

LUC BLAIS

Born: 2/21/1962 – Birthplace: Quebec – Resides: Campbellville, Ontario

Hambletonian wins (1): Forbidden Trade, 2019.

- * Won the 2019 Hambletonian with Forbidden Trade, who upset favorite Greenshoe at odds of 15-1. Forbidden Trade, driven by Bob McClure, was named Canada's Horse of the Year.
- * Finished sixth in the 2024 Hambletonian with Private Access, who was second to T C I by a neck in his elimination and drew post nine for the final.
- * Also finished sixth in the 2020 Hambletonian final with Threefiftytwo.
- * Has appeared in three previous Hambletonian Oaks finals, with a best finish of third in 2017 with Dream Together.
- * Received the O'Brien Award of Horsemanship in Canada in 2021.
- * Other past stars include O'Brien Award recipients Intimidate, Emoticon Hanover (the dam of Emoticon Legacy) and Donna Soprano.
- * Stable has surpassed \$1 million in purses each of the past nine years.
- * Has won nearly 1,300 races and \$29 million in purses during his career.
- * Got hooked on racing at an early age by watching his father, a salesman, race his own horses on the Quebec fair circuit.
- * Spent time in banking and construction before getting involved fulltime in racing.
- * Now trains for information-technology mogul Serge Godin's Determination stable.

JUAN CANO

Born: 10/15/1983 – Birthplace: Guatemala – Resides: Cream Ridge, NJ

- * First time appearing in a Hambletonian or Hambletonian Oaks final.
- * Got his most lucrative career win in June when Conversano won the \$225,000 New Jersey Sire Stakes championship at the Meadowlands.
- * Conversano won her Hambletonian Oaks elimination by a nose over R Charm in 1:52.4.
- * Started his own stable in 2019 after working for several trainers over the years, including Erv Miller and Hambletonian winner Tony Alagna.
- * Had a Breeders Crown finalist in 2024 with 2-year-old female pacer Gigglingonthebeach, who was eighth.
- * Stable has won more than 175 races and \$2.27 million in purses in his career.
- * Set a career high for purses in 2021 with \$451,725 and is already within \$60,000 of that figure this season.

NOEL DALEY

Born: 12/18/1961 – Birthplace: Mount Isa, Australia – Resides: Chesterfield, NJ

Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2024.

Hambletonian wins (1): Broad Bahn, 2011.

* Won the 2011 Hambletonian with Broad Bahn at odds of 6-1 with driver George Brennan. Broad Bahn received the 2011 Dan Patch Award for best 3-year-old male trotter.

* Finished fourth in the 2024 Hambletonian with Sig Sauer, who later won the Kentucky Futurity (the third jewel in the Trotting Triple Crown) and a Breeders Crown on his way to Dan Patch Award divisional honors.

* Daley finished second in the 2009 Hambletonian with Explosive Matter. The race was won by Muscle Hill.

* Had three horses in the 2024 Hambletonian Oaks. Buy A Round finished second to Warrawee Michelle while Miss I La was fourth and Paulina Hanover was seventh.

* In addition to Sig Sauer, Daley trained 2024 Dan Patch Award winning 3-year-old male pacer Captain Albano.

* Daley career win 3,000 in May at Mohegan Pennsylvania's Pocono Downs. He ranks 17th in victories since the inception of official trainer stats in 1991.

* Ranks seventh in purses among trainers since 1991, with \$78 million.

* Past stars include multiple Dan Patch Award winners Mr Muscleman and My Little Dragon. Mr Muscleman, the 2005 Trotter of the Year, was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2017. My Little Dragon was inducted into the Hall of Fame as a broodmare in 2023.

* Daley's stable hosted Bulldog Hanover for trainer Jack Darling for his monthlong stay in New Jersey in July 2022, which included his world-record 1:45.4 victory in the William R. Haughton Memorial at the Meadowlands.

* 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.

* Worked for an airline before making his name in harness racing.

MARCUS MELANDER

Born: 7/1/1992 – Birthplace: Sweden – Resides: New Egypt, NJ

Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2019.

Hambletonian Oaks wins (1): Heaven Hanover, 2023.

