

VERNON DOWNS
Racing
Casino & Hotel



2018 Media Guide



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About Vernon Downs

Nestled in the beautiful rolling hills of central New York, Vernon Downs offers a long-running history of fast-paced harness racing. From April to November, you can listen to the beat of the horses, featuring some of the finest races in the area. In recent years, Vernon Downs has seen a renaissance, with top trotters making a stop in central New York to contest the Zweig Memorial in the summer. Additionally, top New York-sired horses take part in a full slate of New York Sire Stakes and Empire Breeders Classic events. Combine that with a casino, daily simulcasting of races throughout North America, promotions, good food, live entertainment, and an all-suite hotel, Vernon Downs is a great place to have fun at an affordable price.

Vernon Downs Quick Facts

Track circumference: 7/8 mile

Stretch length: 900'

First-row starters: 9

Open stretch: No

Takeout rates: Win, place, and show: 18%.

Exacta and double: 20%. All others: 25%.

Casino Quick Facts

VLTs: 767

Other games: Video Poker, electronic roulette

Denominations: From 1¢ to \$5.00

Minimum age to play VLTs: 18

2018 Racing Schedule

April					
				20	21
				27	28

May					
				4	5
				11	12
13				18	19
				25	26
	28				

June					
				1	2
				8	9
				15	16
17				22	23
				29	30

July					
		4		6	7
			12	13	14
			19	20	21
			26		28

August					
			2	3	4
			9	10	11
			16	17	18
			23	24	25
			30	31	

September					
					1
3				7	8
				14	15
				21	22
				28	29

October					
				5	6
				12	13
				19	20
				26	27

November					
				2	3

2018 Vernon Downs Stakes Schedule

(stakes dates highlighted in schedule at left)

- Fri., May 11 NY Sire Stakes – 3yo C&G Trot
 Fri., May 18 Empire Breeders (Eliminations) –
 NY-sired 3yo C&G Trot;
 NY-sired 3yo Filly Trot
 Mon., May 28 Empire Breeders (Final) –
 NY-sired 3yo C&G Trot;
 NY-sired 3yo Filly Trot
 NY Sire Stakes – 3yo C&G Pace
 Thur., July 12 NY Sire Stakes – 3yo Filly Pace
 Thur., July 19 NY Sire Stakes – 3yo Filly Trot
 Fri., Aug. 17 Zweig Memorial – 3yo Trot
 NY Sire Stakes – 2yo Filly Pace
 Thur., Aug. 23 NY Sire Stakes – 2yo Filly Trot
 Thur., Aug. 30 NY Sire Stakes – 2yo C&G Trot
 Mon., Sept. 3 NY Sire Stakes – 2yo C&G Pace

Post Times

Nightly post time is **6:10 p.m.** except:

- Saturday, May 5 (Kentucky Derby) – 4:30 p.m.
- May 13 (Mother's Day), May 28 (Memorial Day),
 June 17 (Father's Day), Sept. 3 (Labor Day) – 1:05
 p.m.

Vernon Downs Racing Contacts

Website	http://www.vernondowns.com	
Mail	Vernon Downs, 14 Ruth Street, Vernon, NY 13476	
Switchboard	877.88.VERNON (877.888.3766)	
Scott Freeman	President and General Manger	freeman@vernondowns.com 315.829.2201, ext. 2121
Jason Settlemoir	Regional VP, Racing and Simulcast	jsettlemoir@tiogadowns.com 201.460.4025
Jason Bluhm	Sr. Regional Director of Racing	jbluhm@tiogadowns.com 607.372.1693
Scott Warren	Director of Racing/Racecaller	swarren@vernondowns.com 315.829.6825
Garrett Madison	Regional Racing Marketing Manager	gmadison@tiogadowns.com 315.243.3249
Jason Hall	Sponsorships	607.952.6526
Jim Klein	Mutuels Manager	315.829.2201, ext. 3242

Vernon Downs History

July 1, 1953: Vernon Downs opens its doors for the first time to a crowd of 4,632 racegoers. Bob Abbe II wins the first race over the Central New York racecourse, covering 6-1/2 furlongs in 1:44.1. A total of \$114,777 is wagered on the first of 67 programs contested through the inaugural season.

1955: The three-quarter mile track is dubbed "The Home of the Miracle Mile" after Adios Harry paced one mile in 1:55, a world race record which held up for 15 years.

