

TONY ALAGNA**Born: 6/8/1972 – Birthplace: Champaign, IL – Resides: Manalapan, NJ****Breeders Crown trophies: 6.**

Tony Alagna won three Breeders Crown finals in 2019, joining Jimmy Takter, Ron Burke, and Bob McIntosh as the only trainers to win three or more trophies in a year. Alagna's victories were with Ramona Hill in the 2-year-old filly trot, Reflect With Me in the 2-year-old filly pace, and American History in the Open Pace.

Ramona Hill was a Dan Patch Award winner in 2019 and repeated in 2020 when her wins included the Hambletonian.

Alagna's prior triumphs were with 2-year-old male pacer Stay Hungry in 2017, 3-year-old male pacer Racing Hill in 2016, and 3-year-old male pacer Captaintreacherous in 2013.

Captaintreacherous was Pacer of the Year in 2012 and 2013. "The Captain" became the first pacer to win that honor in consecutive years since Jenna's Beach Boy in 1995-96 and joined Niatross as the only horses to accomplish the feat at ages 2 and 3 since the award was first given in 1970.

This year, Alagna's stable has already set records for wins with more than 180 and purses with more than \$6.2 million. He is second in earnings to perennial category leader Ron Burke (who has more than \$17 million). Alagna's triumphs include the Canadian Trotting Classic with Ahundreddollarbill, Cane Pace with Rockyroad Hanover, and Tattersalls with Abuckabett Hanover.

Alagna started his own stable in 2009 and has won more than 1,700 races and \$55 million in purses in his career. He ranks 11th in earnings since 1992.

A native of Illinois, Alagna followed his mom, Donna Lee, into the sport. He had a pony at the age of 3, was reading up on pedigrees at 9, and solely responsible for his first horse at 10. Soon after graduating from high school, Alagna was assisting his mom with her stable.

He later worked for trainer Brian Pinsky and, after getting a degree from Florida's Seminole College, as private trainer for Fox Valley Standardbreds in Illinois. He next spent six years as the top assistant to trainer Erv Miller, where he worked with Breeders Crown champions Lis Mara and Shark Gesture.

MARIE ORTOLAN BAR**Born: 10/6/1968 – Birthplace: France – Resides: Stanford, KY**

Marie Ortolan Bar has appeared in one Breeders Crown final. She finished fifth with 2-year-old male trotter Just In in 2010. Last year, Cuatro De Julio went off stride in his Breeders Crown elimination and did not advance to the final.

Ortolan Bar was forced to put her training career on hold for the better part of eight years while battling a variety of debilitating health conditions, from blood disorders to a rare congenital heart defect known as Ebstein's anomaly. She nearly died on multiple occasions. Although unable to train, she still worked at Jean Pierre Dubois' breeding farm.

When trotter Cuatro De Julio was born, she believed he was special. Eventually, she decided she wanted to train the colt and got her trainer's license again.

JOHN BAX**Born: 11/16/1954 – Birthplace: Ontario – Resides: Campbellville, Ontario****O'Brien Award Trainer of the Year: 2001.****Breeders Crown trophies: 1**

John Bax won a Breeders Crown with 2-year-old male trotter Duke Of York in 2001. Duke Of York received the O'Brien Award that year as Canada's best 2-year-old male trotter.

Bax, who has focused on training trotters since the 1990s, has won more than 700 races in his career and more than \$21 million in purses. Among his past stars was Goodtimes, who was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2004.

He is assisted by his son Matt.

LUC BLAIS**Born: 2/21/1962 – Birthplace: Quebec – Resides: Campbellville, Ontario****Breeders Crown trophies: 4.**

Luc Blais got his first Breeders Crown in 2012 with 3-year-old male trotter Intimidate, a horse he co-owned. His next two trophies came with older female trotter Emoticon Hanover, in 2017 and 2018. He got his fourth title in 2020 with 2-year-old male trotter On A Streak.

Intimidate, Emoticon Hanover, and On A Streak all were O'Brien Award winners.

In addition to her two trophies, Emoticon Hanover twice finished second in Breeders Crown finals. She appeared in five finals during her career.

Blais' stable has earned more than \$2 million each of the past five years, setting a career high with \$2.90 million in 2020. He ranked fourth among Canadian trainers last year.

In 2019, Blais-trained Forbidden Trade won the Hambletonian and was named Canada's Horse of the Year.

For his career, Blais has won nearly 1,100 races and \$22 million in purses.

Blais got hooked on racing at an early age, watching his father, a salesman, race his own horses on the Quebec fair circuit. After spending time in banking and construction, Blais pursued his passion and got involved full time in racing.

He worked for several stables, including Canadian Hall of Famer Yves Filion's Bayama Farms, before going on his own. He now trains for information-technology mogul Serge Godin's Determination stable.

JENNIFER BONGIORNO**Born: 2/27/1990 – Birthplace: Red Bank, NJ – Resides: Alpine, NJ**

Jennifer Bongiorno is making her Breeders Crown debut.

She has won more than 750 races in her career and \$13 million in purses. This season, she ranks fifth among trainers in North America with more than \$4 million in earnings.

Her brother, Joe, has won nearly 2,400 races as a driver and captured a Breeders Crown trophy in 2019.

