



- News, views and insights that matter to breeders, owners and racing industry professionals - July/Aug 2026 -

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Backstretch Assistance Program founder Dr. Chris Samaha named 2026 Buddy Raines Award recipient

Dr. Chris Samaha, who founded the industry-leading Backstretch Community Assistance Program at Monmouth Park more than 30 years ago, has been named the 2026 recipient of the Virgil “Buddy” Raines Distinguished Achievement Award, it was announced May 5 by Monmouth Park.

The Raines Award, currently in its 31st year, is presented annually prior to Monmouth Park’s season opener. It honors men and women who have demonstrated a continuing commitment to the sport of Thoroughbred racing as an owner, trainer or administrator, and whose conduct has been exemplary for professionalism, integrity and service to the sport.

Monmouth Park’s 81st season of racing got underway May 9.

The 55-year-old Samaha, a sports psychologist, launched a substance abuse program for backstretch workers in 1995 that has since involved into a support system for all types of health issues. The program offers free counseling, as well as health education programs, for licensed stable hands, grooms, hot walkers and exercise riders, and offers access to a variety of medical screenings.

Samaha resides in nearby Shrewsbury, N.J.

“I would have burned out long ago if it was strictly a treatment program, but I have all of the other components that help everyone on the backstretch, whether directly or indirectly,” Samaha said. “I’m passionate about what I do

and I would not have stayed in it this long if I didn’t believe this a good industry.”

Samaha’s program features a free lunch program for backstretch workers and he provides Thanksgiving dinners for those workers prior to the stable area closing for the winter. Free medical clinics and screenings are key components of the program as well.



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Fasig-Tipton 2-year-olds in training sale results

Two New Jersey-breds sold during the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Two-Year-Olds in Training Sale held May 18 and 19 in Timonium, Md.

Leading the way was Hip No. 313, a dark bay filly by second-crop sire Yaupon out of the Tiznow mare Lola Lola, who sold for \$100,000 to prominent trainer Saffie Joseph Jr. Bred by Robert Lambe, the filly is the first foal out of Lola Lola, a daughter of the Elusive Quality mare Southern Alibi, herself the dam of four winners.

The pedigree carries considerable black-type depth and traces to one of the sport's most distinguished female families. Third dam Looking Afar produced seven winners, including graded stakes winner Nefertini, victorious in the Go for Wand

Handicap-G2, as well as stakes winner In the Navy Now, an earner of \$253,020 who capturing the Nellie Morse Stakes.

The female family also connects to the influential Phipps breeding program and includes several accomplished runners and sires, led by Seeking the Gold. Additional standouts from the family include Fast Play, a winner of more than \$594,000, Stacked Pack (\$268,208) and Survivalist, an earner of \$478,920 and winner of the Gotham Stakes-G3.

Another New Jersey-bred to sell during the auction was Hip No. 423, a chestnut colt by Tacitus bred by Bright View Farm. The colt was purchased by Scott H. Groh for \$35,000.

Out of the eight-time winning mare Poochy, the colt hails from a productive female family that has consistently

produced durable runners. Poochy earned \$180,150 during her racing career and has already produced multiple earners, including Spiritinthenight, who has banked \$146,892, and Here Comes Billy, earner of \$119,856.

The colt's second dam, Blumin Exuberant, was a six-time winner on the racetrack and proved equally successful as a broodmare. All six of her foals to race reached the winner's circle, including stakes-placed Pinelands Pete, underscoring the family's consistency and soundness.

Black-type performers found throughout the pedigree include Elite Lady (\$302,577), Golden Production (\$217,075) and Freeze Your Kela (\$208,034), adding additional commercial appeal to the colt's page.

NTRA Equine Discount Program

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Index of NJ-bred races at Monmouth Park

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 MSW Boys Short Dirt: August 23
 MSW F&M Long Dirt: August 9
 MSW Boys Long Dirt: August 14
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 Stakes Girls Short Dirt: June 6, August 23
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 Stakes Boys Long Dirt: August 23

2026 New Jersey-bred stakes schedule at Monmouth Park

Run Date	Stakes Name	Purse	Division	Distance
July 4	Irish War Cry Handicap	\$75,000	3 and up	1 mile (Turf)
August 23	Charles Hesse III Handicap	\$100,000	3 and up	1 ¹ / ₁₆ miles
August 23	NJ Breeders Handicap	\$75,000	3 and up	6 furlongs
August 23	Eleven North Handicap	\$75,000	F & M, 3 and up	6 furlongs



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Membership Application

Member Information

NAME

SS#/FEDERAL I.D.#

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

COUNTY

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Membership Categories

Breeder

A breeder member shall be a person who owns the required interest in a broodmare or registered stallion domiciled in New Jersey; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. A breeder member shall have voting rights.

Owner

An owner member shall be a person who owns a registered New Jersey- bred; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. An owner member will not have voting rights.

Associate

An associate member is a person who is interested in owning, breeding, or racing horses in the State of New Jersey or in fostering economic activity through the breeding, ownership and/or racing of horses in the State of New Jersey. An associate member will not have voting rights.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Membership Dues

A check or money order for \$100.00 must accompany this form. Spouses are encouraged to join the **TBANJ** under joint membership status. This fee would total \$150.00 per couple. Each spouse must fill out a separate form to accompany the payment. Membership will be effective upon receipt and will be in force each calendar year and must be renewed annually.

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