

Standardbred Owners Ainspan, McDonald Each Score Thoroughbred Wins at Colonial Downs' Virginia Derby Meet

New Kent VA - March 20, 2026



Virginia-based harness horse owners **Adam Ainspan** and **Anne McDonald** have had their pictures taken in the **Colonial Downs** winners circle in past decades courtesy of standardbred champions that captured **Virginia Breeder's** divisional titles. Ainspan's **Graham Grace Stables** scored with **Great George Two** in 2004 while McDonald's **Always Quick Star** snagged trophies in 2013 & 2014 and her **Celtic Girl** took similar honors in 2010 & 2011.

In a unique twist of fate, **Ainspan** and **McDonald** each returned to the winner's circle last week at the **New Kent** track --- years after harness racing departed **Colonial Downs** for **Shenandoah Downs** --- courtesy of



wins with thoroughbred horses during Colonial's three-day **Virginia Derby** meet that took place from March 12-14.

Ainspan, who is principal owner of 2025 **Harness Horse of the Year Beau Jangles** and 2024 **Breeder's Crown Open Mares champ Call Me Goo**, collected his second thoroughbred stakes win ever in the **\$100,000 Royal New Kent Stakes** on Derby Day with **Tour Player** in front of a sellout crowd of 9,700 fans. McDonald kicked off action the day prior in a \$50,000 maiden claiming score with Virginia-bred **C C Commander** --- her first thoroughbred win in 2-1/2 years.

Both owners are unique in a sense they own and campaign horses of both breeds. In fact both their stables are comprised of about half thoroughbreds and half standardbreds.

"Getting to the winners circle at Colonial with **Tour Player**, with all his connections from **Legion Bloodstock**, the sponsors, and twenty years after **Great George Two**, that was special," said Ainspan. "Colonial means a lot to me. The fans were so engaged reminding me a lot of the energy from the Canadian crowds when **Beau Jangles** wins. I'm very grateful. The Colonial team put on a great show."

"I left Florida a day early just to be at **Colonial Downs** for the race," continued Ainspan. "I had a horse, **Mary's Lad**, win at **Tampa Bay Downs** on the 13th --- a race I missed so I could see **Tour Player** compete in **New Kent** the next day. I knew **Tour Player** would race well. He was anxious and sweaty in the paddock in his prior on Pegasus Day at **Gulfstream Park**. It was hot, loud, and the starting gate truck broke down causing a 20-minute delay. But last Saturday, he looked completely professional. When I saw the opening quarter go in 22 and change, I knew the race was over especially with **Flavien Prat** on board and the front runners cutting that fraction. **Tour Player** was relaxed and professional, and those were some talented runners in the short field that he beat."

Tour Player is a 5-year-old son of **American Pharoah** who was bred by **Bob Baffert** and is trained by **Whit Beckman**. He is 5-for-11 now with earnings of \$381,173.

"**C C Commander's** win was very exciting," said McDonald, who captured a third **Virginia Breeders Championship at Shenandoah Downs** in 2024 with two-year-old standardbred filly **Sweet Pirategirl**. "It was a big win in just her third start. We bred her and raised her but had to delay her racing debut by a year because she jumped over a five foot fence and cut herself pretty badly."

McDonald's home base is **Alexandria** and her horse farm is in **White Post, VA** where she has a pair of thoroughbred yearlings & 4-year-olds, and a 2-year-old. In addition to two standardbred mares --- who are both in foal --- she has three yearlings & 2-year-olds along with a pair of 3-year-olds.

Ainspan is based in **Clifton, Virginia**. His first thoroughbred stakes win came in 2023 in the **\$500,000 Tapit Stakes at Kentucky Downs**. His standardbred **Beau**

Jangles was a perfect 12-for-12 last year as a 2-year-old with earnings of over \$1.2 million.



Both dual breed owners keep an eye on the Virginia racing landscape for obvious reasons. **Shenandoah Downs** kicks off a 7-week spring harness meet in Woodstock April 11 and continues thru May 24.

Colonial Downs ushers in its summer thoroughbred season June 25 and continues thru September 7.

Details are at virginiahorseracing.com.