BRIAN BROWN**Born: 9/27/1964 – Birthplace: Upper Sandusky, OH – Resides: Ostrander, OH****Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2017.****Breeders Crown trophies: 2.**

Brian Brown has won two Breeders Crown finals, with Blazin Britches in the 2017 3-year-old filly pace and Color's A Virgin in the 2015 Mare Pace.

Brown's stable is looking to top \$2 million for the seventh time in the last eight years. He missed by less than \$6,000 in 2020.

For his career, he has won more than 1,750 races and \$30 million in purses.

Brown spent his childhood summers watching his father Robert H. Brown and uncle William Brown campaign horses around Ohio. He fulfilled his dream to become a driver in 1981 at the age of 16 and won nearly 250 races over the ensuing decade but turned his attention to training in the early 1990s.

He is based at the Delaware County Fairgrounds in central Ohio, where he operates a stable with assistance from his wife Jennifer and other family members.

RON BURKE**Born: 10/16/1969 – Birthplace: Washington, PA – Resides: Canonsburg, PA****Hall of Fame:** Class of 2022.**Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year:** 2018, 2013, 2011.**Breeders Crown trophies:** 18.

Ron Burke was elected to the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in September. He will be inducted in July 2022, with trainer George Teague Jr. and driver Yannick Gingras, as well as trainer-driver Chris Boring.

Burke leads active trainers in Breeders Crown trophies with 18. Overall, he ranks second behind Jimmy Takter's 34 wins in finals.

His most recent victory came in 2020 with 2-year-old male pacer Summa Cum Laude, who won in a dead heat with Perfect Sting. It was the first dead heat for win in Crown history.

Burke has won at least one Breeders Crown trophy each of the past eight years. He has won multiple trophies in a year on five occasions, including three finals in both 2018 and 2017. Jimmy Takter is the only other trainer to win at least three trophies in multiple years, which he accomplished six times.

In 2009, Burke got his first trophies with Buck I St Pat in the Mare Trot and Won The West in the Open Pace. His next two Crowns came with the same horses the following year.

Among his other Breeders Crown champions were 2017 Horse of the Year Hannelore Hanover, who beat the boys in that season's Open Trot, and Foiled Again, the sport's all-time leading money-winner with \$7.63 million who won the 2013 Open Pace.

Burke took over the family's training stable from his father Mickey, the 2006 Trainer of the Year, in late 2008. He is in the process of leading all trainers in both wins and purses for the 13th consecutive year.

He got career win 12,000 in September. He is the winningest trainer in history, more than 5,000 victories ahead of second-place Virgil Morgan Jr. He has won no fewer than 762 races in a year since 2009 and topped 1,000 victories three times.

Burke also holds the record for career earnings with \$269 million. No other trainer is within \$100 million of Burke's mark.

JIM CAMPBELL**Born: 3/9/1962 – Birthplace: London, Ontario – Resides: Jackson, NJ****Breeders Crown trophies: 6.**

Jim Campbell won two trophies in 2020. His victories came with 3-year-old female trotter Next Level Stuff and with 3-year-old male pacer Sandbetweenmytoes, who won at odds of nearly 204-1 in the biggest upset in Breeders Crown history.

Campbell's first Crown came in 1998 with 3-year-old female pacer Galleria, the dam of Sandbetweenmytoes. Two-year-old male trotter Broadway Hall gave Campbell his second trophy in 2002 and 3-year-old female trotter Broadway Schooner followed in 2009. Broadway Donna, a daughter of Broadway Schooner, also won at age 3 in 2016.

Galleria, Broadway Hall, Broadway Schooner, and Broadway Donna all were Dan Patch Award winners.

Throughout his career, Campbell has trained a number of stakes-winning horses for Jules Siegel's Fashion Farms. Siegel and his wife Arlene, who passed away in 2010, were the sports Owners of the Year in 2002 and 2009. Jules was inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 2018. Arlene was elected to the Hall of Immortals in 2019.

For his career, Campbell has won more than 1,350 races and \$49 million in purses. His earnings rank 15th best among all trainers since 1992.

Campbell followed his father, Jack, and grandfather, Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Famer Dunc Campbell, into harness racing. His brother, John, became the president/CEO of the Hambletonian Society in 2017 following a Hall of Fame driving career. John holds the record for Breeders Crown trophies with 48.

TOM CANCELLIERE**Born: 11/8/1960 – Birthplace: Orange, NJ – Resides: Chesterfield, NJ****Breeders Crown trophies: 2.**

Tom Cancelliere has won two Breeders Crown finals, both with Bettor Sweet in the Open Pace (2011 and 2012).

Cancelliere began training horses for his brother, John, in 2010. He has won more than 350 races and \$7 million in purses while averaging around 200 starts per year.

Their stable is based at their Magical Acres training center in New Jersey, which also is home to numerous other trainers and horses.

STEVE CARTER**Born: 7/21/1966 – Birthplace: Chillicothe, OH – Resides: Londonderry, OH**

Steve Carter is making his Breeders Crown debut.

Carter has won more than 2,100 races as a driver, but in recent years has focused on training. He has won more than 1,900 races as a trainer and is enjoying the 10th million-dollar season of his career.

