



# The Horsemen's Newsletter

May 2016

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## New Shuttle Service Begins

Live on the backstretch at Laurel Park or Pimlico and want to go shopping? Need a ride to the grocery store, the doctor's office or Social Security?

All backstretch workers have to do is sign up for the new shuttle service being provided through a partnership between Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and Maryland Jockey Club.

A couple months ago, a shuttle service was just a dream. But when workers suggested at one of the MTHA's new monthly open forums that a transportation service would be much appreciated, the MTHA staff began to make plans.

In early April, the shuttle went into operation with six backstretch employees taking advantage of a trip to Walmart, a pharmacy and for lunch. Upcoming trips are planned to the Inner Harbor, Arundel Mills, a Laundromat and "anywhere else" employees want to go on the twice-a-week shuttle.

"Everyone is super excited about it," says David Richardson, the MTHA's Executive Director. "People are so happy people are taking an interest in the backstretch. We're really trying our best to restore a sense of community again among horsemen."

It is the latest step in that direction, having been preceded by the establishment of private mailboxes, a rebuilt recreation hall and the new Horsemen's Health System.

Dan Mangum, the MTHA's Recreation Program's administrator, has taken on the job of driving the 10-seat van the MTHA purchased at the end of last year. The van was being used to

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## Concussions- A Major Focus Of New Horsemen's Health System

*Dr. Kelly Ryan, DO*

Head injuries have been well known to jockeys for generations, however there is a lack of understanding within the thoroughbred racing community as a whole regarding the long-term consequences of head trauma to the sport's many riders.

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury which is caused by direct or indirect hits to the head or even sudden shifting of the brain within the skull. It is estimated that in the United States approximately 1.6 to 3.8 million concussions occur each year in sports. These injuries can occur from varying degrees of force and from multiple mechanisms. For most jockeys or riders, it is when there is a fall from a horse.

When an injury such as this occurs, there is a change to the chemicals in the brain. Often when a rider falls from the horse, they may go to the ER and get a CT scan done of the head, however, this will not show a concussion, just make sure there is no significant fracture or bleeding of the brain.

Most people are familiar with some of the symptoms of a concussion, but there are a lot of symptoms associated with concussions that most people are not aware of. The most common symptom of a concussion is headache.

Immediately after sustaining a fall, many riders might also feel dizzy, confused, tired, and sound and light may bother them such as being in a noisy room or being outside in the bright sunshine. Later on, riders may notice that they have problems with their balance, may have difficulty answering easy

questions, difficulty sleeping and may also find that their headaches or symptoms get worse when they try to concentrate. Symptoms may present initially or may take a few hours to days to notice.

In Maryland, MTHA and Maryland Jockey Club (MJC) has teamed up with MedStar Sports Medicine to provide the necessary care to the riders from qualified physicians on site during race days that have had extra training in dealing with concussions in athletes.

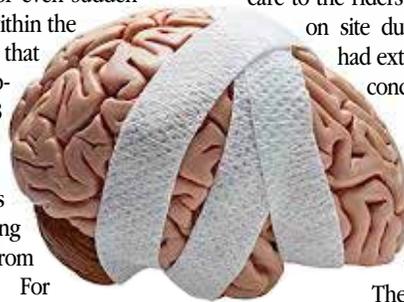
After any fall from a horse during race day or other injuries, it is the responsibility of the jockey to be evaluated by one of the MedStar physicians.

The physician will do a thorough exam including a physical exam but may also do some cognitive testing as well. This will help to determine if it is safe for the rider to go back to racing or if they should refrain from racing and re-evaluated in a few days.

It is the physician's responsibility to make sure to keep each individual rider safe, as well as taking into consideration the safety of the other riders on the track. A lot of riders try to ignore their symptoms and it is their tough nature, that may keep them from letting anyone know that they are suffering. However, this can be very dangerous!

When suffering from a concussion, your reaction time is slowed, your balance may be off, and your depth perception may have changed. All of these things make racing a horse through a tight curve very difficult. A jockey riding like this can be very dangerous, almost as if they were riding intoxicated.

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## ➤ Concussions, continued from Page 1

cated.

While racing with a concussion, jockeys may cause their horse to clip heels, or hug the rail too close resulting in severe and traumatic accidents and trauma.

