

# A Guide to Careers in Horse Racing



# Acknowledgements



This guide is part of a larger effort to encourage young people to consider horse racing careers and to better explain the importance of horse racing to the national economy as well as local agribusiness.

As you are about to read, horse racing offers many opportunities for employment. Some jobs involve direct contact with horses on a daily basis; others relate more to growing and promoting the business; and some revolve around the actual presentation of races. One of the best things about horse racing is that it allows you to “fit” wherever your interests and skills are best suited. We hope that this guide opens your horizons and helps you to make the career choice that is right for you.

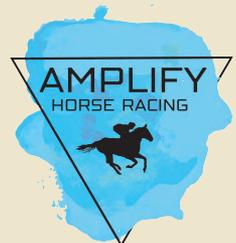
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 Indicates Standardbred-specific careers

 Indicates Thoroughbred-specific careers

**Note:** Salaries are estimates of general industry standards

# What is Horse Racing?

Horse racing is a broad term defined differently depending on the perspective of the person involved. It can be a business, a pastime, a hobby, an investment, a sport, a sporting event, an industry. It can be exhilarating and heartbreaking. It can be lucrative and costly.

The American Horse Council reports that there are over nine million horses in the United States and that the horse industry has an overall economic impact of more than \$102 billion. From the total horse population, nearly a million of these are racehorses and horse racing in the U.S. supports more than 470,000 jobs, adds \$36 billion in direct benefits to the economy, and has an indirect total economic impact of \$63 billion.



In North America, pari-mutuel wagering on races is permitted under the supervision of state racing commissions and various national and provincial agencies. The word "pari-mutuel" means "among ourselves"; bettors are wagering only against other bettors. Racetracks have no vested interest in who wins or loses a wager. Instead, the amount of dollars wagered determines the odds and payoffs to individual gamblers. Racetracks keep a percentage of every wager to cover their expenses and to make a profit.

In addition, horse racing is labor intensive and ever-changing. It requires a workforce which has many unique skill sets, from understanding daily horse care to developing new technologies in cutting-edge fields. Before seeking a career in this diverse industry, a bit of background may be helpful.

## Standardbreds - Harness Racing

Harness racing is a competition for purse money among horses bred to trot or pace usually at a distance of one mile. Professional drivers, almost always wearing their own unique individualized colors, sit in sulkies (specialized two-wheeled carts) and steer the horses with the use of lines. In North America, all of these horses are registered Standardbreds; the North American national registries for harness racing are the United States Trotting Association and Standardbred Canada.

Harness racing was founded by farmers and sportsmen who raced their hitched horses on country roads and city streets in the early 1700s with the premise that "my horse can beat your horse."



Selective breeding resulted in the Standardbred, an American breed developed in the late 1800s when horses met a “standard of time” trotting or pacing one mile in two minutes, 30 seconds (2:30). Today’s Standardbred can exceed 40 miles per hour for parts of the race and who regularly complete miles in the one minute, 50 second (1:50) range.

Harness races are classified by gait (trot or pace), gender, age, earnings or races won. There are claiming races, in which a price is assigned to the horse by its owner and the



horse may be purchased immediately following the race. Stake races like the Hambletonian and Mohawk Million can have purses of more than \$1 million and require advance payments to remain eligible.

Many racetracks operate year-round while others compete during specific seasons. They can be owned and operated by large corporations, private owners, fair associations, and even by fraternal or charitable organizations. Most

of these racetracks offer pari-mutuel wagering and many offer additional forms of sports wagering popular with the general public.

Today harness racing takes place in 23 states and 10 Canadian provinces, both at commercial raceways and at fairgrounds across the continent. Harness racing is enjoyed by fans around the world with racing venues in New Zealand, Australia and most of Europe.

The Standardbred is described as an “all-purpose, gentle, tractable as a light working horse.” Many of these versatile animals go on to successful second careers after racing as riding, driving and competitive show horses as well as working as mounted patrol and police horses.

### **Thoroughbreds - Flat Racing**

Thoroughbreds walk, trot, canter, and gallop – the four-beat gait executed during a race – unlike Standardbreds who race at the trot or pace.

Thoroughbreds can race on the flat or over jumps (which is called a steeplechase or jumps race event) with riders called jockeys using reins to steer while sitting on the horses’ backs.

The Thoroughbred descended from three influential stallions from the Middle East: the Darley Arabian, Byerly Turk, and the Godolphin



Arabian. The racing Thoroughbred was a result of crossing these foundation stallions and their offspring with hardy English riding horse mares in Great Britain between the late 1600s and early 1700s. The hot-blooded nature and aerodynamic features of the Middle Eastern horses, combined with the durability of the English horses created a lightweight, speedy horse that had good endurance over longer distances.