- * Won the 2023 Hambletonian Oaks with Heaven Hanover, who scored from post 10 with driver Tim Tetrick at odds of 28-1.
- * Prior to 2023, Melander's best finish in the Oaks was second, which he accomplished twice, with Hypnotic AM in 2020 and Iteration in 2021.
- * Seeking his first Hambletonian trophy but has finished second on three occasions.
- * In 2023, he was second with Oh Well. In 2022, he was second with filly Joviality S, third with Temporal Hanover and fifth with Periculum. He also finished second, third and fifth in the 2019 final, with Greenshoe, Gimpanzee and Green Manalishi S. Greenshoe and Green Manalishi S were elimination winners. Greenshoe was the 2019 Trotter of the Year.
- * His first Hambletonian was in 2017. He saw Enterprise win his elimination and finish fourth-placed-third in the final. In 2018, Melander-trained Evaluate finished fifth in the final. In 2021, Melander finished sixth with Sonofamistery.
- * Last year, Melander finished 10th in the Hambletonian final with Security Protected, who made an early break.
- * In 2019, at the age of 27, Melander became the youngest trainer ever voted Trainer of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association. The recognition came one year after he was named the Rising Star Award winner by the same organization.
- * Has won more than 600 races in his career and \$36 million in purses.
- * Ranked in the Top 10 among trainers in purses each of the past six years.
- * Set career highs in 2024 with 104 wins and \$6.59 million in purses. Ranked fourth in purses among all trainers in North America.
- * A native of Sweden, Melander came to the U.S. and worked for four-time Hambletonian-winning trainer Jimmy Takter before starting his own stable in 2014. He is based in New Egypt, N.J., at a farm that was home previously to each the legendary Stanley Dancer, a five-time Hambletonian winner, and Continental Farms stables.
- * His uncle, Stefan, won the 2001 Hambletonian as trainer-driver of Scarlet Knight.

JIM OSCARSSON

Born: 4/14/1961 – Birthplace: Umea, Sweden – Resides: Delray Beach, FL

- * Appearing in his first Hambletonian Oaks final.
- * Sent out Aperfectyankee in the 2013 Hambletonian final, finishing fourth.
- * Won the 2012 Peter Haughton Memorial with Aperfectyankee.
- * Trained a then 2-year-old Nuncio in 2013 and finished second with the colt in the Breeders Crown. The following year, Nuncio finished second in the Hambletonian and won the Yonkers Trot and Kentucky Futurity for trainer Jimmy Takter.
- * Nuncio won more than \$3.6 million in the U.S. and Europe.
- * After a two-year stint in the U.S., Oscarsson went back to Sweden in late 2013 because his two teenage children were anxious to return home.
- * Won the 2012 Peter Haughton Memorial with Aperfectyankee.
- * In Sweden, trained a stable of 30 to 40 horses.
- * Sent Explosive De Vie to the International Trot at Yonkers Raceway in 2016. The horse, driven by his son, Kevin, finished fifth.
- * Oscarsson turned over his stable in Sweden to his son so he could move back to the States. Bought several yearlings at the 2023 yearling sales to relaunch his U.S. stable.

CARTER PINSKE

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

- * Making his Hambletonian and Hambletonian Oaks debuts.
- * Set career highs in 2024 with 34 wins and \$1.60 million in purses.
- * Top win last year came with Aperfect Annie in the \$400,000 Kentucky Sire Stakes Championship Series final for 2-year-old female trotters.
- * Won the 2023 Kentucky Filly Futurity with Mommamia Volo.
- * Trained multiple Grand Circuit winner Double Deceiver at ages 2 and 3 in 2021-22. The trotter has since raced in Europe and was a Group 1 winner this year.
- * Graduated from college and 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 for Nifty Norman's stable.
- * 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.

TROND SMEDSHAMMER

Born: 3/22/1967 – Birthplace: Norway – Resides: Allentown, NJ

Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2004.

Hambletonian wins (1): Windsong's Legacy, 2004.

Hambletonian Oaks wins (1): Creamy Mimi, 2008.

