a “dark” season, during which there is no live racing, so you’ll have to consider shipping your horse to another track. There will be some additional transportation expenses, but there will be more chances, of course, to win purses. Races for horses sired or foaled in your state are sometimes raced on “circuits,” with some legs of a season-long series at different tracks—but within easy driving distance so that you can still see your horse race in person.

Racing at the fairs: Each year, a great number of horses never set foot on a commercial racetrack, but instead race only at the state or county fairs. The purses are often more conservative, but many owners, breeders, drivers, and trainers enjoy the relaxed environment of racing at the fairs. In addition, some fairs offer purses that rival those paid at smaller pari-mutuel tracks.

Racing on the Grand Circuit: The “Grand Circuit” is the name for a series of the sport’s most lucrative and competitive races. The races follow a circuit, with each track hosting a group of major races in the same week (one day for the 2-year-olds, the next day the 3-year-olds, etc., or one day will be the fillies and the next day the colts, etc.). Grand Circuit races are for 2- and 3-year-olds, although there are an increasing number of large purse races for older horses. Competing on the Grand Circuit is expensive. Your expenses will include:

- Nomination and entry fees (which can be thousands of dollars each start)
- Shipping expenses (from $50 to $1,000, one-way)
- Paying a private groom

You will need also to pay the travel expenses of your trainer—and a driver if you want someone other than a local driver to handle your horse.
The Big Question: Cost

Training fees, usually charged monthly or per diem, buy you three things: the trainer’s professional services, basic feed such as hay and grain and the services of a groom, the person assigned to the day-to-day care of your horse.

All other necessary items, related to equipment, transportation, shoeing, and animal health will be billed directly to the owner. Here are some you may encounter:

Insurance—A Standardbred is a major investment and one you should consider protecting with insurance, although it is not required. Rates are based upon the stated value of the horse and calculated at rates quoted by an underwriter.

Mortality coverage includes death due to illness, injury, or humane destruction. Named perils are “acts of God,” such as fire, flood, transportation mishaps, etc. Insurers advertise regularly in trade journals.

States also require owners or trainers to pay an annual premium for worker’s compensation coverage to assist stable employees hit by job-related illnesses and injuries. Consult with your trainer or the local horsemen’s organization for details on cost and requirements in your state.

Licensing—You have to be licensed as an owner in every state in which you race, and fees vary from $20 to $50 per state. If you race at only one track or in one state, only one license is needed. But, if you ship around the country, you must have a license from each and every state you visit. Licenses must also be renewed annually. Periodic fingerprinting is also required by most jurisdictions. You must be fingerprinted every three to five years, and you are charged for this service.

The National Racing Compact offers the convenience of submitting one license application, one set of fingerprints, and one check to cover the fees levied by several states. For more information, visit www.racinglicense.com.
Memberships—All horse owners will need to join the U.S. Trotting Association. It currently costs $70 to join and $55 to renew each year. The USTA charges nominal fees for the paperwork that will be needed (registration, transfers of ownership, eligibility, exports, DNA-typing, etc.). Many owners also opt to join and pay dues to state or local horsemen’s associations that aim to work on their behalf in areas of mutual concern. Most state or local horsemen’s groups also provide liability and sulky insurances.

Stabling—Many trainers prefer to keep horses at locations other than commercial racetracks, because many tracks have a limited number of available on-track stalls. They believe that training on a farm with turnout facilities may be more conducive to keeping the horse fresh. Stall rents at farms or training centers vary by month or season; commercial racetracks almost never charge for the use of on-track stalls by ready-to-race horses.

Staking—Most of the richest events in harness racing are for 2- and 3-year-olds, and to race for these pots of gold you will have to ante up a few dollars along the way. The conditions (the requirements of eligibility) written for each race will give the amount of these payments and dates by which they must be paid.