Importation of Thoroughbreds to the United States began in 1730, but all Thoroughbreds can be traced back to the British Stud Book. Thoroughbreds in North America are registered with The Jockey Club, which also maintains annual breeding and racing statistics, and oversees a number of associated media, aftercare, and racing data programs. The Jockey Club is not a governing body; the rules and regulations of racing are overseen by a racing commission in each state or racing jurisdiction.



There are more than 66 Thoroughbred racetracks in North America. In the U.S., a dirt surface is most popular although some races are conducted on turf or synthetic tracks. In European countries, most flat racing is conducted on turf with a few taking place on synthetic surfaces better suited for racing during the colder winter months.

The most recognizable state for Thoroughbred racing and breeding might be Kentucky, where the most famous race, the Kentucky Derby, is run each year at Churchill Downs in Louisville. New York, Florida, California, Maryland, and other states along the East Coast and in the Midwest have viable racing and breeding industries. Other countries where Thoroughbred racing is popular include Ireland, England, France, Australia, Japan, and throughout South America.

Thoroughbreds race at many levels, from county fair tracks to famous racecourses like Saratoga and Keeneland, which hosts elite

race meetings with renowned races. Race conditions, created by a racing secretary, specify the types of horses that compete in each race based on age, races or money won, and gender. Maiden races are written for horses that have never won a race while stakes races are designed for higher level horses. Stakes are “graded” depending on the quality of horses competing; Grade 1 is the highest level, followed by Grade 2, then Grade 3 races. The year-end championships of Thoroughbred racing is the Breeders’ Cup event, held in late October/early November, which rotates to a different state and racetrack each year.

After racing, Thoroughbreds can have successful second athletic careers in a variety of disciplines and are in high demand as sport horses. Some are also placed at correctional facilities to be cared for by inmates who in turn are taught vocational skills.

# Hands-On Racetrack Careers

## Caretaker

Also known as grooms, caretakers have the most responsibility for the day-to-day care of the racehorse. He or she follows the trainer's instructions. There are many different tasks a caretaker may be asked to perform. The structure of care varies from stable to stable. These tasks may include:

- Feeding, grooming and preparing the horse for its daily work, bathing and grooming the horse afterward;
- Assisting the trainer with shipping the horse as needed;
- Caring for the horse at the barn and in the paddock (security area) on race nights;
- Monitoring the health and hygiene of the horse as well as regular stall cleaning;
- Communicating any observations or concerns about the horse to the trainer;
- Cleaning and checking all equipment for safety after each use.



**Compensation:** Caretakers are usually paid weekly and salary is based on how many horses are under their care. Range from \$15,000 - \$40,000 per year with year-end bonuses often given to those fortunate enough to look after a top contender.

## Driver

The driver is the human “star” and a professional athlete who risks his/her life each time he/she sits in the sulky. While some drivers also train horses, the current trend is toward drivers dedicating their efforts to solely racing, also known as “catch driving.” Without the demands of daily care of the horses, a driver can focus on his/her responsibilities on:

- Maneuvering and positioning the horse to perform its best during a race;
- Conveying information to the trainer regarding soundness or possible equipment adjustments to enhance the horse's future performance.



While weight and gender of an individual are not vitally important to earning a driver's license, candidates must be in good physical condition. A driver makes split-second decisions, so he/she must have good reflexes, the strength to control the animal and a competitive nature. He/she must also have the courage and common sense to make strategic decisions while traveling at 35 miles per hour with no windshield, power steering or brakes. To become a driver, a series of written, medical and practical tests must be passed. There are different levels of licenses,

and as a driver gains experience, he/she can move up through the ranks to a full or “A” license. U.S. and Canadian requirements differ slightly.

**Compensation:** Drivers generally earn five percent of what the horse earns in purses. At some tracks, they also get a guaranteed minimum per drive, and many drivers get tips as well. Most drivers make \$20,000 - \$50,000 a year but the very best drivers can earn over \$500,000 per year.

## Exercise Rider

Most exercise riders either have a contract to work for a specific trainer, or operate on a freelance basis working for multiple trainers and charging a per-horse fee. Most people, even if they have ridden horses before, learn about the intricacies of riding racehorses at private farms or training facilities, where the racetracks are less busy. Once riders are competent at controlling a horse running 40 miles per hour, have developed good hand-eye coordination, spacial awareness, and respect for the safety of their horses and others around them, they can safely ride at a busier facility or track.

**Compensation:** Range from \$500 - \$700 per week or around \$15 per horse ridden each morning as a freelancer.

## Jockey

In Thoroughbreds, jockeys are the professional riders who pilot the horses during races. Many jockeys learn from the ground up – learning about horsemanship as a groom or hotwalker, becoming exercise riders (riding racehorses during morning training), and then becoming apprentice jockeys. Apprentice jockeys start off with a weight allowance, meaning they can ride at a lesser weight than more experienced riders. As they win more races, their weight allowance diminishes and then goes away, making them a journeyman rider. Most jockeys are represented by an agent, who helps them book horses to ride in races.



