



Grab the Lines!

Get into the action with Amateur Standardbred Driving Clubs

THE 1997 HAMBLETONIAN, a \$1.5 million race for the world's top 3-year-old trotters, was won by an amateur driver, Mal Burroughs, who drove his own horse, Malabar Man, to a thrilling victory against the very best drivers in the sport!

It's part of the sport's history

CLUB (AMATEUR) DRIVERS have been part of harness racing since the sport's inception. Once only for the rich, these driving ranks have a different face now, with a varied population of sports fans who have in common a love of racing.

Today's club drivers are doctors, dentists, attorneys, bankers, home-makers, teachers, salesmen, and factory workers, among others. They are the men and women who enjoy racing from the front lines, encouraging their

own winners.

There are plenty of opportunities for amateur drivers to satisfy their need to compete. Many tracks in North America are home to local driving clubs, which conduct amateur races on a regular basis, and there are opportunities on both the national and world stages: The Delvin Miller Amateur Drivers' Association sponsors a series of prestigious amateur races, known as the Billings Series, and the North American Amateur Drivers' Association sponsors races, across the globe, against teams of amateurs in other countries, and also selects the amateur who will represent the USA in the World Cup of Amateur Driving, conducted every two years.

What is a club driver?

A CLUB, or amateur, driver is someone who has not received valuable compensation for his or her driving services. To participate in club driving events, a person must be licensed by the U.S. Trotting Association, be a current member of the USTA, and be a current member in good standing with a locally affiliated USTA Standardbred Driving Club.

All amateur and club driving participants must hold a valid USTA driving license. The four types of licenses are: Matinee, Qualifying/Fair, Provisional and Full. For more information on licensing requirements, consult the USTA Rule Book, which is available online at <http://www.ustrotting.com/pdf/USTARuleBook.pdf>, or contact the USTA.

Events

THE TYPES OF EVENTS that are offered by your club are limited only by your imagination.

- The most common events are standard one-mile races, with a starting gate and photo finish.
- Some clubs may offer racing over varied distances.



- A starting gate and photo finish are not required to conduct a successful event, and a “starter” and “finish judges” may be selected from your membership instead.

- Other variations might include individual, competitive-rated miles or general horsemanship competitions.

Remember, the main objective is friendly competition, whatever form it may take. And clubs may also offer non-competitive events such as lectures or clinics with farriers, veterinarians, trainers or professional drivers; demonstrations of the form and function of different racing equipment; and field trips, such as to an auction, breeding farm, major race, or vet clinic.



Forming a driving club

IF THERE IS an amateur driving club at your local track, you’re in luck. If not, there’s the opportunity to start one. The USTA has made it easy for you to do just that; just call the offices and we’ll help get you started. Visit standardbreds.ustrotting.com for a list of currently established driving clubs.

There is certainly no sport other than harness racing in which amateurs can work their way up—and win—against top professionals. But even if your aim is only to adopt the sport of harness racing as a hobby, racing against fellow members of a local amateur club, you’ll feel the exhilaration only driving a racehorse can bring, and the chance to stand in the winner’s circle. You can do it; take the first step and grab those lines!

Learn about Standardbreds and driving from the pros.

Each year, during the third week in May, people come from near and far to live the dream of being a harness driver by attending the USTA’s Standardbred Driving School, held on the grounds of the Delaware, Ohio, County Fair, and on the same racetrack where the famed Little Brown Jug is raced.

The school is perfect for those who want to enter the amateur driving ranks. A curriculum consisting of instruction from trainers, veterinarians, racing officials, both professional and amateur drivers, and time spent jogging horses over the Delaware track will give the



student a perfect chance to “live the dream.” It culminates in an opportunity to earn your USTA license by taking the written driver’s examination.

Registration is required, and the number of students is limited. Tuition is \$300, and includes everything except transportation and lodging.

For more information and an enrollment form, visit http://www.ustrotting.com/misc/driving_school/drivingschool.cfm, or contact the USTA’s regulatory department at the address below, or call **1.877.800.USTA (8782), ext. 3281**.



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