In the Little Brown Jug, for example, a $25 nominating fee must be paid in May of the horse’s yearling season (a $400 “late nominating fee” may be paid in December of his yearling season if you missed the $25 one). A $400 payment is then due in March of his 2-year-old campaign, with another $750 to be paid the following February. Then, if you enter him in the actual race, a $6,000 tariff is due at time of entry, five days prior to the race. Making all the payments keeps the horse eligible to start in a stake.

The conditions of some stakes say that if you miss one payment you cannot start, and you’ll lose any payments made before the one that was missed. Others let you pay a supplemental nomination (generally much greater than the sum of the other payments) to get in. In any event, monies paid in by the owners or nominators go directly to the purse.

Transportation—If your horse spends a lot of time at one track the cost will be minimal. But if it’s a heavily staked colt or filly, or if you board at a training center, your horse will have to travel from track to track.

Vaccinations and Health Tests—are very important to the health of your horses, since without such inoculations or tests they could become sick, and be away from racing. Tests such as the Coggins Test, used to determine whether Equine Infectious Anemia is present, are mandatory. Such tests and treatments usually represent a small expense, but could help avoid a devastating health problem.

Extras—As you become more knowledgeable and involved, you’ll want to subscribe to Hoof Beats, the world’s best magazine devoted to harness racing, and purchase important reference books such as the Stakes Guide, Trotting and Pacing Guide, and the The Care and Training of the Trotter and Pacer, or consult online references such as PATHWAY—all of which are described later in this publication. All will be invaluable aids to your involvement in the sport.

Always discuss potential expenses with your trainer, even before buying your first horse. In talking with him and with owners already in the business you’ll get a handle on what you might expect to see on your training bill. As we mentioned earlier, if you are a new owner you should feel free to ask a prospective trainer for samples of bills that trainer has sent to the owners in his or her stable, and ask about the charges listed on them.

FAST FACT: Each expense represents an offset to the purse income you earn in racing, so make sure that you keep all bills and receipts so you have them for your tax preparer.
The Word on Winning

So far we’ve talked mostly about costs. Let’s get to the good part—winning!

In the last five years, an average of $375 million has been paid each year to winning owners at racetracks in the United States—and you need only to win a tiny fraction of that to be a success.

The purse for a race is most often split five ways, here’s how:

From the amount won by his or her horse, the owner also pays 5 percent to the trainer and 5 percent to the driver. For example, if your horse wins a $10,000 race you will win $5,000, and from that will pay the trainer and driver 5 percent ($250), each (often the track withdraws the driver’s and trainer’s share from the purse, and then pays them directly).

On a typical racing program, between 80 and 100 horses will be entered, with 55 of them sharing purse money. Even without winning a race, it’s likely you will share in at least a portion of the evening’s purse money.

Also, while stakes payments and starting fees must be paid in advance by owners for some races, “overnight” races require no entrance fees.

Don’t forget there are other revenue streams for your stable: If a horse you bought improves, he or she becomes more valuable—and that means the possibility of selling at a profit! Or, if you decide to invest in breeding stock and raise yearlings you might turn a profit when you sell your youngsters, either privately or at auction.

The Internal Revenue Code permits owners to treat their racing operations just as it treats any small business: Racing and breeding stock may be depreciated, expenses deducted and so forth. It’s not strictly a tax shelter, but your accountant, who will be another important member of your stable, will explain the tax situation.

The rewards are many

Owning a Standardbred racehorse is a risk-reward proposition perhaps unlike any other. There are many possible upsides to the experience.