**Compensation:** In addition to a rider fee that the jockey gets for every race, he/she receives 10 percent of what his/her horse earns in a

race. Most jockeys can make \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year but the best jockeys can earn in excess of \$1 million or more.

## Owner

Owners are the cornerstone of the racing industry. While most owners have careers in other fields, a select few manage their stables full time. The owner takes financial risks and reaps any rewards. The owner pays for the horse, its equipment, related care such as farrier and veterinary services as well as the training fees paid to the trainer. He/she must make investment decisions from a business standpoint.



Both Standardbred and Thoroughbred racehorses can cost a few thousand or hundreds of thousands of dollars. Those with breeding potential can be worth millions of dollars. Most owners are “regular folks” and come from all walks of life. Ownership takes many forms:

individual, partnerships, corporations and syndicates in which a large group of people own several horses. Fractional ownership, micro shares and racing partnership groups have become very popular due to the increasing expenses involved in owning horses. The idea of shared risk and benefit is often an economical way to introduce newcomers to racehorse ownership.

There are two primary differences between Standardbred and Thoroughbred ownership: 1.

Standardbreds usually race three

to four times per month while Thoroughbreds on average race once per month; 2.

Standardbreds offer the opportunity to have a more active/hands-on approach since owners can easily learn to jog and work with their own horses as schedules allow.



**Compensation:** Owners' earnings are based on the percentage of ownership, which is variable according to the quality of the horse and the level of competition. With the increasing expenses involved in getting a horse to the races, it should not be assumed that owning racehorses is automatically a money-making endeavor, although this is the desired outcome. Generally speaking, higher level ownership in stakes-caliber horses tends to increase the odds to “make” money and Thoroughbred purse structure is higher than Standardbreds. However, occasionally the dream of a champion racehorse from relatively meager beginnings does come true!

## Trainer

The trainer is responsible for the management and care of all the horses in his/her stable. Some trainers own all of their own horses but most train for owners who pay them a daily or monthly rate plus a percentage of the horse's earnings. Some trainers work exclusively for one owner (private trainer) and are paid a salary plus a bonus based on the stable's performance. Aspiring trainers often work as assistants to established trainers until they have the knowledge and experience to open their own stables. A trainer's responsibilities include:



- Developing exercise, training and racing schedules as well as shipping the horse when needed;
- Selecting the appropriate driver for the horse;
- Determining and scheduling proper shoeing and veterinary care;
- Communicating with owners regularly with regard to the horse's progress and condition;

- Hiring support staff including caretakers/grooms, hot walkers, second/assistant-trainers, stall cleaners and others.



- Maintaining medical, financial and billing records (large stables usually have bookkeepers or accountants to assist);
- Selecting horses to purchase and acting as agent in helping owners sell their horses.

To become a licensed Standardbred trainer in North America, an individual must demonstrate his/her experience with horses, be recommended by other licensed trainers, and pass a written examination as determined by the United States Trotting Association or Standardbred Canada. All licensed Thoroughbred trainers in the U.S. must take a trainer's exam in the jurisdiction where they wish to begin training. While not used by all states, the National Uniform Trainer's Test covers six sections: basic horse health, entries/weights, general rules/employment, medication rules and regulations, race day rules, and a practical barn test exam.

**Compensation:** Standardbred trainers usually charge a daily rate ranging from \$30/day - \$100/day plus they earn five percent of what each horse earns in purses. Thoroughbred trainers have a training fee in the range of \$100 - 200/day and receive 10 percent of each horse's winnings. Yearly trainers' earnings of both breeds would be based on the number of horses trained. This might range from \$20,000 - \$200,000 or more depending on the stable's success.

## Valet

A valet works for a jockey; he/she organizes and manages the jockey's tack during a race day and delivers it to the respective trainers so that each horse has the proper equipment for that day's race. Valets take the tack immediately after a race when it has been removed from the horse, clean it, make sure that all of the correct equipment and weights are in place for a jockey to "weigh out" from the jocks room (each rider is required to carry a certain amount of weight for each race) and take it from the jockey once the rider has "weighed in" – stepping on a scale after a race to prove that his/her weight is the same amount he/she carried during the race.



**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year.

# Farm Careers

There are many important racing professions that are not based at the racetrack. These jobs are at breeding centers and farms, training centers and boarding facilities where horses are bred, raised and trained and turned out for rest and relaxation.

## Farm Administrator

As with any business, horse farms need support staff and the bigger the farm, the greater the need for receptionists, bookkeepers and secretaries. Detailed medical, pedigree, training and breeding records must be kept for each horse. Billing records must be accurate and invoices are sent monthly or seasonally. Arrangements for prospective client visits must be made. Owners require accurate information and while computer software makes these tasks much easier than they once were, there is increasing demand for more records.