He has earned \$17 million in purses lifetime.

SCOTT COX**Born: 3/7/1969 – Birthplace: Canton, OH – Resides: Streetsboro, OH**

This is Scott Cox's first appearance in the Breeders Crown.

Cox has won more than 1,100 races and nearly \$8 million in purses in his training career. He also has more than 450 wins as a driver.

DOMENICO CECERE**Born: 6/23/1981 – Birthplace: Locorotondo, Italy – Resides: Enfield, CT**

Domenico Cecere, the head trainer for Lindy Farms and its various racing stables, made his Breeders Crown debut in 2018 and has appeared in two finals. His best finish came in 2019 when Lindy The Great finished fourth in the Open Trot.

For his career, Cecere has won more than 200 races and \$4 million in purses. He is on the verge of setting career highs in both categories this season, with more than 60 wins and \$1.2 million in earnings.

Cecere was born in Italy and moved to the U.S. in 2007. He was introduced to horses at an early age and got his first racehorse at the age of 14. He later worked in Italy for trainer Mario Baroncini for seven years, becoming accomplished as a driver and trainer, before deciding to give racing in the States a try.

STACY CHIODO**Born: 1/21/1977 – Birthplace: Red Bank, NJ – Resides: Jackson, NJ**

Stacy Chiodo is appearing in her first Breeders Crown.

Chiodo has more than 120 wins as a driver and nearly 350 wins as a trainer. She is enjoying a career year as a trainer with more than \$425,000 in purses, thanks in part to the success of Breeders Crown finalist Shezafreaklikeme.

Shezafreaklikeme is owned by Chiodo Racing, which also bred the filly. Her mother, NF One Rose, is a full sister to past Chiodo star Mighty Young Joe. In 2014, Chiodo drove Mighty Young Joe to victory in 1:49.3 to become the first female driver ever with a sub-1:50 mile.

JEFF CULLIPHER**Born: 9/30/1971 – Birthplace: Henderson, KY – Resides: Pendleton, IN**

Jeff Cullipher is seeking his first Breeders Crown trophy. Cullipher, who made his Crown debut in 2017, has had three finalists.

Cullipher has set a career high this year with more than 200 wins. He ranks fifth among all trainers in North America in victories this season.

He is on the verge of setting a career best in purses, too, with more than 3.3 million.

His stable has grown in recent years with owner Tom Pollack. Cullipher has won more than 950 races lifetime, with more than 700 of those victories coming since the start of 2017. He has more than \$14 million in purses lifetime.

Cullipher followed his father Roger, who has more than 2,600 wins as a driver and nearly 1,000 as a trainer, into the sport.

JONAS CZERNYSON**Born: 4/18/1973 – Birthplace: Ystad, Sweden – Resides: Vero Beach, FL****Breeders Crown trophies: 2.**

Jonas Czernyson won Breeders Crown trophies in 2012 and 2013 with female trotter Maven, who was a champion at ages 3 and 4. She was a Dan Patch Award winner in 2013.

Among Czernyson's other top wins was the 2005 Hambletonian Oaks with Jalopy.

For his career, he has won more than 550 races and \$21 million in purses.

NOEL DALEY**Born: 12/18/1961 – Birthplace: Mount Isa, Australia – Resides: Chesterfield, NJ****Breeders Crown trophies: 4.**

Noel Daley has been part of numerous Breeders Crown wins. He won several trophies as a second trainer for Brett Pelling's stable in the mid-to-late 1990s and has captured a total of eight trophies (with Mike Vanderkemp and Brendan Johnson) since starting his own stable.

His stable won its first Crown with 3-year-old male trotter Mr Muscleman in 2003. His most recent victory came with 3-year-old female trotter Cedar Dove in 2011.

Daley is from Australia and worked for an airline before making his name in harness racing. Daley has won 2,650 races and \$63 million in purses.

At the end of the 2018 season, Daley returned to Australia to train horses but decided the change of scenery wasn't for him and came back to the U.S. in the fall of 2019.

Stars from Daley's stable include three-time Dan Patch Award-winner Mr Muscleman, who was the 2005 Trotter of the Year, and two-time Dan Patch honoree My Little Dragon, a female pacer. My Little Dragon was a three-time Breeders Crown winner, sharing the all-time record for a pacer, and Mr Muscleman was a two-time Crown champ.

In July 2017, Mr Muscleman was inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame.

DAVE DEWHURST**Born: 11/26/1966 – Birthplace: New Hartford, NY – Resides: Clinton, NY**

Dave Dewhurst has had one Breeders Crown finalist, 3-year-old male trotter Speedy Lad in 1997. He finished eighth.

Dewhurst, who has won multiple training titles at Vernon Downs, has more than 2,200 career training triumphs. He has \$11 million in lifetime purses.

This year, Dewhurst has earned more than \$770,000 in purses, a career high.

GEORGE DUCCHARME**Born: 12/25/1961 – Birthplace: Norwood, MA – Resides: Norfolk, MA**

George Ducharme has appeared in one Breeders Crown final, finishing second with 2-year-old male trotter Royalty For Life in 2012.

A year later, Ducharme and Royalty For Life won the Hambletonian. Royalty For Life received the 2013 Dan Patch Award for best 3-year-old male trotter.

