

Vernon Downs 2026 Media Guide



VERNON DOWNS RACING



BUCHOLIC VERNON DOWNS

Nestled in the beautiful rolling hills of central New York, Vernon Downs offers a long-running history of fast paced harness racing. From April to November, you can listen to the beat of the horses, featuring some of the finest races in the area. In recent years, Vernon Downs has seen a renaissance, with top trotters making a stop in central New York to contest the Zweig Memorial in the summer.

Additionally, top New York-sired horses take part in a full slate of New York Sire Stakes and Empire Breeders Classic events. Combine that with a casino, daily simulcasting of races throughout North America, promotions, good food, live entertainment, and an all-suite hotel, Vernon Downs is a great place to have fun at an affordable price.

Vernon Downs Quick Facts

Track circumference: 7/8 mile

Stretch length: 900'

First-row starters: 9

Open stretch: No

Takeout rates: Win, place, and show: 18%. Exacta and double: 20%. All others: 25%.

Casino Quick Facts

VLTs: 512

Other games: Video Poker, electronic roulette

Denominations: From 1¢ to \$5.00

Minimum age to play VLTs: 18



LIVE HARNESS RACING RETURNS!

OPENING DAY SATURDAY, APRIL 18 | POST TIME 5:05PM*

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY						
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JUNE						
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28	29	30				

JULY						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST						
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SEPTEMBER						
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OCTOBER						
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NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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29	30					

STAKES HIGHLIGHTS						
MAY 25: NYSS 3-Year-Old Colt Trot, NYSS 3-Year-Old Filly Trot						
JUNE 12: \$500,000 Empire Breeders Classic Finals 3-Year-Old Colt & Filly Trot, NYSS 3-Year-Old Colt Pace						
JULY 10: NYSS 2-Year-Old Colt Trot						
JULY 19: \$600,000 Zweig Memorial 3-Year-Old Colt & Filly Trot, NYSS 2-Year-Old Colt Pace, NYSS 2-Year-Old Filly Pace						
AUGUST 14: NYSS 3-Year-Old Filly Pace						
SEPTEMBER 4: NYSS 2-Year-Old Filly Trot						
OCTOBER 2: Big Apple Eliminations - All 2-Year-Old Divisions						
OCTOBER 9: \$1,000,000 Big Apple Finals - All 2-Year-Old Divisions						

POST TIMES 12:15PM 5:05PM

*PENDING REGULATORY APPROVAL.

LIVE A LITTLE
WIN A LOT



VERNON DOWNS
RACING

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Management reserves the right to modify or cancel promotion at any time.



VERNON DOWNS CONTACT INFORMATION

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VERNON DOWNS TRACK HISTORY

July 1, 1953: Vernon Downs opens its doors for the first time to a crowd of 4,632 racegoers. Bob Abbe II wins the first race over the Central New York racecourse, covering 6-1/2 furlongs in 1:44.1. A total of \$114,777 is wagered on the first of 67 programs contested through the inaugural season.

1955: The three-quarter mile track is dubbed "The Home of the Miracle Mile" after Adios Harry paced one mile in 1:55, a world race record which held up for 15 years.

1964: Legendary racecaller Jim Moran debuts at Vernon, sharing duties with announcer Bud Hebert before embarking on a half-century career as the voice of harness racing in central New York.

1965: Bret Hanover attracts a crowd of 14,169 to the Miracle Mile for the season's featured three-year-old pacing event.

1966: Bret Hanover again makes Vernon Downs history, establishing a 1:54 world record in a time trial. The grandstand is enclosed with large sliding windows, affording racegoers protection from inclement conditions while still allowing for open-air atmosphere on warm summer nights.

1971: The downstairs clubhouse restaurant is now air conditioned, and the track is rated the second fastest in America by the United States Trotting Association.

1972: The upper-level clubhouse restaurant is renamed the Gold Cup Room from the Mohawk Terrace, while the downstairs section becomes the Miracle Mile Room after two decades as the Turfside Terrace.

1973: AmTote installs a computerized pari-mutuel system, and 61 television monitors are installed throughout the facility.

1974: Instant replay of races is offered for the first time.