**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$75,000 per year depending on the level of responsibility.

## Farm Caretaker

While there are similarities between farm grooms and racetrack grooms, the farm groom will generally care for a larger group of horses with less intensive individualized care. In addition, he/she may have the added responsibility of broodmare and foal care, depending on the type of facility. Farm caretakers may also have responsibilities for farm maintenance, yearling sales preparation, and farm equipment operation.

**Compensation:** Range from \$15,000 - \$40,000 per year depending on level of responsibility.



## Farm Manager

The farm manager has complete responsibility for the farm's operations. This is a top management position that requires years of experience in animal husbandry as well as a general understanding of farm procedures and business. Depending on the specific nature of the farm, these responsibilities may include:

- Selecting and supervising all staff;
- Supervising farm maintenance;
- Selecting and purchasing of feed and equipment;

- Supervising care and monitoring the health of all the horses on the farm;
- Communicating with clients (and potential clients) and the farm owners regarding animal care and mating selections;
- Representing the interests of the farm, including promotion and advertisement of its business facilities, products and services.



Thoroughbred rules require that all breeding takes place entirely with live cover, meaning that the mare and stallion must meet for the breeding as opposed to artificial insemination used in Standardbreds. Thoroughbred farm managers assist in scheduling and facilitating the transportation of mares to the breeding shed when they are ready to be bred/covered by the stallion. They might also have a role in planning the best matings for each mare based on her pedigree, racing performance, and previous offspring.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$100,000 per year depending on the level of responsibility.

### Foaling Attendant

The foaling attendant must be a detail-oriented, level-headed individual who can stay calm in the event of a crisis. The foaling attendant is a key person in the success of any breeding farm during foaling season and experienced attendants are in high demand. The foaling attendant's may responsibilities include:

- Observing the mare prior to and during the birthing process (foaling);
- Providing assistance in the event of problems during foaling;
- Maintaining written and mental records of a mare's foaling habits from year to year.

**Compensation:** The foaling attendant is often a seasonal employee. Wages may be either hourly or salaried and range from \$10,000 - \$20,000 per foaling season.

### Stallioner/Stallion Handler

The stallioner or stallion handler physically manages the farm's breeding stallions under the direction of the farm or stallion manager. He/she must be an experienced horse person, capable of controlling the often volatile stallions with a firm, yet measured manner to assure their safety and reproductive health.

Responsibilities may include:

- Caring for the stallions on a daily basis;
- Preparing the stallions for breeding duties;
- Supervising semen transport as needed for Standardbreds.



**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$40,000 per year depending on level of experience.



## Training Center Manager

The training center manager has many of the same responsibilities as the farm manager, but may also deal with training track maintenance, stall rentals for trainers, farrier areas, and therapy facilities. He/she is responsible for staffing these positions, but in many cases, must also be able to assist in a variety of capacities. Additionally, the training center manager must arrange for manure removal and general facility maintenance. In flat racing, many training centers are used specifically for breaking and pre-training – which means training yearlings to saddle and getting them started in race training as 2-year-olds. In this case, the training center manager might also serve as a trainer for starting young horses before they are sent to the primary trainer for their racing career.

**Compensation:** Range from \$50,000 - \$100,000 per year depending on the level of responsibility.



# Racetrack Operations Careers

The racetrack is a complex operation that demands the talents of hundreds of people in a variety of jobs, not all of which are horse-centric. Racetracks often play an important economic role in their community; they are high-profile crosses between a theater and a stadium while showcasing racing to the public and offering wagering. In the current business environment, many racetracks combine positions and an eager, energetic individual may fill multiple roles.

Management structure of racetracks and specific job titles vary greatly. At smaller racetracks, tasks and duties may be combined in different ways and/or managers may do more of the work themselves. At large racetracks, they may be supervising dozens of individuals within distinct departments. Because many racetracks do not offer “live racing” throughout an entire year, employees who work on the racing side may work at several different racetracks in the course of a given year.

Compensation figures are based on the assumption that the individual will work an entire year (often among two or three racetracks) and thus represent an approximate annual salary.

## General Manager

The general manager oversees all aspects of the racetrack’s operation, from coordinating high-dollar stakes races to making sure there is soap for patrons in the restrooms. He/she often has assistants to oversee specific areas but they report to him/her as the person who makes the ultimate final decisions. The general manager must be a competent administrator, capable of dealing with horsemen, patrons, regulatory bodies and government agencies and his/her staff. An intimate knowledge of the racing industry as a whole is critical. The general manager’s responsibilities may include:

- Supervising all employees, either directly or indirectly;
- Delegating authority as the racetrack’s head of administration;
- Making all day-to-day decisions regarding operation of the racetrack;
- Implementing policies and procedures as directed by the racetrack’s owners to maintain an efficient and profitable operation.