Ducharme has won 999 races and nearly \$16 million in purses lifetime. His stable has exceeded \$1 million for seven consecutive years.

He set career highs with 94 victories and \$1.94 million in 2019.

Ducharme, who has enjoyed success with young horses in both the New York and Massachusetts sire stakes programs, has been a trainer for more than 30 years. He started as a groom at Foxboro Raceway.

MARK EVERS**Born: 6/22/1957 – Birthplace: Glendale, OH – Resides: Lebanon, OH**

Mark Evers has appeared in one previous Breeders Crown. In 2003, he trained and drove Art's Chip to a third-place finish in the final for 3-year-old male pacers.

For his career, Evers has won more than 800 races as a driver and more than 440 as a trainer. He has focused more on training in recent years.

This year, Evers has set career highs for training wins with 30 and training purses with more than \$670,000 thanks largely to the exploits of 2-year-old male pacer Monte Miki.

Monte Miki was bred by owner Velocity Standardbreds, which is headed by Ever's wife Sylvia Norris.

PER ENGBLOM

Born: 2/12/1980 – Birthplace: Viby, Sweden – Resides: East Windsor, NJ

Per Engblom made his Breeders Crown debut in 2019. He has had six finalists and is seeking his first trophy.

Engblom started his own stable in 2019 after spending six years as the top assistant to Hall of Fame trainer Jimmy Takter. The Takter Stable won 19 of its record 34 Breeders Crown trophies during that time frame.

In his three years on his own, Engblom has won 160 races and \$5 million in purses.

Engblom grew up in Mantorp, Sweden. His father, Raoul, also is a trainer.

This is Enblom's second stint in the U.S. He was 19 when he came to the States for the first time. He spent five years at the Takter stable, then returned home, where he was the private trainer for Stall Tilly, and later worked in Italy before starting his own public stable.

At the beginning of 2012, Engblom and his wife, Helene, decided to move to the U.S. with their then 4-year-old son, Tom, who was ready to start school. Engblom worked for a year with trainer Tony Alagna before returning to the Takter Stable.

TOM FANNING**Born: 10/30/1958 – Birthplace: Jersey City, NJ – Resides: Jackson, NJ**

Tom Fanning has appeared in eight Breeders Crown finals. His best finish came in 2016 when Frost Damage Blues was third in the Mare Pace.

Fanning set a career high with \$1.44 million in purses in 2015. He is challenging that mark this season, which is his eighth million-dollar season in nine years.

Lifetime, he has won more than 1,300 races.

Fanning's wife Moira is the COO of the Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown.

ROBERT FELLOWS**Born: 8/27/1962 – Birthplace: Ontario – Resides: Rockwood, Ontario**

Robert Fellows has appeared in four Breeders Crown finals. His best finish was in 2002 with 3-year-old filly trotter Sturdy Lori.

Fellows has won more than 1,300 races and \$20 million in purses in his career. He has been a mainstay on the Woodbine Entertainment circuit for more than three decades.

This year, he has topped \$1 million in earnings for the eighth time in his career.

DENIS GUERIEL**Born: 1963 – Birthplace: Quebec – Resides: Dunham, Quebec**

Denis Gueriel is making his Breeders Crown debut.

For his career, he has won 78 races as a trainer and nearly \$1 million in purses.

MARK HARDER**Born: 11/12/1961 – Birthplace: Wellington, New Zealand – Resides: Freehold, NJ****Breeders Crown trophies: 1.**

Mark Harder got his first Breeders Crown in 2018 with 3-year-old filly trotter Lily Stride.

Harder has won more than 2,100 races. His stable is on the verge of its 21st consecutive season with at least \$1 million in purses. He has won \$48 million in purses in his career.

He grew up in New Zealand, where his parents owned a kiwi and avocado orchard. Harder thought he would go to college to earn a degree in agriculture, but instead got the horse bug and started working with horses after finishing high school.

After arriving in North America, he worked for several horsemen before launching his own stable in 2000. Four years later, he won the training title at the Meadowlands and saw his stable earn \$6.85 million in purses. Among his highlights that season was Holborn Hanover winning the Meadowlands Pace at odds of 58-1.

Following the 2005 campaign, Harder decided to reduce the size of his stable. After starting more than 1,100 horses annually from 2002-2005, he has not topped 630 in any year since.

WALTER HAYNES JR.**Born: 10/28/1965 – Birthplace: Camden, NJ – Resides: Alexandria, IN**

Walter Haynes Jr. has appeared in two Breeders Crown finals. His best finish came in 2020 with Majestic Player A, who was fourth in the Open Trot.

Haynes does not drive as often these days but has won nearly 2,500 races as a driver. He has won more than 1,200 races as a trainer.

He is enjoying the third million-dollar season of his career as a trainer. He has earned \$10 million in lifetime purses.

JOE HOLLOWAY**Born: 9/17/1956 – Birthplace: Wilmington, DE – Resides: Freehold, NJ****Hall of Fame:** Class of 2019.**Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year:** 1995.**Breeders Crown trophies:** 8.

Joe Holloway won a Breeders Crown in 2020 with Perfect Sting, who finished in a dead heat with Summa Cum Laude. It was the first dead heat for win in Breeders Crown history. Perfect Sting finished the season 10-for-10 and received the Dan Patch Award for best 2-year-old male pacer.