The other concern is a condition called second impact syndrome, which is a condition when an athlete had a concussion and did not recover and then sustained another concussion before the brain had a chance to heal. If this occurs, it could lead to permanent disability or even death.

Treatment of concussions is fairly simple; you must allow your brain to rest. This means both physical and mental rest.

When recovering from a concussion, it is important to drink plenty of water, eat and sleep well and to avoid aggravating activities which require concentration such as reading, watching too much TV, or playing on a cell phone.

When you exercise, the pressure in your brain increases and it can worsen the symptoms and the duration of a concussion. For this reason, a Return to Ride/Participation protocol has been implemented to ensure the athlete's body can tolerate increase in activity.

A concussion can take anywhere from a few days to a few months to improve, but usually requires approximately seven days to return to regular activity. If an athlete does not give their brain the proper amount of time to heal, they may experience chronic headaches and other symptoms. For this reason, the MedStar physicians will help to guide the riders back to their mounts with RTP protocol, which is a multi-step process. This is to make sure that they are recovering appropriately and safely.

The first step is to be headache and symptom free for 72 hours of rest. Once a rider can go about their regular day to day activities without symptoms, then they can start a light exercise activity such as jogging or riding a bike for 30 minutes. As long as their symptoms do not reoccur, the next day they can do more intense and longer exercise and can try doing some simulated riding exercises on the equisizer.

The following step would be a 30 minute trot on a horse and then the following day increasing intensity to mounted individual gallop/race speed.

Prior to going back to races, the jockey must be re-evaluated by the physician again to make sure they have fully recovered and are safe to return to competition.

The physician will most likely have them do a SCAT 3 test which is a "sport concussion assessment" used in other athletes to determine severity and progress of a concussion.

The MedStar Sports Medicine Physicians can also help to coordinate treatment with specially trained therapist or medications if needed for symptoms or a prolonged course.

A concussion can be associated with many symptoms but if, at any time, a rider who has suffered a fall starts experiencing worsening symp-

toms, slurring of speech, change in vision, severe dizziness, falls, weakness of one specific part of their body, vomiting or experiencing the worst headache of their life, they should be re-evaluated immediately. Not all headaches are concussions, and some head trauma can be life threatening.

While there is still research being done, it has been suggested that people who have suffered multiple concussions, have history of learning disabilities or psychiatric illness and people who have sustained severe head trauma may take longer to recover.

Helmets are very important to help prevent skull fractures, and offer some protection from concussions, but unfortunately when falling from such great speeds and distance, risk of concussion are still increased. Unfortunately, there has not much research in how common concussion are in jockeys, but may be something that could be evaluated in the future.

The Return to Ride/Participation Protocol is new to the racing community but a similar system has been implemented in almost every other sport. Riders deserve the most up to date treatments and the same care that MedStar offers other professional and collegiate athletes.

Former jockeys have later come forward describing incidents of passing out, severe headaches, confusion and subsequently long term effects of mistreatment or avoidance of treatment for concussions. For any athlete or rider, missing 1-2 days of practice or riding seems long and 1-2 weeks seems like an eternity, but it is better than frequent headaches or permanent damage.

Head Injury Return To Participation (RTP) Protocol for Horsemen, exercise Riders and Jockeys

- \* Any Person sustaining a head trauma or suspected head trauma who exhibits any physical, cognitive, emotional or sleep symptoms is subject to the RTP protocol.
- \* Any person sustaining a head injury must be without any symptoms for at least 72 hours prior to starting RTP protocol.
- \* During the RTP protocol, patient must remain without symptoms during phase and during the 24 hours between phases.

### PHASES OF PROGRAM:

1. 30 minute continuous jog or stationary bike ride.
  2. 30 minute simulated ride.
  3. 30 minute mounted individual trot.
  4. Individual Gallop/simulated Race speed.
  5. Return to racing.
- \* Rider must be examined by Track physician prior to step 1 and step 4 or 5

*Dr. Kelly Ryan is one of four MedStar physicians who are a part of the Horsemen's Health System at Laurel Park, Pimlico and Timonium.*

## ➤ Van, continued from Page 1 —

transport workers to the Social Security Administration and for other special circumstances.

But now, Mangum will take backstretch workers on trips on a regular basis twice a week.