The thrill of rooting for your horse, especially when it wins, is virtually unequalled. Many people involved in racing meet others in the sport and make friends for life. The rewards that racehorse owners enjoy include:

- Owning a horse purchased for a modest amount can potentially win big money—or at least more than they cost to buy and keep.
- A colt with outstanding ability among his peers may have a future career as a stallion, and if successful in the breeding shed can generate a six-figure income each year, for as long as 15 years.
- An outstanding mare can become a broodmare and produce as many as 15 to 18 babies, one per year, which in turn could each be worth tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars when sold.
- A well-chosen claiming horse or properly classified racehorse can be purchased for a modest amount of money, then could rise in class and thus earn more than enough money to cover his training and racing bills. He might also rise to a higher claiming level, and when claimed bring in more money than he cost to buy. And you get to keep the purse winnings when he’s claimed.
- You can buy or claim a horse that has been unsuccessful for his current owner and trainer for a modest amount of money, and your trainer might find the key to improving that horse. You would win bigger purses against a higher level of competition. Or, perhaps the driver you employ recognizes that the horse you bought will perform better, and earn more money, by using a different racing strategy.

FAST FACT: The average Standardbred earned $17,786 in 2008, according to USTA statistics—trotters banked $18,515 and pacers won $17,485.
Take the Plunge

You’ve decided to take the plunge. Here are a few easy steps toward getting started:

1. Visit http://owners.ustrotting.com to find the telephone number for a track or horsemen’s organization located near you.

2. Call and ask to have a trainer recommended.

3. Talk to that trainer and ask about how to find a horse, and how much it will cost to get started.

Remember that trainers, fellow owners, breeders, the USTA, and all the others you’ll meet along the way want to welcome you into the sport. Their expertise and love of the industry—and of the horses themselves—is something you’ll quickly come to understand and share.

Prospective owners are welcomed into the sport, and you’ll make plenty of friends. You’ll meet owners who love the excitement of the sport, who own horses strictly as an investment, and men and women from all walks of life and economic strata. At some point, they were first-time owners, too. They took the plunge, and now enjoy Standardbred ownership. They will be a source of information you’ll need and want to know about racing and breeding.

And at the heart of it all is winning. Whether it’s collecting the winner’s share of a $1 million race or winning a county fair stakes, there are few things to match the thrill of standing in the winner’s circle with family and friends to have your picture taken alongside the horse you purchased and helped develop.

Maybe you’ll become directly involved by lending a hand in your horse’s training and care, or actually driving him in a race for amateur drivers. Amateur driving is, after all, a great part of harness racing history that lives on today in several amateur series and championships.

Maybe you’ll just want to put aside the pressure of the office or the noise of the assembly line to be with your family at the farm or racetrack.

We can’t promise your first horse will be a champion, or that your money will be returned many times over, but we can promise that a well-planned entrance into the business will return joy and satisfaction in abundance.

There’s an old adage that says, “The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man.” Perhaps that sums up why owning a harness horse is such a rewarding experience.

We’ll see you in the winner’s circle.
Owner’s Glossary

Learning how to “speak harness racing” is a great way to understand and better appreciate the sport. Here is a list of terms you’ll hear your trainer and others using:

