



## MEDIA ALERT

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### **YOUNGEST DUO IN HARNESS RACING HISTORY EARN TOP DRIVER & TRAINER AWARDS AT RUNNING ACES** *HARNESS PARK FINISHES INAUGURAL MEET*

**Columbus, MN-** Running Aces Harness Park concluded its inaugural meet on Sunday, July 6 and named 19-year-old John Delong its Driver-of-the-Year and a 20-year-old Justin Anfinson its Trainer-of-the-Year. The pair is believed to be the youngest dash-winning driver and trainer combo at any harness track in history.

Delong had 76 wins and captured the Driver-of-the-Year title by a wide margin. A native of Minnesota, Anfinson won 39 races, but didn't earn his Trainer-of-the-Year title until the very last race of the 2008 meet.

Duane Miller and Anfinson entered the final card tied with 38 victories apiece from their stables, and each trainer had horses entered in four races on Sunday. In the eighth and final race of the year, Miller was set to drive for Anfinson for the first time all season. As fate would have it, Miller put Anfinson's horse, Daria's La Bamba, a 4-1 third choice in the betting, on the line and cruised to a wire-to-wire 1:58 time, giving Anfinson the Trainer-of-the-Year Award.

"I'll be able to tell people I came so close to winning a trainer's title, except that I won it for the other guy," laughed the good-natured Miller after the final race.

In all, twenty trainers managed ten or more wins at Running Aces for the race meet. The fastest mile on went to The Gangster N, an 11-year-old horse who scorched the track in 1:53.4, just two ticks off the established track record, in a \$2000 claiming pace. Ken Holliday, a leading driver at Buffalo Raceway and winner of nearly 5,000 career victories, was in the sulky. He was in Minnesota to pick up his daughter Ashley, Running Aces' outrider during the inaugural season.

Total purses for the three-month first-ever meet at Running Aces were \$1,048,400 for an average of \$2461 per race.

Running Aces Harness Park will continue operations with a 24 hour, 50-table state-of-the art card room with blackjack, Ultimate Texas Hold 'em, seven-card stud and other games, dining, simulcast betting and private events.

The only professional harness park in Minnesota, Running Aces opened for its inaugural season on April 11 with four stables and 300 stalls.

Running Aces Harness Park is located off I-35 and Highway 97/County Road 23 (Exit 129) in Columbus, Minnesota - near Forest Lake. To contact Running Aces, call 651-925-4600 or 1-877-RUN ACES (786-2237) or go to [www.runningaces.com](http://www.runningaces.com).

Running Aces Harness Park is a harness race track and card room owned by North Metro Harness Initiative, LLC, 50% of which is owned by Southwest Casino & Hotel Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Casino Corp. (SWCC) and 50% of which is owned by MTR-Harness, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of MTR Gaming Group, Inc., (MNTG).

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