He and MTHA Racetrack Director Diana Pinones say workers who need rides can sign up at the Laurel Park kitchen or by calling Mangum at 410-802-5798 or Pinones at the MTHA's main number, 410-902-6844.

"We have some specific destinations planned," Mangum says. "But all anyone has to do is indicate when they sign up that they need to go to a doctor's office or MVA or Social Security, or wherever they might need and we will get them there."

"It's a great thing the MTHA is doing. We are going where they want to go." Mangum, 68, has worked at the track since 1992 and been involved the recreation program since 1998. The program organizes golf tournaments, bowling, basketball, softball and soccer leagues and sees the van trips as an opportunity for backstretch workers, who are often in need of transportation, to do more than just get their everyday living chores handled more easily.

He says he hopes to get the van on the road possibly as early as 11 a.m. and no later than noon, and have everyone back by 3 p.m. or 4 p.m.

"We are in the early stages, but we're hoping to do a lot of things," Mangum says. "It's not just for food and pharmacy visits. We want them to have fun, too." "We hope to have movie days, where people can go to the movies at the Laurel Town Center or Arundel Mills. We have a Bowie Baysox game on the schedule."

"I think it is a great convenience for them and as word spreads, I think this van is going to be really popular."

And, he adds, workers are already expressing their appreciation.

"A lot of people just don't have any [motorized] transportation and they can't do everything on a bike," he says.

Pick up for the service is at the main stable gate at Laurel Park. Mangum says the service will also be expanded to Pimlico Race Course as need arises.



## Rec Report

### Spring Golf Tournament

The MTHA Golf Outing held on Monday, April 18 at the Walden Country Club was a wonderful success for all of the 50 golfers who participated.

The sun drenched day included golf, dinner, beverages, prizes and much fun for all. The winners were as follows:

**1st Place:** Alfonso Griffith's Team (Chris Michael, Loren Smith), **2nd Place:** Wayne Potts Team (Cory Jensen, Marty Leonard Clarence Boswell), **3rd Place:** Libby Butts Team (Chuck Friedman, Larry Martin, Maria Rivera).

**Closest to Pin:** J.D. Brown and Marcus Salazar, **Longest Drive:** Loren Smith, **Best Turned Out:** Libby Butts Team.

### Baseball Ticket Distribution

The winners of the first drawing for the Orioles Ticket Packages were:

Antonio Corona (Gary Capuano) 4/8 vs. Rays, Mike Anderson (David Lazelle) vs. Blue Jays 4/20, Monica McKinnon (Cagett Farms) vs. White Sox 4/30, Damon Dilodovico vs. Yankees 5/4, Skeets Holland vs. A's 5/6, Tink Throckmartin (Gary Capuano) vs Tigers 5/12, Donna O'Connor (Rodney Jenkins) vs Detroit 5/14.

Congratulations to all of the winners! The next set of drawings will be held on 5/13 at Pimlico. Please sign up at the track kitchens or call Dan at 410-802-5798.

Also, the Bowie BaySox tickets are going quickly, please sign up soon if interested.

### Kickball

The MTHA is organizing pickup Kickball games on Tuesdays at the fields located across from the track on Route 198 at the Golf and Batting Cage fields. Games start at approximately noon.

Please contact Marty Leonard at (203) 733-1367 for more information.

### Texas Hold'em Results

The winners of the MTHA Texas Hold'em Tournament were: **1st Place:** Howard Wolfendale, **2nd Place:** Tony Aquirre.

The next tournament is scheduled for Monday, May 9 in the newly refurbished Laurel Park Rec room starting at noon. For more info call Marty Leonard at 203-733-1367.

### Van Service

The MTHA is sponsoring the *MTHA Express* Van service for employees on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

This new service includes transportation for shopping, pharmacy, lunch, movies, doctor and dentist appointments etc. You must sign up in the track kitchens each week to ensure a spot.

For more information, see Dan.

Don't forget!

## MTHA Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 23, 2016  
Pimlico Triple Crown Room  
11am - All Members Invited

# Maryland Racing - Firing On All Cylinders

The Maryland horseracing industry has been speeding along like a Formula One race car, firing on all cylinders.

The Maryland General Assembly passed The Maryland International and Preakness Stakes Incentive Act of 2016, allowing for the establishment of the Maryland International Thoroughbred Race - that must be run as a Grade 1 race on turf at Laurel Park.

