

# Harness Racing Returns To Shenandoah Downs

*Pacers And Trotters Compete At The Fair And Through The Fall*

**By Darrell Wood**

With a total of 16 harness racing dates Scheduled for 2019, pacers and trotters will return to the Shenandoah County Fairgrounds in Woodstock, VA two different times -- in late August for four race days during the Shenandoah County Fair and again for a five week period from September 13th through October 13th during the Shenandoah Downs pari-mutuel meet, where betting is available.

Shenandoah Downs offers a “throw back” type experience where fans gather in a grandstand close to action on the track and cheer on their favorites. The scene provides an intimate experience for one and all --- there is no simulcasting, no casino and no dining room. It’s all about the live

racing on a state of the art half mile oval that underwent an \$800,000 renovation in 2016. There is a 100 year history of County Fair harness racing in Woodstock so fans have an appreciation of the effort it takes to get a horse to the track. Often times, the horse finishing last is cheered as much as the winner!

The Fair will host its 102nd year of racing from August 28th - August 31st. Admission to the races is included with daily Fair admission. During the Shenandoah Downs meet, racing takes place every Friday at 3:30 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m. Ten races are held each day and a race goes off every 20 minutes which gives attendees time to study the field and make wagers. Parking

and admission are both free and the races are family friendly.

Fridays will feature Happy Hour racing with dollar specials on hot dogs and draft beverages. On three of the Saturday cards, eight lucky fans will have a chance to “Own a Horse for a Day” and keep the money their horse earns in a \$4,000 race. The winners will visit their horse, trainer and driver in the barn area before the race and get their picture taken in the winner’s circle after the race. The track will host Weiner Dog races on September 28th and a “Pink Power” Breast Cancer Awareness Day on October 12th.

The \$300,000 (est.) Virginia

Breeders’ Championships will close out the season Sunday October 13th. The non-betting event features eight championship races showcasing Virginia-bred two and three-year-old pacers and trotters of both sexes. Preliminary Breeders’ races will take place the Sunday prior, on October 6th.

Shenandoah Downs’ location makes it an ideal stop as either a post-hiking activity or a way to enhance nearby winery/craft brewery visits. Unlike a sporting event where fans need to be there from tipoff to the final buzzer, many fans come and enjoy several races, then move on to their next destination or activity.



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