1980: Niatross, who was based at Vernon in a 13-for-13 freshman season, returns to Vernon with driver Clint Galbraith after their Meadowlands Pace triumph to capture the Gaines Stakes in 1:53.3, a new track record. A new lighting system is installed around the track.

1984: Sunday racing is welcomed to Vernon Downs.

1985: Prakas sets the trotting record at Vernon with a 1:56 mile in the Founders Gold Cup for three-year-old's.

1988: Call for Rain establishes a new speed mark at Vernon with a 1:52.3 mile on August 20.

1989: Dexter Nukes equals Call for Rain's mark of 1:52.3 in the Gaines Stakes.

1991: The inside hub rail is removed and replaced with pegs marking the inside of the track. May concert series begins.

1992: Stylish Cam takes another second off the track record with a 1:51.3 performance in the North American Pacing Series.

1994: Canaco On Time turns in a 1:51.1 mile on the pace. The Vernon Downs Hotel, located at the top of the present-day homestretch, opens in November as the Vernon Comfort Suites.

1995: Deliberate Speed's 1:55 Founders Stakes win establishes a new trotting track record.

1996: Oye Vay's 1:50.3 Gaines Stakes victory is the fastest mile in four decades of racing at Vernon. Both three-year-old trotting divisions of the Breeders Crown are held at Vernon, with Personal Banner (1:54.1) and Running Sea (1:55) winning the filly and colt divisions, respectively.

2000: After 47 years of the unique six-furlong track configuration replete with a chute for starting one-mile races in the homestretch, a new 7/8-mile oval is unveiled on July 1.

2004: Vernon Downs closes its doors in July.

2006: New York real-estate mogul and harness racing enthusiast Jeff Gural purchases Vernon Downs out of bankruptcy. Bob's Ring Of Fire and Chuck Connor Jr. win the first race of the abbreviated 30-day meet. Easton Alliance N and Cat Manzi won the \$83,500 Artiscape for distaff pacers in 1:51.

2007: The Credit Winner free-for-all trot debuts at Vernon Downs. Vivid Photo and Roger Hammer take the lion's share of the \$154,000 purse with a 1:52.1 victory in the first of ten renewals of the event, which later would be named the Crawford Farms Trot and would move to sister track Tioga Downs in 2017.

2013: Intimidate and Ron Pierce establish the all-age trotting record at Vernon with a 1:51 win in the Credit Winner.

2014: After 50 years behind the microphone, Jim Moran calls his final race at Vernon Downs.

2015: Speedy local mainstays Fireyourguns and JK Panache both record 1:47.3 miles at Vernon to jointly hold the all-age track pacing record.

2018: The one and only Atlanta 3 year old trotting queen out of Chapter Seven sets a new track record in her EBC finals score here at Vernon of 150.3 on May 28th 2018.

2021: Cattlewash out of the Ron Burke barn goes wire to wire in a short field of 5 to break the track record for 4 year old pacers in a time of 149.0 flat.

2023: Kirekegaard K equals all time track trotting record of 1:50.3 while setting a new standard for 3-year-old colts for Ake Svanstedt in the Empire Breeders Classic.

2025: Vernon Downs installs a new LED lighting system improving track safety and an enhanced visual experience for simulcast players.

The Dr. Harry M. Zweig 3-year-old Trot (Grand Circuit Stake)

Top 3-year-old trotters are featured annually at Vernon Downs in the Harold M. Zweig Memorial