**Compensation:** Range from \$75,000 - \$250,000 per year depending on the level of responsibility.

At many racetracks, specific administration duties are divided among departments each with its own manager or vice president. Salary for each of these department manager positions may range from \$40,000 - \$100,000 per year depending on the level of responsibility.



## Business Development Department

This department is responsible for maximizing the wagering, both on (at the racetrack) and off-track (at other tracks or facilities). This department is also often responsible for the racetrack's player rewards program and may have responsibility to act as a liaison with other racetracks' simulcast and advance deposit wagering services, which allow people to bet online or by phone. In many cases, there is overlap between business development and customer relations, since finding and maintaining guests is key to racetrack success.

## Advance Deposit Wagering Attendant

This individual is responsible for deposits to interactive wagering accounts that may be affiliated with the racetrack. He/she must be trustworthy with money, and have excellent computer and interpersonal skills.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$45,000 per year.

## Money Room Attendant

Money room personnel work in a secure area separated from wagering areas. With the assistance of counting machines, they handle all of the money wagered and paid out over the course of a racing day. Money room attendants must have a good head for numbers and the ability to work quickly under pressure. They must also be trustworthy and (often) bondable as they may handle tens of thousands of dollars daily. Their responsibilities include:

- Counting and recording all money before it is distributed to the tellers and cashing out the teller at the end of his/her shift;
- Redistributing cash to tellers as needed to replenish their "bank" in order to assure they have enough cash on hand to pay winning bettors;
- Counting, recording and preparing all cash for bank deposit at the end of the racing day.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year.

## Mutuel Clerk

The mutuel clerks or tellers sell and cash wagers from guests using pari-mutuel terminals. They also have an important customer relations function, as they likely have more face-to-face contact with guests than any other track employee. These individuals are responsible for balancing their cash and payouts at the end of each shift. Some tellers work specialty areas for check cashing, credit card advances, players club services or to facilitate advance deposit wagering account transactions.



**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$35,000 per year.

## Mutuel Manager

The mutuel manager supervises the wagering operations at a racetrack or off-track facility. This individual oversees the mutuel clerks, the totalisator personnel (see below) and others who work in the wagering area.

**Compensation:** Range from \$40,000 - \$80,000 per year.

## Players Club Attendant

The players club allows guests to earn points toward rewards or cash bonuses. While each racetrack's club is set up differently, the players club personnel have the responsibility for special events, establishing and maintaining the rewards structure and dealing with questions about the various promotions. They must sign up new members and interact regularly with the racetrack's biggest players to ensure their needs are being met. At some racetracks, a mutuel teller receives an hourly bonus to take on this responsibility in addition to selling and cashing tickets.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$45,000 per year.

## Simulcast Director

This is an important and evolving position. Some tracks derive more than 80 percent of their revenue from incoming simulcasts. The simulcast director has responsibility for simulcasting issues related to the broadcast and wagering on races to and from other racetracks. He/she decides which other racetracks to schedule, creates the simulcast calendar and often supervises the program department manager and simulcast television control. The simulcast director must be a salesperson, negotiating with other tracks, off-track betting facilities and account wagering platforms to accept his/her racetrack's signal. He/she must be knowledgeable about harness racing as well as flat racing.

**Compensation:** Range from \$40,000 - \$100,000 per year.

## Totalisator Personnel

"Tote" personnel actually work for the business that supplies the wagering terminals and associated computer equipment and software that calculate payouts and wagering totals. They also maintain the wagering terminals, including self-service terminals. These are usually skilled computer programmers. Most tote companies are also responsible for the large tote board which displays odds and will-pays in the infield of the racetrack. They also convey the on-track wagering information to the racetrack's television department and to simulcast locations.

**Compensation:**  
Range from  
\$25,000 - \$50,000  
per year.



## Customer Relations Department

This department is responsible for making sure the racetrack has customers and keeping them happy. The manager often supervises all guest relations personnel (parking attendants, admission clerks, tellers, and program sellers) as well as all food service operations, both concession and clubhouse dining. He/she assists in coordinating on-track promotions and advertising as well.



## Executive Chef

Racetrack restaurants are prime areas to watch the races. All of the jobs available at a stand-alone restaurant (from wait staff to dish washers) are also available at the racetrack clubhouse restaurant. The executive chef's role is to ensure high quality dining. This individual not only is in charge of all the line cooks and all food that comes out of the kitchen, but he/she also creates special menu items and coordinates staffing and promotions with the food service director.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$60,000 per year.

## Food Service Director

Racetracks serve food ranging from hot dogs and fries to prime rib and seafood. The food service director supervises the concession stands and restaurants. He/she must take care of many details including:

- Hiring all concession and restaurant staff and setting work schedules;
- Managing costs by selecting food suppliers and determining pricing in conjunction with the executive chef;
- Ensuring the restaurant facilities meet all health codes;
- Coordinating promotions and special offers in the restaurant with special racing events.