- **Babies**—a general term for very young horses, including weanlings, yearlings, and 2-year-olds.
- **Broodmare**—A female horse used for breeding.
- **Catch-Driver**—A driver not directly employed by a stable, who gets a percentage of the winnings (generally 5 percent). Hired for his or her considerable skill.
- **Chart**—The numerical details of a given race, showing such items as: names of horses and drivers; racing positions; fractional and final times; and odds and payoffs. A “word picture” of what happened in a race, similar to a box score.
- **Claimer**—The name for a horse entered in a claiming race, one from which it can be bought at a price stated in the race condition.
- **Coggins**—A test used to ensure that a horse does not carry the virus for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA). The trainer of every racehorse must carry evidence that a current Coggins test has been performed on every horse in his or her care.
- **Colt**—A male horse, not more than 3 years of age.
- **Conditioned Race**—A race for which eligibility is determined by money or races won over a specified period of time, e.g.: “Non-winners of $2,500 in the last six starts.”
- **Condition Sheet**—The race secretary will publish a list of racing conditions for upcoming race dates, including a list of the purses to be paid, and the times and dates when entries will close.
- **Conformation**—The physical appearance of the Standardbred, including bone and muscle development, size, and the overall “look” of the horse.
- **Dam**—The female parent of a foal.
- **DNA-typing**—A method of genetic markers unique to each horse, much like fingerprinting, used to determine the true identity and parentage of each horse. All newborn foals must be DNA-typed before they can be registered, raced, or used in breeding.
- **Electronic Eligibility**—The owner at the time a horse makes its first start in a race is obliged to pay a one-time fee to the USTA to fund the collection and maintenance of racing data over the duration of the horse’s racing career.
- **Entry Fee**—A fee paid at the time a horse is entered in a stake race, typically three days before the race is contested. The fee is added to the purse. Most races have no entry fee.
- **Filly**—A female horse, not more than 3 years of age.
- **Foal**—(n.) A newborn horse; (v.) the act of giving birth.
- **Freeze Brand**—Stamping a permanent identifying number on a foal, using a metal device soaked in frozen nitrogen; sometimes in place or in addition to tattooing.
- **Freshman**—A 2-year-old racehorse.
- **Gelding**—A castrated male horse of any age.
- **Grand Circuit**—A series of rich and important races held at tracks across North America.
- **Handicap**—A race secretary may, if stated in the race condition, handicap the field by assigning the horse he thinks to be the best the outside post position, and assigning posts, outside-in, to horses in descending order of their perceived ability or recent success. Is also the term given to the process of picking a winner in a race.
- **Hobbles**—Straps around a trotter or pacer’s leg, designed to assist the horse in maintaining its gait at racing speed.
- **In-To-Go**—A listing of what horses drew into what races, including the post positions they either drew or were assigned, and the names of their drivers. Can be found online on the track’s Web site, or at http://racing.ustrotting.com.
- **Invitational**—A race to which the entrants have been invited by the race secretary; one of the highest levels of competition at a track.
- **Jog Cart**—A longer, heavier cart used in the training of horses. It is more comfortable for the trainer, who may spend many hours a day jogging horses as part of their training routine, and the placement of its seat permits the trainer to observe how the horse is moving while on the racetrack—as a means of assisting the trainer in making shoeing or equipment changes.
- **Limited Liability Company**—LLCs, as they are known, are popular because, similar to a corporation, owners have limited personal liability for the debts and actions of the LLC; other features of LLCs are more like a partnership, providing management flexibility and the benefit of pass-through taxation.
- **Maiden**—A horse who has never won a race for a purse.
- **Mare**—A female horse, age 4 and up.
**Mixed Sale**—An auction at which horses of all ages are sold.

**Nominating Fee**—The first of a series of stakes payments made to make a horse eligible to race in a future stake. The fee is added to the purse.

**Off-Stride**—When a horse is neither trotting nor pacing.

**Open**—A race when any horse may enter, which usually draws some of the track’s best horses; also the term used to describe a race for any horse, regardless of where it was foaled or regardless of its sex.

**Overnight**—A race for which eligibility is determined by claiming price or the number of races or amount of purse money a horse has won; owners pay no fees to enter overnight races.

**Pacer**—A gait marked by a side-to-side movement: The left legs move in unison, as do the right legs (see: Trotter).

**Paddock**—The place where horses are assembled at a racetrack, prior to a race, or a fenced-in grassy enclosure on a farm or at a training center where horses are turned out for freshening. It is also the term used to describe the hiring of a groom or other individual who will handle a horse while it’s in the paddock, prior to a race (you’ll pay a groom to “paddock” your horse on race day).

**Purse**—The pot of money won by the owners of the top finishers in a race; the winner wins 50 percent, runner-up wins 25 percent; the third place finisher wins 12 percent; and the horses finishing fourth and fifth win eight and five percent of the purse, respectively.

**Pedigree**—A horse’s family tree, especially showing each individual’s race record and foals produced by each mare on the female side.

**Qualifying Race**—A non-purse race contested to determine both the manners of the horses and whether they are capable of racing, without breaking stride, in a minimum standard of time set by the track. Horses who have never started in a race, have been away from the races for some time, and those who have broken repeatedly in purse races must successfully compete in a qualifying race before being permitted to start in a betting race.

