



Western Fair on track with the return of an old tradition

For Immediate Release: September 1, 2010: Not since 1960 has live harness racing been available to the public during the annual Western Fair. That's about to change as we bring back yesteryear and the nostalgia of the sport to the 135th edition of the annual fall classic in honour of the Raceway's 50th anniversary.

Fairgoers can experience the unique exhilaration of live harness racing from the Grandstand as we showcase this exciting sport and its elite equine athletes in 8 races on our half-mile track Monday, September 13 through Wednesday, September 15. Post time 6:30 p.m. Free race programs will be available at the gate to adults 19 years of age or older.

Former track announcer Frank Salive will be on hand to call the races and interview drivers. Plus, we'll have contests, prizes and family-friendly events like the chance to meet a real, retired race horse or even jog one on the track!

Harness racing has quite a history. Though the racing of horses in harness dates back to ancient Rome, the popularity of modern harness racing began in America where trotters were routinely raced over rural roads as owners tried to best their neighbour's stock. The first harness racing tracks were constructed in the early 19th century and harness racing became an institution at hundreds of county fairs across the continent for more than a hundred years. As the automobile replaced the horse and the population became more urbanized, these annual competitions disappeared at many major fairs in Canada and the United States.

In May 1961, the Western Fair Association introduced night harness racing...and Western Fair Raceway was born. It was the first time racing was held under the lights in the province of Ontario. The Raceway now hosts a 130 date season, October thru May, and is a key part of the year-round operations of the Western Fair Association.

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