1964: Legendary racecaller Jim Moran debuts at Vernon, sharing duties with announcer Bud Hebert before embarking on a half-century career as the voice of harness racing in central New York.

1965: Bret Hanover attracts a crowd of 14,169 to the Miracle Mile for the season's featured three-year-old pacing event.

1966: Bret Hanover again makes Vernon Downs history, establishing a 1:54 world record in a time trial. The grandstand is enclosed with large sliding windows, affording racegoers protection from inclement conditions while still allowing for open-air atmosphere on warm summer nights.

1971: The downstairs clubhouse restaurant is now air conditioned, and the track is rated the second fastest in America by the United States Trotting Association.

1972: The upper-level clubhouse restaurant is renamed the Gold Cup Room from the Mohawk Terrace, while the downstairs section becomes the Miracle Mile Room after two decades as the Turfside Terrace.

1973: AmTote installs a computerized pari-mutuel system, and 61 television monitors are installed throughout the facility.

1974: Instant replay of races is offered for the first time.

1980: Niatross, who was based at Vernon in a 13-for-13 freshman season, returns to Vernon with driver Clint Galbraith after their Meadowlands Pace triumph to capture the Gaines Stakes in 1:53.3, a new track record. A new lighting system is installed around the track.

1984: Sunday racing is welcomed to Vernon Downs.

1985: Prakas sets the trotting record at Vernon with a 1:56 mile in the Founders Gold Cup for three-year-olds.

Vernon Downs History

1988: Call For Rain establishes a new speed mark at Vernon with a 1:52.3 mile on August 20.

1989: Dexter Nukes equals Call For Rain's mark of 1:52.3 in the Gaines Stakes.

1991: The inside hub rail is removed and replaced with pegs marking the inside of the track. May concert series begins.

1992: Stylish Cam takes another second off the track record with a 1:51.3 performance in the North American Pacing Series.

1994: Canaco On Time turns in a 1:51.1 mile on the pace. The Vernon Downs Hotel, located at the top of the present-day homestretch, opens in November as the Vernon Comfort Suites.

1995: Deliberate Speed's 1:55 Founders Stakes win establishes a new trotting track record.

1996: Oye Vay's 1:50.3 Gaines Stakes victory is the fastest mile in four decades of racing at Vernon. Both three-year-old trotting divisions of the Breeders Crown are held at Vernon, with Personal Banner (1:54.1) and Running Sea (1:55) winning the filly and colt divisions, respectively.

2000: After 47 years of the unique six-furlong track configuration replete with a chute for starting one-mile races in the homestretch, a new 7/8-mile oval is unveiled on July 1.

2004: Vernon Downs closes its doors in July.

2006: New York real-estate mogul and harness racing enthusiast Jeff Gural purchases Vernon Downs out of bankruptcy. Bob's Ring Of Fire and Chuck Connor Jr. win the first race of the abbreviated 30-day meet. Easton Alliance N and Cat Manzi won the \$83,500 Artiscape for distaff pacers in 1:51.

2007: The Credit Winner free-for-all trot debuts at Vernon Downs. Vivid Photo and Roger Hammer take the lion's share of the \$154,000 purse with a 1:52.1 victory in the first of ten renewals of the event, which later would be named the Crawford Farms Trot and would move to sister track Tioga Downs in 2017.

2013: Intimidate and Ron Pierce establish the all-age trotting record at Vernon with a 1:51 win in the Credit Winner.

2014: After 50 years behind the microphone, Jim Moran calls his final race at Vernon Downs.

2015: Speedy local mainstays Fireyourguns and JK Panache both record 1:47.3 miles at Vernon to jointly hold the all-age track pacing record.

Harold M. Zweig Memorial • 2017 Recap

Top three-year-old trotters are featured annually at Vernon Downs in the Harold M. Zweig Memorial, which features separate open and filly divisions. Last year, standout distaffer Ariana G was collared in the open division by Yes Mickey. The 2018 Zweig is slated for Friday, August 17.

2017 Zweig Memorial Recap

from Standardbred Canada

Yes Mickey (\$71.00) closed along the pylons to defeat the award-winning filly Ariana G at the finish line for a 34-1 upset in the \$320,000 Dr. Harry M. Zweig Memorial Trot on August 18, 2017. Trainer Åke Svanstedt swept the Zweig stakes, with his stable's Evelyn and driver Andy Miller also winning the \$135,000 filly division.