- * Won the 2004 Hambletonian with Windsong's Legacy. Smedshammer trained and drove the colt to victory.
- * Windsong's Legacy added the Yonkers Trot and Kentucky Futurity to sweep the Trotting Triple Crown and was named 2004 Trotter of the Year. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2014.
- * At the end of 2004, Smedshammer was named Trainer of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association.
- * Making his first appearance in a Hambletonian final since finishing seventh as the trainer-driver of Classichap in 2018.
- * Finished third in the Hambletonian in 2006 as the trainer of Blue Mac Lad and in 2009 as the trainer of Calchips Brute.
- * Trained 2008 Hambletonian Oaks winner Creamy Mimi, who was driven by Andy Miller.
- * Smedshammer-trained horses finished second in the Oaks in 2018 (Phaetosive), 2006 (Emantee) and 2004 (Housethatruthbuilt).
- * Made his Hambletonian debut in 1997 when he trained and drove Bowlin For Dollars to victory in his elimination and finished fourth in the final.
- * 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.
- * Has won nearly 1,400 races as a trainer and nearly 800 as a driver in his career.
- * His horses have totaled \$53 million in purses in his career.
- * Ranks 19th in purses since the inception of official trainer statistics in 1991.
- * Past stars include Arch Madness, who retired in 2014 with \$4.28 million in purses, making him one of the richest trotters in history.

AKE SVANSTEDT

Born: 11/18/1958 – Birthplace: Sweden – Resides: Wrightstown, NJ

Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2023.

Hambletonian wins (2): Captain Corey, 2021; Perfect Spirit, 2017.

Hambletonian Oaks wins (1): Warrawee Michelle, 2024.

- * Has won the Hambletonian twice, both times as the driver as well as trainer of his horses.
- * In 2021, Svanstedt guided Captain Corey to victory. In 2017, it was Perfect Spirit, who was declared the winner when What The Hill was disqualified for interference in the stretch. It was the first disqualification of a winner in Hambletonian history.
- * Had three of the top-four finishers in the 2021 Hambletonian: winner Captain Corey, third-place Ambassador Hanover, and fourth-place Delayed Hanover.
- * Finished third in past two Hambletonian finals, with Amazing Catch from post 10 in 2024 and Up Your Deo in 2023.
- * Up Your Deo earlier in the year won the MGM Yonkers Trot, the first jewel in the Trotting Triple Crown.
- * Has had eight previous Hambletonian Oaks finalists. In addition to winning with Warrawee Michelle, he finished second in 2023 with Bond, who was beaten by a neck.
- * Finished third in the 2018 Hambletonian Oaks with Plunge Blue Chip.
- * Was named 2023 Trainer of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association.
- * Ranked second in North America in training purses last year, with \$8.23 million.
- * Most lucrative victory last year came in the \$1 million MGM Yonkers International Trot with Jiggy Jog S. She was named 2024 Trotter of the Year.
- * Set his career high for purses in 2023, with \$9.85 million. Only three trainers in history have had seasons with higher purses: Ron Burke, Mickey Burke and Jimmy Takter.
- * Has been in the top five in purses each of the past six years.
- * Set a career high for training wins in 2023 with 162.
- * Moved to the U.S. from Sweden in 2014.
- * Was Sweden's Trainer of the Year five times and Driver of the Year on three occasions.
- * Won 6,306 races as a driver in Sweden and 5,384 as a trainer.
- * In 2017, Svanstedt was inducted into Sweden's Hall of Fame.
- * Since arriving in the U.S., Svanstedt has won more than 1,200 races as a trainer and \$62 million in purses.
- * Ranks 12th in purses since the inception of official trainer stats in 1991.
- * Has won more than 700 times as a driver with \$36 million in purses.
- * Grew up with horses in Sweden. His father, who was in the timber business, used horses for work and raced cold-blooded trotters. Svanstedt began his professional career at the age of 24 and within several years was the champion at his home track in Bergsaker.

NANCY TAKTER

Born: 6/23/1981 – Birthplace: Malmö, Sweden – Resides: Allentown, NJ

Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2020.

Hambletonian wins (2): Karl, 2024; Tactical Approach, 2023.

Hambletonian Oaks wins (1): Sorella, 2020.

* Captured the 2024 Hambletonian with Karl to become the first trainer since her father, Jimmy Takter, to win the event in back-to-back years. Takter accomplished the feat in 2014 (Trixton) and 2015 (Pinkman).

* Won the 2023 Hambletonian with Tactical Approach, driven by Scott Zeron. He won from post 10, the least advantageous starting spot at The Meadowlands, at 12-1 odds.

