

Yonkers Raceway to expand French simulcasting in 2015

by Frank Drucker, publicity director, Empire City at Yonkers Raceway

Yonkers, NY --- Yonkers Raceway and the Standardbred Owners Association of New York have announced an expanded simulcasting calendar with Le Trot and the French PMU for the 2015 racing season.

Pending approval of the New York State Gaming Commission, a total of 31 racing cards -- featuring 173 trotting races -- are scheduled to be simulcast from Yonkers into Europe.

Last month, Yonkers Raceway began the experiment, sending four race dates (thus far) and a total of 20 races, all with oversized fields and at the added (1-1/4 mile) distance. The European response has been strong, averaging more than \$300,000 per race.

The French-hubbed audience also includes Switzerland, Belgium, Spanish Basque community, Germany, Austria, Luxemburg, Holland, Estonia and Malta.

In addition to the successful late-season Sunday afternoon cards, the 2015 French simulcasting calendar also includes regular Tuesday afternoon simulcasts in the 3-5 p.m. (ET) range.

Note that this Sunday, there is a matinee card (first post 11 a.m.), but, as previously scheduled, it will not be simulcast overseas. European export returns Sunday (Dec. 14) for Yonkers' final live program of the season.

"We are particularly pleased with the initial results of the races from Yonkers," Benoit Fabrega, Technical Director at Le Trot in France, said. "To be honest, they exceeded the goals we set. There was a real effort by the organizers in America to inform the French public and it works. We are therefore delighted to intensify Yonkers' product in 2015."

"We are very happy with the results that have been achieved so far," Raceway president Tim Rooney said. "It has very much been a team effort and we'd like to thank the horsemen for being available and enthusiastic about participating, our fans for coming out and supporting our races at such an early hour and, of course, our French partners for allowing us the opportunity to showcase our racing product. We look forward to the expanded program."

"We have carefully and systematically worked for a long time to make sure this pilot program had the benefit of expertise from both sides of the Atlantic," Joe Faraldo, president of the SOA of New York, said. "The relationship that the success of this effort has produced will be further enhanced and nurtured cooperatively by Yonkers, the SOA of New York and our French partners. The model built here at Yonkers can well serve the industry in the cultivation of a global market."

Again, pending NYSGC approval, Yonkers' 2015 live season is scheduled to begin Friday night (Jan. 9). Further information will be sent when available.