Svanstedt was in the bike behind Yes Mickey and left out from post three with Ariana G (Yannick Gingras) settling in behind while Long Tom (Brett Miller) advanced outside to take the lead into the first turn.



Long Tom clocked the opening quarter in :26.4 over a sloppy track before Ariana G swept to command down the backstretch, reaching the half in :55.1 and then three-quarters in 1:23.3.

In the stretch, Long Tom tipped out with Devious Man (Andy Miller) rallying out three-wide, but the leading lady's biggest threat was looming in behind. Yes Mickey closed inside of Ariana G and surged ahead as the wire approached to win by a quarter-length in 1:51.2. The time of the mile was just one-fifth of a second off the track record for three-year-old trotting geldings. Devious Man finished two and a half lengths behind in third.

In the \$135,000 Zweig filly division, Evelyn (\$16.00) slipped out of the pocket in the stretch and overtook the popular pacesetter Feed Your Head to win.

The Svanstedt-trained Evelyn and driver Andy Miller left from post three with 3-2 favorite Feed Your Head (Yannick Gingras) forging ahead through a :27 opener. The bettors' choice cleared to command past the first quarter mark with Sunshine Delight (Brett Miller) parked from post eight and Celebrity Ruth (Jason Bartlett) tipping out on cover towards the half.

Feed Your Head remained clear on top through middle splits of :57 and 1:25.4 while Evelyn bided her time in the pocket spot before finding room to split horses in the stretch and trot by Feed Your Head for the 1:54.1 victory. Sunshine Delight finished second closing to her outside a length back while Feed Your Head settled for third.

Harold M. Zweig Memorial • Past Winners

Open Division

Year	Top Three Finishers	Driver	Trainer	Time	Purse/Margin
2017	Yes Mickey Ariana G (f) Devious Man	Åke Svanstedt Yannick Gingras Andy Miller	Åke Svanstedt Jimmy Takter Julie Miller	1:51.2	\$320,000 nk, 2-1/4
2016	Bar Hopping Milligan's School Love Matters (dh) Hititoutofthepark (dh)	Tim Tetrick Andy Miller Brett Miller Corey Callahan	Jimmy Takter Julie Miller Jimmy Takter John Butenschoen	1:53.1	\$300,000 1-1/2, nk
2015	Pinkman Canepa Hanover Workout Wonder	Yannick Gingras Jimmy Takter Daniel Dubé	Jimmy Takter Jimmy Takter Åke Svanstedt	1:52	\$370,000 3/4, 1/2
2014	Father Patrick Nuncio Flyhawk El Durado	Yannick Gingras John Campbell Mark MacDonald	Jimmy Takter Jimmy Takter Mark Ford	1:52.2	\$340,000 1-1/2, 5-1/4
2013	Royalty For Life Corky Pine Credit	Brian Sears David Miller Corey Callahan	George Ducharme Jimmy Takter Erv Miller	1:53.1	\$360,000 1-1/2, 1-1/2

Filly Division

Year	Top Three Finishers	Driver	Trainer	Time	Purse/Margin
2017	Evelyn Sunshine Delight Feed Your Head	Andy Miller Brett Miller Yannick Gingras	Åke Svanstedt Staffan Lind Jimmy Takter	1:54.1	\$135,000 1, 1-1/4
2016	Flowers N Songs Womans Will Fad Finance	Yannick Gingras Andy Miller Jim Morrill Jr.	Paul Reid Julie Miller Trond Smedshammer	1:53.4	\$140,000 1-3/4, hd
2015	Mission Brief Wild Honey Magic Marker	Yannick Gingras John Campbell Brian Sears	Ron Burke Jimmy Takter Richard Norman	1:51.4	\$185,000 2, 3
2014	Shake It Cerry Heaven's Door Bikini So Teeny	Ron Pierce Åke Svanstedt Charlie Norris	Jimmy Takter Åke Svanstedt Charlie Norris	1:53.4	\$150,000 3/4, 2-1/4
2013	Mistery Woman Shared Past Frau Blucher	David Miller Dave Palone Ron Pierce	Jonas Czernyson Ron Burke Chris Oakes	1:52.1	\$150,000 1, 1-3/4

Empire Breeders Classic • Trotting Events

Since 2007, top New York-sired three-year-old trotters have taken to Vernon Downs for the Empire Breeders Classic. Since then, EBC winners of both sexes have proven themselves as national contenders. This year's EBC trotting finals are slated for Memorial Day (May 28).