**Compensation:** Range from \$40,000 - \$75,000 per year.

## Group Sales Coordinator

This individual is responsible for attracting group parties to the racetrack. Often attending trade shows and special events, he/she must be outgoing, enthusiastic, and detail-oriented. The group sales coordinator works with food services personnel to assemble special group menus. He/she may serve as a party host ensuring that guests have an enjoyable experience.

**Compensation:** Range from \$20,000 - \$40,000 per year although most also make commission based on the number of parties booked.

## Security

Security is required at many points of the racetrack including the backstretch, the paddock, the grandstand and clubhouse. With tens of thousands of dollars being wagered each day, security is critical. Security guards must have specialized training (weapons use, for example) and must also have a customer service-oriented personality to resolve disputes between patrons. They will also escort money room and mutuel department employees who carry large amounts of cash.



**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$50,000 per year.

## Program Department Manager

This position usually incorporates two aspects of responsibility. First, the program department manager supervises the racetrack print shop. Timing and a solid understanding of the racetrack's business are critical for this position. If too many programs are printed, they sit unused and the racetrack wastes money, paper and resources. The program department manager is also responsible for staffing the program seller stands and sometimes the admissions booths.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$60,000 per year.

## Marketing and Communications Department

This department is in charge of relationships with local and industry media, making sure they are informed of upcoming racetrack events. The manager is also the supervisor of the racetrack's website and social media initiatives. At many tracks, he/she is also responsible for scheduling and hiring the track announcer and any on-air personalities used in pre-game and simulcast shows.



## Announcer

The track announcer is one of the most well recognized racetrack employees though many people never see him/her. He/she calls the races, vividly describing the action to the public. The best track announcers have a unique voice, a great memory and good eyesight. He/she plays an important role in enhancing the racing experience for fans and horsemen. The announcer's duties include:

- Observing each race and conveying accurate information about it to the general public;
- Informing the betting public of program changes or additional information not in the racing program, under direction from the judges;
- Informing the public of upcoming events and other on-track promotions.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year.

## Audio/Visual Room Personnel

The audio/visual room at a typical racetrack is similar to what might be seen in a city's television network affiliate. The role of the television department has evolved with the increased popularity of simulcasting. The director of television operations oversees the entire department, from equipment to staffing. Other related positions include graphic designer, floor director (controls which camera views are broadcast), audio technicians, camera operators, other effects operators (responsible for getting the graphics onto the screen), an engineer (responsible for maintaining most of the computer hardware), and a simulcast attendant, who makes sure that all incoming and outgoing simulcast equipment (satellite dishes, decoders, wiring, television monitors) is working properly.



**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$75,000 per year.



## Digital Media Specialist

From racetracks to farms and even separate media companies, social media has become increasingly important in marketing the horse racing industry and giving people a behind-the-scenes view of what goes on. This role can entail managing various social media accounts for a specific company, some writing, videography work, and other related tasks. Most racetracks and farms now employ their own digital media specialist while some individuals

might work on multiple accounts for marketing or digital media companies that specialize in racing.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year.

## Handicapper

This job involves handicapping the races each day and then delivering betting information and tips to the public. Some racetracks do this live, on-air between races; others do it in a pre-game show; still others pre-record their handicapping segments. Wagering information may be supplemented with printed tip sheets with more detailed analysis. The best public handicapper does not just give out winners, but provides a positive return on investment by identifying potentially good-value horses and information from his/her own experience and observations.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year depending on level of responsibility.

## Marketing Director

This individual is responsible for all communications with the media. He/she issues press releases before and after races or promotions. The marketing director interacts with local print and broadcast media, pitches story ideas about the racetrack and often serves as a spokesperson, appearing in interviews for television, newspapers and radio. The marketing director has often taken on the added role supervising social media campaigns as well as writing website content.

**Compensation:** Range from \$35,000 - \$75,000 per year.

## Television Host

This position is often combined with the handicapper at a racetrack and is best served by someone with a deep understanding of the industry in order to best explain racing and wagering complexities. Comparable to a “color” personality in other sports, the television host provides information and enthusiasm for the racing product.



**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year depending on level of responsibility.

## Webmaster

The racetrack’s website might be the first interaction that many people have with a racetrack as they search for racing schedules, dining information, entries and special promotions. It is critical that the website be updated and maintained regularly. While some webmasters are strictly responsible for updating and editing content, others have the responsibility for designing graphics for the site as well as periodic reviews (with other managers or departments) of the site’s effectiveness.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year.