**Race Secretary**—The track official who designs conditions for each race and determines each horse’s eligibility to enter those races.

**Series**—A race consisting of one or more preliminary legs and culminating in a final, the purse for which contains any nominating and starting fees.

**Sire Stakes**—A stakes race restricted to the progeny of stallions standing for stud service in a given state or province. A way to promote that jurisdiction’s breeding industry.

**Sophomore**—A 3-year-old racehorse.

**Stakes**—The term for a race into which horse owners and breeders pay in nominating fees, sustaining fees, and starting fees, which are all added to the purse, as is a defined amount contributed to the purse by the host racetrack.

**Stud**—Male breeding stock; a stallion.

**Stud Fee**—The tariff for the services of a stallion. Can range from a couple of hundred to tens of thousands of dollars.

**Sustaining Fee**—A fee paid to keep a horse eligible to a future stakes.

**Syndication**—A partnership arrangement calling for investors to put up “shares” of money to buy and stand a stallion at stud. Syndicate members share in the profits and have breeding rights to the stallion—which they may use for their own broodmares, or sell to others.

**Trotter**—A gait marked by a diagonal movement: The left front and right rear legs move in unison, as do the right front and left rear (see: Pacer).

**Weanling**—A foal weaned from its mother’s milk.

**Winners-Over**—A race for horses who have won more than a certain amount of purses, over a stated time span.

**Yearling**—A 1-year-old horse of either sex.
Here to Help

The U.S. Trotting Association has much to offer racehorse owners.

If it has to do with Standardbreds and racing, the USTA does it. Nearly 20,000 individuals and more than 260 racetracks join together to regulate, promote, and make the rules of racing. The USTA also licenses drivers and trainers; sponsors schools for racing officials; makes grants and donations towards programs benefiting the entire sport; conducts and supports broad-based marketing, publicity and public relations efforts; serves as the breed registry; and keeps detailed racing and breeding records. The USTA is administered by directors elected by the membership.

Indispensable Resources for the Owner

On the Web

Here is your best site for contact information for regional horsemen’s groups (a great way to find a trainer!), U.S. racetracks and horse auctions, and links to key industry resources. Your first act as a prospective Standardbred horse owner should be to bookmark this site on your computer: http://owners.ustrotting.com.

USTA Online, the U.S. Trotting Association’s popular Web site, at www.ustrotting.com, offers news, race entries and results, and a broad range of information about Standardbreds and harness racing—free of charge.


STARS, an online stallion guide, containing a wealth of information about the sport’s leading stallions, their pedigree, their racing record, and the performance of their offspring—free and online at http://stars.ustrotting.com.

In Print

The USTA produces annual, periodical, and online publications, each of which is an important source for the Standardbred owner; prices vary, for more details visit http://shop.ustrotting.com.

Hoof Beats, the award-winning monthly magazine published by the USTA, which features colorful and informative articles on breeding and racing, regular “how to” columns about training and shoeing, and profiles of leading owners, drivers and trainers. It is the most widely circulated harness racing periodical in the U.S. Subscribe by calling 877.800.USTA (8782).

The Care and Training of the Trotter and Pacer, the definitive work on the subject of training and racing Standardbreds, written by leading horsemen. Published by the USTA, and last revised in 1996.

The Stakes Guide, a comprehensive list of added-money races, including conditions, schedule of payments, and dates. The Stakes Guide is published each January, and its companion volume, the Yearling Nomination Booklet, is published in April.

The Trotting and Pacing Guide, the sport’s most comprehensive record book. More than 300 pages of Standardbred racing records, and information about all aspects of the industry. Published annually in April.
For more information on harness racing, contact the United States Trotting Association
6130 S. Sunbury Rd.
Westerville, Ohio 43081
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or visit us on the Web at www.ustrotting.com

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