Holloway's first three trophies came with Jenna's Beach Boy, who was victorious in 1994, 1995 and 1996. Jenna's Beach Boy is the only male pacer in history to win more than two Breeders Crown finals and the only pacer to win three in a row. He was voted Pacer of the Year in 1995 and 1996.

His remaining wins came with pacing mare She's A Great Lady in 1996, 2-year-old male pacer Badlands Hanover in 1998, 2-year-old filly pacer Lady MacBeach in 2000, and 3-year-old filly pacer Divine Caroline in 2015.

Holloway, who has not made more than 200 starts in a year since 2011, has won more than 1,050 races in his career and \$35 million in purses.

A native of Wilmington, Del., Holloway graduated from the University of Delaware in 1978 with a degree in animal science. He turned his attention, though, to harness racing and began his career racing at Brandywine. Prior to starting his own stable in 1988, he teamed with David Rovine for one of the top stables at the Meadowlands.

JIM KING JR.**Born: 2/16/1952 – Birthplace: Milford, DE – Resides: Harrington, DE****Breeders Crown trophies: 1.**

Jim King Jr. won his first Breeders Crown title in 2018 with Shartin N in the Mare Pace. In 2020, he had second-place finishes with Shartin N in the Mare Pace and Lyons Sentinel in the 3-year-old filly pace. Those two horses also had second-place finishes in 2019.

Shartin N was the 2019 Horse of the Year. In 2018, she became the first pacing mare in harness racing history to earn \$1 million in a season and finished second to pacing stallion McWicked for Horse of the Year.

King received the 2019 Good Guy Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association. His wife, Jo Ann, who for years shared training duties, got the award in 2015.

Jim won more than 3,300 races and \$25 million in purses as a driver, but his focus is now on training. As a trainer, he has more than 1,250 victories and \$22 million in purses.

Jo Ann also was an accomplished driver. She was the first female driver to win a race at the Meadowlands and won 135 times in the late 1970s through early-1980s. She has more than 235 wins as a trainer.

TODD LUTHER**Born: 6/15/1985 – Birthplace: Columbus, OH – Resides: Columbus, OH**

Todd Luther is making his Breeders Crown debut.

Luther trains for his brother Greg, a real estate coach and marketer who last year decided to launch his "million-dollar experiment" of seeking and buying stakes-caliber racehorses and yearlings for his stable.

This year, Todd Luther has set career highs for starts with 759, wins with 116, and purses with more than \$2.2 million.

For his career, Luther has won nearly 400 races and more than \$3.7 million.

BRENT MacGRATH**Born: 10/17/1958 – Birthplace: Truro, NS – Resides: Bible Hill, NS**

Brent MacGrath has appeared in two Breeders Crown finals. He has won one trophy, with 3-year-old male pacer Somebeachsomewhere in 2008.

Somebeachsomewhere was named 2008 Horse of the Year in the U.S. and Canada. He also shared Horse of the Year honors in Canada at age 2. For his career, he won 20 of 21 races and \$3.22 million. Following his racing career, he became an influential sire until his untimely passing at the age of 13 in 2018.

He was enshrined in the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2009 and the U.S. Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 2015.

In addition to training a small stable of horses, MacGrath is the owner of several car and tire dealerships in the Maritimes.

JOHN McDERMOTT**Born: 12/5/1965 – Birthplace: Kearny, NJ – Resides: Goshen, NY**

John McDermott is appearing in his first Breeders Crown final.

McDermott followed his brother, trainer Kevin McDermott, into the sport. He began training a few horses of his own while working as a police officer in New Jersey before eventually giving up his job in law enforcement to focus on the horses.

For his career, McDermott has won more than 600 races and \$8 million in purses.

MARCUS MELANDER**Born: 7/1/1992 – Birthplace: Sweden – Resides: New Egypt, NJ****Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2019.****Breeders Crown trophies: 3.**

Marcus Melander has captured three Breeders Crown trophies, all with male trotter Gimpanzee, who won in 2018, 2019, and 2020 to join Mack Lobell as the only male trotters to win finals at ages 2, 3, and 4.

Gimpanzee was the 2018 Dan Patch Award winner for best 2-year-old male trotter and received the Dan Patch Award in 2020 for best older male trotter as well as Trotter of the Year. He finished runner-up to stablemate Greenshoe for Dan Patch honors in 2019.

Melander was voted 2019 Trainer of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association. He is the youngest trainer to ever receive the award. His stable in 2019 won 86 races and \$5.36 million in purses. He ranked fourth in earnings in North America.

In 2018, Melander got the Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

Melander's stable in 2021 has more than \$3 million in purses, good for 10th best in North America. It is his third consecutive year with more than \$3 million. For his career, Melander has won more than 340 races and \$17 million in purses.

As a youth growing up in Sweden, Melander stayed up all hours of the night following the results of U.S. harness racing. He was making a name for himself as a driver in Europe but was always fascinated by racing in the States. At age 19, Melander won Sweden's equivalent to the U.S. Harness Writers Association's Rising Star Award. He had just more than 100 wins when the Melanders moved to America.

