



Trainer Candidate

JONATHAN MALDONADO

Jonathan Maldonado, a Laurel Park-based trainer, has been in Maryland for more than a decade, and his horses have earned more than \$3 million.

Maldonado is a native of Puerto Rico who got started in racing at a very early age by going to the barn and gradually learning the business. He began training horses at the age of 17, and it didn't take long for his operation to grow dramatically.

At one point in Puerto Rico, Maldonado had 80 to 90 horses in training. But the earnings potential was low, so he came to the United States and settled on Maryland, where he had family.

Maldonado began helping trainer Hugh McMahon and then became an assistant trainer for Dane Kobiskie, who won two consecutive training titles. He then decided to go out on his own and has assisted other trainers who ship in while running his own operation.

Maldonado is bilingual and said he has a passion for assisting those who work on the backstretch at Maryland tracks. He said he believes the MTHA Board of Directors can do more in that regard.

"There should be somebody who speaks Spanish on the board," Maldonado said. "About 90% of the people back here speak Spanish, and we as horsemen rely a lot on those employees."

After about 10 years training horses in Maryland, Maldonado said he wants to see changes.

"I believe we should be in a better place by now," he said. "We need some young people on that board. In Maryland, we're supposed to be close to being (on par) with the biggest racetracks in America, and here we are, stuck in the same spot. We as horsemen have to get together and make things happen. It's the only way to do good things here."

Maldonado also said he'd like to see more attention paid to the racing surfaces. "Nobody talks about the track," he said. "We have to focus on that."