* Tactical Approach also won the Kentucky Futurity, giving him two of the three jewels in the Trotting Triple Crown, and a Breeders Crown. He was named 2023 Trotter of the Year.

* Finished second in the Hambletonian in 2021 with 55-1 longshot Spy Booth and in 2020 with Ready For Moni.

* Appearing in her third Hambletonian Oaks final.

* In 2020, Takter continued something of a family tradition by winning the Hambletonian Oaks with Sorella. Her father won the event a record eight times. Yannick Gingras drove Jimmy Takter's final five Oaks champs, which came consecutively from 2014 to 2018, and also drove Sorella.

* Sorella was Canada's 2020 O'Brien Award winner for best 3-year-old filly trotter.

* Takter was the caretaker of 2010 Hambletonian winner Muscle Massive, trained by her father. She made her Hambletonian final debut as a trainer in 2014 with Resolve, who finished fifth.

* Stable earned \$6.21 million in purses in 2024 to rank sixth in North America.

* Champagne Problems was the 2024 Dan Patch Award winning 2-year-old filly trotter.

* For her career, Takter has won more than 850 races and \$43 million in purses.

* Ranks 24th in purses since the inception of official trainer stats in 1991.

* In 2020, Takter was the unanimous selection for Trainer of the Year by the chapters of the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

* She trained 2020 Horse of the Year Tall Dark Stranger and set career highs with 127 wins (a total she equaled in 2024) and \$8.07 million in purses.

* In 2013, Takter started her own training stable. In 2014, she guided 2-year-old female pacer JK She'salady to Horse of the Year honors. JK She'salady is the only 2-year-old filly pacer to be named Horse of the Year.

* Received the Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association in 2014.

* Was 1 when she moved with her family from Sweden to the U.S. Her father is Hall of Fame trainer Jimmy Takter, a four-time winner of the Hambletonian and record eight-time winner of the Hambletonian Oaks.

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

Hambletonian wins (1): Market Share, 2012.

- * Has appeared in four previous Hambletonian Oaks finals, with a best finish of fifth with Bare My Soul in 2022.
- * Toscano was the first female trainer to win the Hambletonian, which she did with Market Share in 2012.
- * One year earlier, Toscano-trained Chapter Seven finished fourth in the race. In 2017, Toscano trained the favorite heading toward the event, Dan Patch Award-winner Walner, but the colt was unable to race because of injury and was later retired.
- * Chapter Seven came back at age 4 and won eight of 10 races, \$1.02 million, and was named Horse of the Year. He was one of three Dan Patch Award winners for Toscano that season, with Market Share and pacer Heston Blue Chip.
- * Toscano was named 2012 Trainer of the Year Award by the U.S. Harness Writers Association. She was the first female trainer to receive the honor.
- * Has won more than 2,600 races as a trainer.
- * She has \$72 million in career purses and has topped \$1 million in earnings for 19 consecutive years.
- * Ranks ninth in purses since the inception of official trainer stats in 1991.
- * A Brooklyn native, Toscano briefly attended SUNY at Stony Brook before finding her calling and beginning her career.
- * Worked with veteran trainer Buddy Regan and Hall of Famers Buddy Gilmour and John Campbell prior to stepping out on her own in 1985.

LUCAS WALLIN

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

- * Made his Hambletonian debut in 2022 with Rebuff, who won his elimination and finished sixth in the final.
- * Rebuff later won the Kentucky Futurity, the third jewel in the Trotting Triple Crown.
- * Appeared in the 2021 Hambletonian as a driver, sitting behind Cuatro De Julio for trainer Marie Ortolan Bar and finished seventh.
- * Has appeared in three previous Hambletonian Oaks finals as a trainer. In 2022, Manon finished fourth. In 2020, Ab'sattitudexpress finished eighth. In 2019, he had two finalists, with Princess Deo finishing fifth and Queen Of Trix finishing sixth.
- * Received the 2022 Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association.
- * Stable has exceeded \$1 million in purses each of the past four years.
- * Set career highs with 44 wins and \$1.72 million in purses in 2023.
- * 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 2014, he was alerted to an opportunity to work for Ake Svanstedt's U.S. stable. Wallin spent two years with Svanstedt before deciding to go on his own.
- * Wallin's stable has won more than 260 races and \$7.91 million in purses in his career.