Melander's younger brother, Mattias, assists with training and drives occasionally. His sister, Mikaela, also assists and is a caretaker.

Melander is the nephew of Stefan Melander, who trained and drove Scarlet Knight to victory in the 2001 Hambletonian. He worked in Sweden for his uncle, and after moving to the U.S. he worked for Jimmy Takter, who is the winningest trainer in Breeders Crown history.

VIRGIL MORGAN JR.**Born: 11/23/1965 – Birthplace: Columbus, OH – Resides: Grove City, OH**

Breeders Crown trophies: 1.

Virgil Morgan Jr. won the 2008 Open Pace with Mister Big, who received the second of his two divisional Dan Patch Award honors that year.

In January, Morgan was inducted into the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame.

For his career, Morgan ranks No. 2 all time in wins among trainers, with more than 6,950. He also is in the Top 10 for purses, with nearly \$63 million.

He led the sport in wins in 2000 and 2002 and has finished second on five occasions. He was fourth in 2020 and is fourth again this year, with more than 210.

Morgan was introduced to the sport by his father, known as "Big Virg," who was a truck driver and enjoyed spending time with "Little Virg" at the races. When he was 18, Morgan bought his first horse for \$800 and sold it three months later for a profit. When Morgan eventually opened his own stable, Big Virg was one of his owners.

CHRISTI NOBLE

Born: 10/31/1986 – Birthplace: Batavia, NY – Resides: Xenia, OH

Christi Noble is making her Breeders Crown debut.

She has won more than 250 races and \$3 million in purses in her career.

Her husband, Dan Noble, is one of the leading drivers in Ohio and led North America in wins in 2011.

RICHARD "NIFTY" NORMAN

Born: 10/21/1960 – Birthplace: New Zealand – Resides: Allentown, NJ

Breeders Crown trophies: 6.

Nifty Norman won two Breeders Crown trophies in 2020, with 3-year-old male trotter Amigo Volo and 2-year-old female pacer Fire Start Hanover. Both received divisional Dan Patch Award honors. Amigo Volo also was a Crown winner at age 2.

He got his first trophy with 2-year-old filly trotter Poof She's Gone in 2009 and the next two with female trotter Bee A Magician, at age 3 in 2013 and age 4 in 2014. Bee A Magician was Horse of the Year in 2013. She was 17-for-17 and earned \$1.54 million. Her earnings were a record for a 3-year-old filly trotter.

Norman's stable has already set a career best in 2021 with \$4.68 million in purses. He ranks fourth among all trainers in North America. It is his third consecutive season with more than \$4 million in earnings.

For his career, Norman has won more than 1,500 races and \$45 million in purses.

A native of New Zealand, where he worked with horses after leaving school, Norman came to California in 1985 to visit his friend, trainer Ross Croghan, and ended up staying to help with Croghan's stable. He later worked with Brett Pelling before starting his own stable.

BRETT PELLING

Born: 7/17/1958 – Birthplace: Auckland, NZ – Resides: Cream Ridge, NJ

Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 1998.

Breeders Crown trophies: 11.

Brett Pelling has won 11 Breeders Crown trophies, good for fifth place in history. His most recent triumph came in 2019 in the Mare Pace with Caviart Ally.

Her victory came upon Pelling's return to the Breeders Crown stage after an absence of 14 years. Pelling, a New Zealand native, left the U.S. for Australia in 2006 before deciding to come back in 2017 to train horses again.

Prior to Caviart Ally's win, Pelling's previous Crown came in 2005 when Rocknroll Hanover won the 3-year-old colt pace on his way to Horse of the Year. Pelling's stable also produced two-time Breeders Crown champion Armbro Operative, Forever Starlet, Grinfromeartoe, I Am A Fool, Juliet's Fate, Mystical Maddy, Western Ideal, and Western Terror.

Pelling opened his own stable in 1988 and won multiple training titles at the Meadowlands in addition to finding success on the Grand Circuit.

He has won more than 1,700 races in his career and \$59 million in purses. From 1998 through 2005, Pelling's stable averaged 155 wins and \$5.6 million in purses.

This year, Pelling has earned more than \$3 million to rank among the Top 10 trainers in North America.

CARTER PINSKE**Born: 8/16/1995 – Birthplace: Waconia, MN – Resides: Sorrento, FL**

Carter Pinske is making his Breeders Crown debut.

Pinske graduated from college in 2018 and has worked as an assistant to Richard “Nifty” Norman. In 2019, he got his first training win with then 2-year-old Amigo Volo in a division of the Bluegrass Stakes. Amigo Volo, co-owned by the Pinske family, won Breeders Crown trophies in 2019 and 2020.

The Pinske family has been involved in harness racing since the mid-1950s when Carter's great-grandfather Robert began competing at the Minnesota county fairs. Pinske Stables is now led by Carter’s father Karl and Karl’s mother Marlys.

Pinske Stables was the 2020 Dan Patch Award Owner of the Year.

JOE PUTNAM**Born: 8/25/1963 – Birthplace: Flint, MI – Resides: Pendleton, IN**

Joe Putnam made his Breeders Crown debut in 2020 with Rockin Nola, who finished sixth in the Mare Pace.

