

For immediate release

John Zimich Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs (570) 831-2195  
[zimich@mohegansunpocono.com](mailto:zimich@mohegansunpocono.com)

## **Another Banner Year for Horsemen at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs**

With increased purses from slot revenues in Pennsylvania, Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs certainly has seen its racing improve to another level over the past few years and the 2009 season was no different with topflight horses and horsemen competing here throughout the 135-day meet that concluded November 21.

For the first time in the 44-year history of the Northeastern Pennsylvania racetrack, nine drivers earned purses of more than \$1 million with two of them surpassing the \$2 million mark.

Joe Pavia, Jr., who won his first-ever driving title at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs with 251 wins, finished his season with \$2,657,271 while Jim Morrill Jr., who was runner-up and top Universal Driving Rating champion with a mark of .400, earned \$2,504,756 in purses with 217 victories.

The other drivers who earned more than \$1 million in purses included Andrew McCarthy, 166 wins and \$1,971,082; Anthony Napolitano, 142 victories and \$1,669,456; Mike Simons, 136 wins and \$1,607,378; Tom Jackson, 118 victories and \$1,516,277; George Napolitano, Jr., 109 wins and \$1,054,992; Greg Grismore, 82 wins and \$1,101,247, and Larry Stalbaum, 75 wins and \$1,049,525.

It also was another milestone on the trainer's side when three conditioners topped the \$1 million mark in purses. They were leading trainer (wins) and percentage trainer Chris Oakes with 116 wins and \$1,198,352 in purses; Carmine Fusco, 106 wins and \$1,231,336 in purses, and Ron Burke with 88 victories and \$1,544,951 in purses.

Pavia, Jr., also finished fifth behind William Mullin in the trainer standings with 41 victories and \$669,782 in purses.

Purses (overnight and stakes) in 2009 increased a whopping \$10 million-plus from \$17,109,536 in 2008 to \$27,319,779. There were 2,041 races conducted for the 135-day meet in 2009.

Linda Segarra, horsemen's bookkeeper, also noted it was another record year for claims registered during the 2009 season. She noted a total of \$12,310,075 was meted out for 779 claims made during the season. Both are new claiming standards.

June 12 is a day that will be long be remembered in the history of the racetrack. At the time, two world three-year-old trot records were established during the contesting of the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes for three-year-old trotting colts and geldings.

Caviar Crown (Dave Palone) set the three-year-old colt world and track mark for a five-eighths mile oval in the third race with a time of \$1:53.1 and 10

races later Shermans Mountain (Morrill, Jr.) established the world and track mark for three-year-old trotting gelding, stopping the timer in 1:53.3.

It also was on this day when aged pacing gelding Asfarasyoucansee (Morrill, Jr.), set a new track mark for aged pacing geldings with a time of 1:48.4.

Stage Show, four-year-old trotting mare, established a world and track mark October 13 when she trotted the mile in 1:53.1 over the five-eighths mile surface with Tom Jackson in the sulky.

Another pacing track record was set by four-year-old stallion Sailing Cruise (McCarthy) on July 10 with a time of 1:50.2.

Johnny Z, trained by George Teague, Jr., and driven by Brian Sears, won the richest races of the season at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs. Johnny Z was victorious in the \$301,140 Max C. Hempt Memorial Pace for three-year-old pacing colts and geldings. Time of the mile was 1:51.3 with the track listed as sloppy.

On the three-year-old distaff side, Yellow Diamond (Morrill, Jr.) won the \$250,350 James M. Lynch Memorial Pace for three-year-old pacing fillies. Yellow Diamond just missed the stakes mark of Southwind Tempo by a fifth of a second, winning in 1:49.4.

The racetrack hosted the Pennsylvania Championship Finals for three-year-olds on September 12 with a track listed as good. Winners of those \$200,000 races were Billie Bluechip (Joe Pavia, Jr.), filly pace, 1:53; Doubleshotofscotch (Morrill, Jr.), colt and gelding pace, 1:51.4; Caviar For The Lady (Charlie Norris), filly trot, 1:57, and Salutation Hanover (Yannick Gingras), colt and gelding trot, 1:56.3.

Four Starz Sue, a hard-hitting four-year-old gelding trained by Carmine Fusco, was named 2009 Pacer of the Year. Trotter of the Year honors were shared by All About Justice, five-year-old gelding trained by Gail Wrubel, and Grain Of Truth, an eight-year-old gelding trained by Ray Schnittker.

Claiming Pacer of the Year was Ron Burke-trained Theredandpanlines, a four-year-old pacing gelding while Claiming Trotter of the Year went to Twocarlane, a nine-year-old gelding trained mainly by John Wagner.

Nip N Attack, five-year-old mare trained by Oakes, was named Mare of the Year. Johnny Z, a three-year-old pacing stallion, was chosen as Three-year-old Colt of the Year with Billie Bluechip, trained by Pavia, Jr., was honored as Three-year-old Filly of the Year.

The 135-day meet total handle was \$36,431,523.07.

Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs once again hosted the Mildred Williams Driving Challenge that featured all female drivers, who donated their purses to the Susan G. Komen Foundation For The Cure, Northeast Affiliate. Track management and Pennsylvania Harness Horsemen's Association teamed to donate \$3,000 to the charity in its fight against breast cancer.

Billings Amateur Driving Series also made another stop here and featured a few divisions of the amateur drivers and the latter's purse money is donated to the sport's Hall of Fame at Goshen, N.Y.

Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs is proud and honored to become the first track ever to host all 12 Breeders Crown events October 9, 2010.