OPEN DIVISION

• 2025	Emoticon Legacy ▪ Maryland ▪ Meshuggah	Louis Roy Dexter Dunn Scott Zeron	Luc Blais Marcus Melander Marcus Melander	1:51.4
• 2024	Dame Good Time Amazing Catch Daiquiri Hanover	Scott Zeron Dexter Dunn Ake Svanstedt	Travis Alexander Ake Svanstedt Ake Svanstedt	1:52.3
• 2023	Ari Ferrari J Chappercraz Cecil Hanover	Dexter Dunn Joe Bongiorno Ake Svanstedt	Tony Alagna Ron Burke Ake Svanstedt	1:51
• 2022	Temporal Hanover ▪ Periculum ▪ Pretender	Brian Sears Mattias Melander Andrew Mccarthy	Marcus Melander Marcus Melander Nancy Takter	1:52.3
• 2021	Spy Booth ▪ Balenciaga ▪ Zenith Stride	Dexter Dunn Scott Zeron Andrew Mccarthy	Nancy Takter Paul Kelly Mark Harder	1:52.3
• 2020	Ready For Moni ▪ Back Of The Neck ▪ King Alphonso	Matt Kakaley Scott Zeron Dexter Dunn	Nancy Takter Ake Svanstedt Ake Svanstedt	1:51.1
• 2019	Greenshoe ▪ Green Manalishi S ▪ Mariseille	Brian Sears Tim Tetrick Ake Svanstedt	Marcus Melander Marcus Melander Ake Svanstedt	1:52
• 2018	Met's Hall ▪ Manchego (f) ▪ Six Pack	Andy Miller Yannick Gingras Åke Svanstedt	Julie Miller Jimmy Takter Åke Svanstedt	1:52
• 2017	Yes Mickey ▪ Ariana G (f) ▪ Devious Man	Åke Svanstedt Yannick Gingras Andy Miller	Åke Svanstedt Jimmy Takter Julie Miller	1:51.2

FILLY DIVISION

- 2025 Torrissi Yannick Gingras Nancy Takter 1:54.0
 - What A Bid Hanover Ake Svanstedt Ake Svanstedt
 - Magic Marker Tyler Buter Richard Norman

- 2024 Date Night Hanover Dexter Dunn Marcus Melander 1:51.4
 - Senorita Palema Tim Tetrick Ake Svanstedt
 - Drawn Impression Louis Roy Luc Blais

- 2023 Sadie Hanover Scott Zeron Linda Toscano 1:53.1
 - Gigi Hanover Ake Svanstedt Ake Svanstedt
 - Baptism Dexter Dunn Chris Ryder

- 2022 Jiggy Jog S Dexter Dunn Ake Svanstedt 1:53.3
 - Delilah Hanover Todd McCarthy Richard Norman
 - Baptism Ake Svanstedt Ake Svanstedt

- 2021 Darlene Hanover Todd Mccarthy Brett Bittle 1:53.4
 - Aunt Irene Dexter Dunn Nancy Takter
 - Contested Hanover Tim Tetrick George Ducharme

- 2020 Ramona Hill Andrew Mccarthy Tony Alagna 1:52.0
 - Hypnotic AM Brian Sears Marcus Melander
 - Tricky Sister Jason Bartlett Andrew Harris

- 2019 The Ice Dutchess Yannick Gingras Nancy Johansson 1:52.4
 - Evident Beauty David Miller Richard Norman
 - Starita Dexter Dunn Joe Holloway

- 2018 Supergirl Riley Marcus Miller Erv Miller 1:54.3
 - Plunge Blue Chip Åke Svanstedt Åke Svanstedt
 - Perfect Summer K David Miller Andrew Harris

- 2017 Evelyn Andy Miller Åke Svanstedt 1:54.1
 - Sunshine Delight Brett Miller Staffan Lind
 - Feed Your Head Yannick Gingras Jimmy Takter

EMPIRE BREEDERS' CLASSIC
New York Sired 3YO Trotting Colts and Geldings
Super Chapter *(Scott Zeron)*



• 2025	Super Chapter	Scott Zeron	Marcus Melander	1:50.4
• 2025	Chat Room	Tyler Buter	John Butenschoen	1:52.3
• 2024	Situationship	Ake Svanstedt	Ake Svanstedt	1:52.1
• 2024	Wild Ticket	Dexter Dunn	Marcus Melander	1:52.3
• 2023	Kierkegaard K	Ake Svanstedt	Ake Svanstedt	1:50.3*
• 2022	Justice	Ake Svanstedt	Ake Svanstedt	1:53.3
• 2021	Ahundreddollarbill	Andrew Mccarthy	Tony Alagna	1:53.2
• 2020	Third Shift	Ake Svanstedt	Ake Svanstedt	1:52.4
• 2020	Hobbs	Jason Bartlett	Jim Campbell	1:53.3
• 2019	Gimpanzee	Brian Sears	Marcus Melander	1:54
• 2018	Six Pack	Åke Svanstedt	Åke Svanstedt	1:51.2
• 2017	Devious Man	Andy Miller	Julie Miller	1:52.2
• 2016	Dante	Åke Svanstedt	Åke Svanstedt	1:52.3
• 2015	Crazy Wow	Yannick Gingras	Ron Burke	1:51.1
• 2014	Expressive Action	Mike Simons	John Grasso	1:54.1