## Other Racing Operations Positions

### Charter

This individual views the progress of each race and after recording details of the race, creates the chart showing horses' positions at key points in the race. This information is later included in the racing program past performance information which patrons use for handicapping purposes; accuracy is a must. This individual must have a sharp eye and consistent judgment as well as knowledge of numerous computer systems. Some racetracks use automated tracking systems so at these tracks, the charter must verify, record and transmit the information. The charter may also administer claims and transfers of ownership.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$60,000 per year.

## Director of Racing

This individual is responsible for “putting on the show.” At some smaller racetracks, this position may be combined with the race secretary. At larger racetracks or those corporations who own multiple racetracks or racinos, the director of racing may coordinate racing and simulcast schedules and wagering menus.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$100,000 per year depending on level of responsibility.



## Facilities Maintenance Worker

The physical plant – grandstand, barns, parking lot, and other buildings – of a racetrack requires daily maintenance and cleaning. Most racetracks also employ skilled tradesmen – carpenters, electricians, plumbers and mechanical technicians – to handle everyday repairs and construction at the track.

**Compensation:** Range \$20,000 - \$70,000 per year.

## Field or Horsemen’s Representative

In Canada, the field representative at each racetrack functions as the representative who works in the branch office of Standardbred Canada. He/she assists members with licensing, registration and transfers. This individual also completes and verifies the judges’ “official race reports,” and helps the judges in preparing rulings, forms and reports. In the U.S., the horsemen’s representative is usually an employee of the state’s horsemen’s association, acting as a liaison between horsemen and the association and between individual horsemen and racetrack management.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year.

## Groundskeeper

With acres of grass (and pavement) to be maintained, groundskeepers and landscapers are critical to providing racetracks with a clean, neat atmosphere. Guests appreciate a well-kept and aesthetically attractive facility.

**Compensation:** Range from \$20,000 - \$40,000 per year.



## Judge (Presiding and Associate)

All race meets are conducted within rules set by state or provincial racing commissions. In some jurisdictions, judges are hired exclusively by the commissions. In others, the presiding judge is an employee of the commission while the associate judges are hired by the racetrack. Regardless, judges act as official interpreters of the rules, both during the races and in other matters such as draws and the claiming process. Just as there are checks and balances in government, the judges provide a check and balance system to ensure rules and regulations are followed. Responsibilities include:

- Regulating the conduct of all races and all race participants;
- Observing the races to assure there are no rule violations and if there are, to assess fines or penalties as needed;
- Posting the official order of finish and adjudicate the photo finish if necessary;
- Conducting the post-position draw and assuring that drivers make their final choices in a timely manner;
- Instilling public confidence in the integrity of racing which often means responding to patron emails or letters about specific races.



The judges are the ultimate authority in all matters pertaining to the daily racing program, and while an appeals process exists, the decision of the judges is final. Judges must have experience in the racing side of the industry and be decisive but tactful and be of utmost character. Judges must be accredited either by the United States Trotting Association or Standardbred Canada and must be licensed by their state or provincial racing commission as well.

**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$100,000 per year.

## Office Staff

Every racetrack needs executive assistants, receptionists, secretaries, bookkeepers and accountants to ensure smooth day-to-day operations. While these individuals may not have comprehensive knowledge of racing, it is a huge asset if they do.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$50,000 per year (comparable to similar positions outside of the horse industry).

## Outrider

Not to be confused with a parade marshal who leads post parades before the public in front of the grandstand, the outrider in both breeds is an experienced horseback rider. He/she helps control unruly horses by assisting drivers or jockeys prior to the start and in the event of an on-track accident. The outrider must have



knowledge of racing and its rules and must be attentive at all times. He/she must be skilled in catching horses that get loose either before, during, or after a race and in calming horses who have been involved in mishaps. Most outriders in the Thoroughbred industry begin as pony riders.

**Compensation:** Range from \$20,000 - 40,000 per year.

## Paddock Judge

The paddock judge supervises the paddock, the secure area where horses go prior to racing. This area is limited to licensed grooms, owners, trainers, drivers and jockeys who have horses racing. The paddock judge's responsibilities include:

- Supervising the identification of each horse in the paddock prior to racing, usually with assistance from an identifier who checks the freeze brands or microchips;
- Overseeing the pre-race sampling of blood and/or urine;
- Supervising paddock security, including the sign-in of participants and administration of the breathalyzer;
- Communicating with the presiding judge regarding issues or violations that occur in the paddock as well as relaying information from the judges to the starter and outrider.

**Compensation:** Range from \$20,000 - \$60,000 per year.

## Photo Finish Operator/Race Timer

The use of modern technology now allows one person to fill both roles of photo finish operator and race timer at most racetracks. Typically this person must be computer literate and have the ability to operate several computer systems simultaneously.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$40,000 per year.