2017 Empire Breeders Classic Recap

from Standardbred Canada

Devious Man (\$4.70) and Barn Bella (\$3.10) refused to disappoint their backers on June 18, 2017 at Vernon Downs, as favorites swept both Empire Breeders Classic events on a special Father's Day afternoon card.



In the \$252,000 Classic for three-year-old trotting colts and geldings, Devious Man floated into position early, tracking from fourth well behind pacesetter Swell Chap (Brett Miller) before Andy Miller angled him off the pegs past a :56.3 first half mile. On the far turn, the Credit Winner colt gained the cover of Stick With Me Kid (Brian Sears), following a :28.1 third-quarter duel before vaulting to the fore above the eighth pole just moments after Stick With Me Kid put away Swell Chap. Devious Man used a three-wide slingshot move to kick away from the field by four lengths, capturing the Classic in 1:52.2.

Bill's Man (Corey Callahan) rallied belatedly down the grandstand side from fourth-over to take second narrowly over Stick With Me Kid, who held third after handling much of the heavy lifting through the middle stages.

Julie Miller trains Devious Man for Stroy, Inc. and the Andy Miller Stable, Inc.

In the \$228,250 Classic for three-year-old trotting fillies, Barn Bella overcame post 9 and a taxing early pace en route to a 1:51.3 triumph, equaling the track record for sophomore distaffers on the trot.

Jeff Gregory put the daughter of Conway Hall in play from the far outside, travelling uncovered in pursuit of Ostrich Blue Chip (Scott Zeron) through a :26.1 first quarter and clearing the lead upon reaching the backstretch. After slowing the tempo through a :29.1 second split, Barn Bella dug in to protect her ground from a first-over Celebrity Ruth (David Miller) on the far turn, repelling that threat past a 1:24 three-quarter split and edging away off the corner. Barn Bella edged clear from her nine rivals while driven out in upper stretch, ultimately putting 3-1/4 lengths on Celebrity Ruth. Sunshine Delight (Brett Miller) was a farther four lengths back in third after stalking second-over cover through the final three-eighths.



Trainer Steven Pratt co-owns Barn Bella with Nancy Pratt along with Wanda Polisseni's Purple Haze Stables, LLC.

Empire Breeders Classic • Past Winners

New York-Sired Three-Year-Old Trotting Colts and Geldings

Year	Top Three Finishers	Driver	Trainer	Time	Purse/Margin
2017	Devious Man Bill's Man Stick With Me Kid	Andy Miller Corey Callahan Brian Sears	Julie Miller John Butenschoen George Ducharme	1:52.2	\$252,000 4, nk
2016	Dante	Åke Svanstedt	Åke Svanstedt	1:52.3	\$222,975
2015	Crazy Wow	Yannick Gingras	Ron Burke	1:51.1	\$255,325
2014	Expressive Action	Mike Simons	John Grasso	1:54.1	\$215,125
2013	Jurgen Hanover	David Miller	Donna Marshall	1:53.4	\$259,900
2012	Archangel	Jim Morrill Jr.	Peter Arrigenna	1:53.1	\$233,250
2011	Whatever It Takes	Andy Miller	Julie Miller	1:54	\$283,475
2010	Strong Hope	Ron Pierce	Noel Daley	1:55.2	\$235,900
2009	Russell Hill	Jim Morrill Jr.	Jimmy Takter	1:57.1	\$206,275