EMPIRE BREEDERS' CLASSIC

New York Sired 3YO Trotting Fillies

El Nightwish (*Dexter Dunn*)



•	2025	Pink Bomb	Dexter Dunn	John Butenschoen	1:54.1
•	2025	El Nightwish	Dexter Dunn	Lucan Wallin	1:52.4
•	2024	Honey's Sweet	Yannick Gingras	Tony Alagna	1:52.0
•	2023	Royal Filly	Tyler Buter	Tony Alagna	1:52.3
•	2022	Joviality S	Brian Sears	Marcus Melander	1:51.0
•	2021	Iteration	Brian Sears	Marcus Melander	1:53.1
•	2021	Darlene Hanover	Andrew Mccarthy	Brett Bittle	1:54.3
•	2020	Hypnotic AM	Brian Sears	Marcus Melander	1:53.4
•	2019	Quincy Blue Chip	Jim Morill JR	Gareth Dowse	1:55.0
•	2018	Atlanta	Scott Zeron	Rick Zeron	1:50.3
•	2017	Barn Bella	Jeff Gregory	Steven Pratt	1:51.3
•	2016	Non Stick	Åke Svanstedt	Åke Svanstedt	1:54
•	2015	Barn Doll	Jeff Gregory	Steven Pratt	1:52.1
•	2014	Crediana	Tim Tetrick	T. Smedshammer	1:54.1
•	2013	Lola De Vie	Jim Morrill Jr.	Chris Ryder	1:55.3
•	2012	For A Dancer	Jeff Gregory	Joe Holloway	1:54

VERNON DOWNS TRACK RECORDS

**Fastest*

Pace:

- *1:47.3 Fireyourguns 2015 Jim Morrill, Jr. & JK Panache 2015 Frank Davis
- 2C Travel Playlist 2015 Marcus Miller 1:49.2
- 2F Vivians Dream 2022 Jordan Stratton 1:50.4
- 2G Tomy Terror 2014 Corey Callahan 1:50.2
- 3C Shake That House 2019 Brian Sears 1:47.4
- 3F (t) Stepabovetherest 2024 Braxten Boyd 1:49.4 Tarrific 2024 Jason Bartlett 1:49.4
- 3G Splash Brother 2020 Tyler Buter 1:49
- 4H Cattlewash 2021 David Miller 1:49.0
- 4M Armbro Dancer 2007 Ron Pierce 1:50.1
- 4G JK Panache 2013 Jim Morrill, Jr. 1:49.1
- AH He's Gorgeous 2012 Tim Tetrick 1:48.3
- AM (t) My Little Dragon 2008 Brian Sears 1:49.4 Venus Delight 2015 Jason Bartlett
- AG (t) Fireyourguns 2015 Jim Morrill, Jr. 1:47.3* JK Panache 2015 Frank Davis

Trot:

- *1:50.3 Atlanta 2018 Scott Zeron & Kierkegaard K 2023 Ake Svanstedt
- 2C Crazy Wow 2014 Dan Rawlings 1:54 & Keep Asking 2023 Scott Seron 1:54
- 2F Atlanta 2017 Mark Macdonald 1:54
- 2G Lightning Force 2013 John Campbell 1:55
- 3C Kierkegaard K 2023 Ake Svanstedt 1:50.3*
- 3F Atlanta 2018 Scott Zeron 1:50.3*
- 3G Dame Good Time 2024 Scott Zeron 1:51.1
- 4H A Penny Earned 2013 J. Whittemore 1:53.1
- 4M Hannelore Hanover 2016 Yannick Gingras 1:51.3
- 4G Intimidate 2013 Ron Pierce 1:51
- AH Whats The Word 2023 C. Connor Jr. 1:52
- AM Maven 2014 Yannick Gingras 1:52
- AG San Pail 2011 Randy Waples 1:51.1

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