Earlier this year, Putnam was inducted into the Michigan Harness Racing Hall of Fame.

Putnam has won more than 3,000 races as a driver and nearly 1,400 as a trainer during his career. He has purse earnings of \$15 million as a driver and \$11 million as a trainer.

His son Joey is in his fifth year as a driver.

CHRIS RYDER**Born: 10/2/1955 – Birthplace: Greymouth, New Zealand – Resides: Allentown, NJ****Breeders Crown trophies: 4.**

Chris Ryder won his first two Breeders Crown trophies with Mystical Sunshine, in the 2006 and 2007 Mare Trot, followed by 3-year-old filly pacer Put On A Show in 2010 and 3-year-old filly pacer I Luv The Nitelife in 2013.

Last year, Ryder finished second in the Open Pace with Bettor’s Wish, who was a two-time Dan Patch Award winner.

Ryder grew up in New Zealand and began riding ponies at the age of 10. His father was a dairy farmer who later worked at a stable and trained horses. Ryder worked for his father and older brother, who had a stable, before a stint in Montreal as a groom.

He came to the U.S. when his wife, Nicola, got a job in the New York area. Ryder worked several odd jobs before turning to training on a fulltime basis.

Ryder has won more than 1,600 races and \$45 million in purses in his career.

RAY SCHNITTKER**Born: 2/11/1958 – Birthplace: Buffalo, NY – Resides: Middletown, NY****Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2008.****Breeders Crown trophies: 3.**

Ray Schnittker got his first Breeders Crown trophy with 2-year-old male trotter Deweycheatumnhowe in 2007, followed by 2-year-old female trotter Check Me Out in 2011, and 2-year-old male pacer Huntsville in 2016.

Schnittker also was the driver of Deweycheatumnhowe in his Crown triumph. Only one trainer since then, Verlin Yoder in 2018 with Woodside Charm, has driven their own horse to victory in a Breeders Crown final.

Deweycheatumnhowe, named after the fictitious law firm referenced in numerous comedy routines, won the 2008 Hambletonian Stakes and was named Trotter of the Year. Schnittker was named Trainer of the Year.

Schnittker's father, Warren, got started in harness racing as a hobby. Schnittker, who was a standout wrestler in high school, worked in a factory and helped his father with the horses on a part-time basis before getting fully immersed in the sport. The Schnittkers raced successfully in the Buffalo, N.Y., area before moving their stable to the metro New York area in the mid-1980s.

Since picking up his first win as a driver in 1978, Schnittker has recorded more than 2,800 victories in the sulky. In addition, he has nearly 1,400 wins as a trainer.

TROND SMEDSHAMMER**Born: 3/22/1967 – Birthplace: Norway – Resides: Allentown, NJ****Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2004.****Breeders Crown trophies: 9.**

Trond Smedshammer has won nine Breeders Crown trophies, which is tied for sixth most in history. His most recent triumph came in 2019 with 3-year-old filly trotter Winndevie. All nine of his wins came with driver Brian Sears.

Smedshammer got his first with 3-year-old filly trotter Stroke Play in 2003. His other Crown winners included trotter Arch Madness, a two-time O'Brien Award winner and the richest Canadian-sired Standardbred in history, with \$4.32 million.

Stroke Play was a Dan Patch Award winner as were Smedshammer's trophy winners Housethatruthbuilt, Blur, and Sand Vic. His remaining Crown champs were H P Paque, Strong Yankee, and Break The Bank K.

A native of Norway, Smedshammer arrived in the U.S. in 1987 after a mandatory year in the Norwegian Army. He worked for trainer Per Henriksen for six months before heading back home, where he continued to train horses. A year later, he returned to the States and worked at Lindy Farms. In 1992, he started his own stable.

Smedshammer trained and drove 2004 Trotting Triple Crown winner Windsong's Legacy and was named Trainer of the Year.

For his career, Smedshammer has won more than 1,300 races as a trainer and more than 725 races as a driver. As a trainer he has won \$51 million in purses.

MARK STEACY**Born: 7/15/1961 – Birthplace: Kingston, Ontario – Resides: Lansdowne, Ontario****Breeders Crown trophies: 3.**

Mark Steacy won his first Breeders Crown trophy in 2006 with 3-year-old male trotter Majestic Son. The next year, he captured a Crown with 2-year-old female pacer Stylish Artist. In 2009, Hana Hanover won the Mare Pace.

Majestic Son was Canada's Horse of the Year in 2006. Hana Hanover was an O'Brien Award winner in 2007.

For his career, Steacy has won more than 1,400 races and \$21 million in purses.

AKE SVANSTEDT**Born: 11/18/1958 – Birthplace: Sweden – Resides: Columbus, NJ**

Ake Svanstedt is seeking his first Breeders Crown trophy.

He has finished second on six occasions, most recently in 2020 with Plunge Blue Chip in the Mare Trot.

In August, Svanstedt won the Hambletonian with Captain Corey. In September, the horse was sidelined for the remainder of the year because of an injury.

Svanstedt moved to the U.S. from Sweden in 2014. That year, he trained and drove Sebastian K, who trotted the then-fastest mile in harness racing history when he won in 1:49 at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono.