New York-Sired Three-Year-Old Trotting Fillies

Year	Top Three Finishers	Driver	Trainer	Time	Purse/Margin
2017	Barn Bella Celebrity Ruth Sunshine Delight	Jeff Gregory David Miller Brett Miller	Steven Pratt Trond Smedshammer Staffan Lind	1:51.3	\$228,250 3-1/4, 4
2016	Non Stick	Åke Svanstedt	Åke Svanstedt	1:54	\$234,375
2015	Barn Doll	Jeff Gregory	Steven Pratt	1:52.1	\$248,275
2014	Crediamia	Tim Tetrick	Trond Smedshammer	1:54.1	\$217,725
2013	Lola De Vie	Jim Morrill Jr.	Chris Ryder	1:55.3	\$237,600
2012	For A Dancer	Jeff Gregory	Joe Holloway	1:54	\$239,500
2011	Jezzy	Tim Tetrick	Ray Schnittker	1:55	\$238,225
2010	Southwind Samurai	Patrick Berry	Björn Norén	1:54.4	\$234,900
2009	Honorable Daughter	Jim Morrill Jr.	Larry Remmen	1:57	\$212,875

Vernon Downs Track Records

Pacing Records

2C	Travel Playlist	2015	Marcus Miller	1:49.2
2F	See You At Peelers	2010	Marcus Johansson	1:51.3
2G	Tomy Terror	2014	Corey Callahan	1:50.2
3C	Heaven's Gait	2017	David Miller	1:49
3F (t)	Major Look	2012	Jeff Gregory	1:50
	Give Me An Amen	2013	Jeff Gregory	
3G	My Spirit Soars	2015	Jim Morrill Jr.	1:49.3
4H	Dude's The Man	2016	Chris Lems	1:49.4
4M	Armbro Dancer	2007	Ron Pierce	1:50.1
4G	JK Panache	2013	Jim Morrill Jr.	1:49.1
AH	He's Gorgeous	2012	Tim Tetrick	1:48.3
AM (t)	My Little Dragon	2008	Brian Sears	1:49.4
	Venus Delight	2015	Jason Bartlett	
AG (t)	Fireyourguns	2015	Jim Morrill Jr.	1:47.3
	JK Panache	2015	Frank Davis	
1/2 mi	Some Or Lis	2013	Joe Nassimos	:53.2
7/8 mi*	Noble Wabbit	2013	John MacDonald	1:39

Trotting Records

2C	Crazy Wow	2014	Dan Rawlings	1:54
2F	Atlanta	2017	Mark MacDonald	1:54
2G	Lightning Force	2013	John Campbell	1:55
3C	Market Share	2012	Tim Tetrick	1:52.1
3F (t)	Check Me Out	2012	Tim Tetrick	1:51.3
	Barn Bella	2017	Jeff Gregory	
3G	Crazy Wow	2015	Yannick Gingras	1:51.1
4H	A Penny Earned	2013	Jimmy Whittemore	1:53.1
4M	Hannelore Hanover	2016	Yannick Gingras	1:51.3
4G	Intimidate	2013	Ron Pierce	1:51
AH	Wings Of Royalty	2017	Chris Lems	1:52.4
AM	Maven	2014	Yannick Gingras	1:52
AG	San Pail	2011	Randy Waples	1:51.1
7/8 mi*	Mystical Con	2015	Claude Huckabone III	1:43.1
1-3/8 mi	Ivanhoe Diamant	2011	Claude Huckabone III	2:44.2

2017 Driver and Trainer Standings

Driver Standings

	St	W	P	S	W%	Purses
John MacDonald	587	185	132	82	31.5	767,680
Chris Lems	589	120	81	78	20.4	565,968
Jimmy Whittemore	467	82	90	72	17.6	406,827
Truman Gale	502	54	89	90	10.8	323,619
Leon Bailey	285	30	29	48	10.5	154,636
Ben McNeil	175	28	22	20	16.0	118,094
Josh Kinney	188	17	20	25	9.0	93,444
Shawn McDonough	104	14	15	21	13.5	61,039
Brett Crawford	135	13	25	20	9.6	85,038
Claude Huckabone III	306	13	25	41	4.2	104,968
Joe Nassimos	197	13	25	28	6.6	83,476
Justin Huckabone	99	12	13	10	12.1	51,796
Jason Bartlett	52	11	10	3	21.2	244,054
Dan Daley	94	22	20	4	11.7	60,890
Jim Morrill Jr.	54	10	8	6	18.5	218,576
Andy Miller	37	8	5	8	21.6	390,473
Brian Sears	30	8	1	6	26.7	161,136