The act also establishes a \$500,000 bonus program for Maryland-bred or sired horses winning in the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course and approved \$100,000 for a Maryland-bred or sired horse that finishes second through fifth in the Preakness.

Days later, the Maryland Racing Commission also approved the opening of the Maryland Jockey Club's fourth off-track betting facility at GBoone's Events Center on Old National Pike near Boonsboro and approved the liquor license for the new OTB at the Timonium Fairgrounds Race Track.

"It's like hitting a racing trifecta," says Sal Sinatra, MJC president and general manager. "First of all, we're delighted the bill passed the legislature. The International put Laurel on the racing map for years and this gives us a golden opportunity to bring it back."

The International - then known as the D.C. International and one of the greatest turf races in the world - was born in 1952. It drew horses from South America, Australia, the Soviet Union, France and other foreign countries.

But in 1994 it ran for the last time, defeated by the rise of the Breeders' Cup.

Now, if - or as Maryland Racing Commission chair John McDaniel speculates, when - the MRC approves the new International, it could actually be strengthened by the Breeders' Cup.

"We'd like to make it a Breeders' Cup prep race and run it in late September or early October, maybe as early as next year, 2017," Sinatra says. "And our ultimate wish is to try to establish it as a 'Win and You're In' race with the Breeders' Cup. It would add to the cachet and make it easier to get horses."

In passing the bill, which is expected to be signed by Gov. Larry Hogan before the end of May, the legislature provided \$500,000 in purse money for the International.

"This bill passed unanimously [by a 137-0 vote in the House and 46-0 in the Senate]," Mc-

Daniel says. "It reflects in its entirety that Maryland racing has the confidence of the legislature. I'm very pleased and I know The Stronach Group, the MJC and the horsemen are, too."

McDaniel says when he attended a recent meeting of the Racing Commissioners International "the buzz was all about Maryland racing. Everyone sees the handles are up, more trainers are coming. People want to be part of it."

"I think it goes back to the 10-year agreement and everyone being engaged in the process of bringing Maryland racing back to its best in seven-to-10 years. And the MJC has been an extremely supportive part of that."

Sinatra and the MJC love that the money they are putting into the Maryland racetracks is paying dividends.

"I think when you just work hard stuff like that bill - when you're investing funds and showing progress - the legislature is more likely to support you," Sinatra says.

The latest infusion of money by the MJC into Pimlico, he says, totals from \$750,000 to \$1 million. About \$500,000 of that money was spent upgrading the 21-by-30-foot infield television to a high-definition model. The rest went to fixing the water pumps, so there is not a recurrence of last year's water pressure problems and sealing the roof over the grandstand boxes where last year's Preakness-day deluge caused unexpected leaks.

"The group that got rained on last year won't this year," Sinatra says. "We also put down new carpeting in that area and installed new TVs."

— Continued on [mdhorsemen.com](http://mdhorsemen.com) ➔

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# Backstretch Mailboxes Available

In an effort to improve accessibility to backstretch worker's mail, which is a constant issue at most race track's, the MTHA has made available in the newly refurbished Laurel Park Rec Room, 200 secure mailboxes to current residents of Maryland Jockey Club tracks.

One key per dorm room will be provided free of charge to currently employed residents in dorm rooms at Laurel Park and Pimlico as well as Laurel Commons.

Mail will be delivered daily to these

mailboxes which can only be accessed by keyholders. Previously, resident's mail was held at the stable gate in a cardboard box.

Excess mailboxes will be provided to non-resident horsemen on a first come, first served basis.

Mailbox holders will be assigned a box number and can use the address of 3600 Laurel Ft. Meade Road, Box # \_\_\_\_, Laurel, MD 20724.

Call 410-902-6844 to sign up.



## MTHA

500 Redland Court, #105  
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117

**May 2016**

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## Backstretch Pension Sign-Up Schedule

MTHA's Backstretch Pension Plan Registration for the year ended 2015 will take place at the following times and locations.

Please bring your MRC Badge and W-2, 1099, or tax return for 2015.



**May 2 - May 6**

Laurel Park MTHA Office,  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**May 9 - May 13**

Pimlico MTHA Office,  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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