Since arriving in the U.S., Svanstedt has trained more than 770 winners and earned nearly \$34 million in purses. As a driver, he has more than 470 wins and \$22 million in purses.

Last year, Svanstedt set a career high with \$5.21 million in purses and ranked fourth in North America. This year, he is on the verge of reaching \$5 million and ranks third.

Svanstedt was Sweden's Trainer of the Year five times and Driver of the Year on three occasions. In 2017, he was inducted in Sweden's Hall of Fame. Svanstedt won 6,306 races as a driver in Sweden and 5,384 as a trainer.

NANCY TAKTER**Born: 6/23/1981 – Birthplace: Malmo, Sweden – Resides: Allentown, NJ****Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2020.****Breeders Crown trophies: 7.**

Nancy Takter in 2020 became the fifth trainer in Breeders Crown history to win at least three finals in a year. She captured trophies with 3-year-old filly pacer Peaky Sneaky, Manchego in the Mare Trot, and Kissin In The Sand in the Mare Pace.

Manchego became the third female trotter in history with at least three trophies. She was the 2020 Dan Patch Award winner for best older female trotter.

Takter won two Breeders Crown trophies in 2019, with 2-year-old male pacer Tall Dark Stranger and Manchego. Tall Dark Stranger was a Dan Patch Award winner.

Her previous wins came with 2-year-old male pacer Captain Crunch in 2018 and 2-year-old filly pacer JK She'salady in 2014. Captain Crunch was a Dan Patch Award winner and JK She'salady was 2014 Horse of the Year. She is the only 2-year-old filly pacer in history to receive the honor.

Last year, Tall Dark Stranger became Takter's second Horse of the Year. Takter set career highs in wins with 127 and purses with \$8.07 million on the way to being named Trainer of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

Takter was the U.S. Harness Writers Association's 2014 Rising Star Award winner.

Lifetime, she has won more than 480 races and \$25 million in purses. This year, she has earned more than \$4 million and ranks sixth in North America.

Takter worked for her father, Jimmy, before starting her own stable in 2013. Jimmy Takter, who retired from training after the 2018 season, holds the record for Breeders Crown trophies with 34.

LINDA TOSCANO

Born: 6/26/1955 – Birthplace: Brooklyn, NY – Resides: Freehold, NJ

Hall of Fame: Class of 2019.

Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2012.

Breeders Crown trophies: 7.

Linda Toscano won a Breeders Crown in 2020 with 2-year-old filly trotter Lady Chaos. She finished second with 3-year-old male trotter Play Trix On Me.

Her first trophy came in 2002 with pacing mare Molly Can Do It. Male trotter Chapter Seven was a two-time Breeders Crown champion (2011 and 2012) for Toscano and Horse of the Year in 2012. Toscano also won in 2012 with 3-year-old male pacer Heston Blue Chip.

A year later, Market Share won the Open Trot. In 2016, Walner won the final for 2-year-old male trotters.

Heston Blue Chip, Market Share, and Walner also were Dan Patch Award winners. Market Share won the 2012 Hambletonian.

For her career, Toscano has won nearly 2,400 races and \$61 million in purses. Her stable is enjoying its 15th consecutive season with more than \$2 million in earnings.

A Brooklyn native, Toscano briefly attended SUNY at Stony Brook before finding her calling and beginning her career on the track. She worked side by side with veteran trainer Buddy Regan and Hall of Famers Buddy Gilmour and John Campbell prior to starting her own stable in 1985.

LUCAS WALLIN

Born: 12/28/1992 – Birthplace: Sweden – Resides: New Egypt, NJ

Lucas Wallin made his Breeders Crown debut in 2020 with two finalists. Two-year-old female trotter Mazzarati finished second in one final and 3-year-old female trotter Ab'sattitudexpress finished third in the other.

Wallin grew up in Sweden, where he was driving ponies at the age of 8. Several years later, he began helping at his uncle Joakim Wallin's stable. In mid-2014, he was alerted to an opportunity to work for Ake Svanstedt's U.S.-based stable. He spent two years with Svanstedt before deciding to go on his own.

For his career in the U.S., Wallin has won more than 120 races as a trainer and 40 as a driver. He will drive Cuatro De Julio for trainer Marie Ortolan Bar in the Breeders Crown final for 3-year-old male trotters.

MELANIE WRENN

Born: 8/15/1965 – Birthplace: Lima, OH – Resides: Carmel, IN

Melanie Wrenn has appeared in one Breeders Crown final. She finished fifth with 2-year-old male trotter Chin Chin Hall in 2018.

For her career, Wrenn has won nearly 400 races and \$7 million in purses.

Her husband, Peter, is a two-time Breeders Crown winner as a driver.

Wrenn followed her father, Bill Deters, into the sport. Her brother, Mike Deters, is also a successful trainer.

GREG WRIGHT JR.

Born: 12/2/1969 – Birthplace: Windsor, Ontario – Resides: Meadowlands, PA

Greg Wright Jr. drove in two Breeders Crown eliminations in 2000 but is making his first trip to the finals as either a driver or trainer.

When he was in high school, Wright was considered a baseball prospect, but his focus was on the horse.

He has won more than 2,100 races as a driver and nearly 300 as a trainer.

Wright's father won nearly 3,000 races as a driver and more than 700 as a trainer.