Trainer Standings

	St	W	P	S	W%	Purses
John MacDonald	161	57	43	27	35.4	261,107
Andy Gardner	225	51	47	32	22.7	215,596
Dennis Whittemore	163	38	31	28	23.3	175,643
David Dewhurst	187	30	32	37	16.0	163,171
Misty Carey	263	25	42	43	9.5	154,916
Homer Hochstetler	89	24	17	14	27.0	104,055
Angus MacDonald	136	24	17	22	17.6	97,139
George Ducharme	50	23	5	7	46.0	139,119
John McNeil III	87	22	12	9	25.3	84,444
Jessica Okusko	78	21	8	13	26.9	73,785
Jordan Hope	64	19	11	2	29.7	77,150
Truman Gale	150	18	33	27	12.0	120,845
Dustin Ingraham	114	18	23	10	15.8	72,321
Gates Brunet	103	16	19	21	15.5	79,379
Harris O'Brien	52	13	4	5	25.0	41,371
Jennifer Sansone	110	13	13	11	11.8	50,065
Robert Gale	155	12	20	29	7.7	101,867

Horseman Profiles



John MacDonald

Birthday: 28 Jan 1982

Hometown: Charlottetown, PEI

- Cracked the top 5 at Vernon

in 2013 after early success in Ottawa, and has been a perennial top local driver since

- Captured both the Vernon training and driving titles in the 2016 and 2017 seasons



Chris Lems

Birthday: 13 Dec 1986

Hometown: Sioux Falls, SD

- Finished in the top 5 of the Vernon drivers' standings each

season since 2009

- Drove Royalty For Life to a 1:53 local victory in preparation for his 2013 Hambletonian triumph



Jimmy Whittemore

Birthday: 14 Oct 1983

Hometown: Norway, ME

- Earned his 1,000th career driving win in 2014 at Vernon
- Won over 100 races each of

the past ten years after moving from his native Maine



Truman Gale

Birthday: 26 Feb 1989

Hometown: Helena, NY

- Leading provisional driver at Vernon in 2012
- Broke his Meadowlands

maiden only his second drive there

- Drove over 100 winners each year from 2013 to 2016



Jim Morrill Jr.

Birthday: 10 Nov 1964

Hometown: Hamburg, NY

- One of North America's perennial top drivers, with over

\$2M in purses earned each year since 2000

- Primarily drives at Pocono and in Western New York after years at the Meadowlands
- One of the most sought-after reinsmen on the New York Sire Stakes circuit



Yannick Gingras

Birthday: 4 Aug 1979

Hometown: Sorel, QC

- Has eclipsed \$9M in purse earnings each of the last eleven years, pushing him

over \$150M in career purses earned

- Regular driver of Foiled Again, the richest pacer in harness racing history
- Won the Zweig Memorial in 2014 (Father Patrick) and 2015 (Pinkman), as well as the filly division in 2015 (Mission Brief) and 2016 (Flowers N Songs)



Andy Gardner

Birthday: 5 Jan 1983

Hometown: Vernon, NY

- Trainees have amassed over \$250,000 in purses earned each of the last four seasons

- Runner-up in the trainer standings behind John MacDonald in both 2016 and 2017

Horseman Profiles



Dave Dewhurst

Birthday: 26 Nov 1966

Hometown: New Hartford, NY

- Has earned over \$8M in purses as a trainer, with over

1800 wins to his credit

- Perennial contender at Vernon has finished in the top 5 locally in seven of the last eight seasons.

Homer Hochstetler

Birthday: 1 Aug 1952

Hometown: Crete, IL

- Has amassed nearly \$20M in purse earnings and over 1700 training wins
- Enjoyed six \$1M seasons (2001, 2003-07) while based in Chicago

George Ducharme

Birthday: 25 Dec 1961

Hometown: Norfolk, MA

- Won the 2013 Hambletonian with Vernon-based trotter Royalty For Life
- Amassed over \$1M in purses in both 2013 and 2015 with fewer than 500 combined starts between the two years
- Perennial contender on the New York and Massachusetts Sire Stakes circuits

Credits

Cover: Vernon Downs Aerial – Ross Oder.

Page 8: Yes Mickey (inside) holds off Ariana G – Frances Blazer/Fotowon.

Page 10: Devious Man (top), Barn Bella (bottom) – Frances Blazer/Fotowon.

Page 14: Chris Lems, Jimmy Whittemore – Frances Blazer/Fotowon. Jim Morrill Jr. – Ed Keys/USTA. Yannick Gingras – Fred J. Brown.