## Pony Rider

Thoroughbreds in North America generally use "ponies" to escort them to the starting gate. The ponies are actually calm horses, sometimes even off-the-track Thoroughbreds, and a pony rider is the one who holds onto the racing Thoroughbred and takes him/her through a controlled warmup. Upon reaching the starting gate, the pony rider hands off the racing Thoroughbred and jockey to the gate crew. Horses can be ponied during morning training as well, sometimes even without a rider.



**Compensation:** Range from \$500 - \$700 per week.

## Program Director

The program director is employed by the racetrack and is licensed by the United States Trotting Association. He/she works under the supervision of the director of racing, the race secretary and the judges in preparing the official records for each horse in each race both prior to and after each race. He/she verifies the correctness of information working hand-in-hand with the charter to assemble accurate post-race records for use in past performance lines in the program. At some tracks the program director and charter responsibilities are combined.

**Compensation:** Range from \$35,000 - \$80,000 per year.

## Race Secretary

The race secretary oversees the day-to-day programming of competitive races to the satisfaction of racetrack management, horsemen, racing commissions, and fans. The race secretary must have extensive knowledge of racing and rules both locally and nationally in order to create competitive racing which likely may be the single most important factor in a racetrack's success. The individual must be computer literate and be able to navigate varied systems to determine horses' eligibility, earnings, etc. He/she may also supervise other backstretch activities. Responsibilities include:

- Constructing a weekly condition sheet, the list of races which are to be held based on the horse population available;
- Supervising the assistant race secretary, program director and other race office personnel;
- Ensuring all administrative details pertaining to the race card are performed according to the appropriate rules.

**Compensation:** Range from \$50,000 - \$125,000 per year.

## Steward

Comparable to judges in harness racing, stewards have similar responsibilities to judges in that they are the enforcers of the rules. Generally, they receive their training through the Racing Officials Accreditation Program, a racing officials training program that accredits racing officials in the U.S. While the stewarding course is the most in-depth, other officials including paddock and placing judges, outriders, horse identifiers, and others can receive their training through ROAP.

**Compensation:** Range from \$35,000 - \$80,000 per year.



## Track Superintendent

Another very important crew includes personnel who keep the actual racing surface in optimum and safe condition in all kinds of weather, both during the morning when horses are exercised and during the races.



**Compensation:** Range from \$30,000 - \$100,000 per year.



## Starter

Harness races begin with the horses following a mobile starting car with attached, foldable wings which accelerates as it approaches the start line. This is actually a two-person job: the driver of the starting gate who steers the car and the official starter controls the speed of the car and the gate itself. Responsibilities include:

- Supervising the driver of the car;
- Gathering the horses and providing instruction to the drivers so that all horses leave from the starting gate fairly and in the proper post position;
- Pulling the lever to close the wings of the gate as the car reaches the start line and calling “GO!” to signal the start of the race;
- Enforcing the rules of the start, signaling a recall if necessary.

**Compensation:** Range from \$25,000 - \$40,000 per year.

## Starter (and Assistant Starters)

Unlike Standardbreds, Thoroughbreds begin their races from a standstill. Starting gates are connected to a tractor and moved to different points around the track depending on the distance of the particular race. Assistant starters take the racehorses from the pony riders once they have arrived at the gates, and lead them inside. In the U.S., assistant starters hold horses in the gates and make sure they are looking forward when the gates spring open. In several other countries, assistant starters do not remain in the gates with the horses.



The official starter oversees the proceedings as horses load into the gates, and waits until all horses are calm, still, and looking forward before pushing the button that opens the gates. Another requirement is that Thoroughbreds need their “gate card” before they are allowed to enter a race. This means they must visit and “school” in the gates a certain number of times (depending on the rules of the racing jurisdiction) during morning training. Horses who act up on race day, refusing to load in the gates or acting dangerously, can be placed on the “starters list” which means they would need to “re” school in the mornings and be reapproved by the starter before being entered to race again.

**Compensation:** Range from \$50,000 - \$100,000 per year; assistant starter range from \$30,000 - \$70,000 per year.

# Specialized Careers

These individuals are usually independent contractors, self-employed or work for an outside company. They are usually not racetrack or farm employees; thus no compensation figures are included.

## Accountant

The unique aspects of running an equine racing business are often handled by accountants who have a general understanding of the horse industry.

## Attorney

The legal implications and ramifications of racehorse ownership are difficult to navigate. Many attorneys choose to specialize their practices in horse-related issues.

## Equine Dentist

The equine dentist performs routine check-ups as well as diagnosing and treating specific problems in the horse's mouth. There are some educational programs that teach equine dentistry while some individuals opt to serve as dental assistants or apprentices first and learn the trade in that manner.



## Farrier

A farrier is a blacksmith who specializes in shoeing horses, but he/she is more than just a metalworker. His knowledge of conformation, hoof health and composition, and the many shoe types and materials available is critical to any racehorse's success. While some schools offer courses in this field, on-the-job training as an intern or apprentice is necessary.



## Equine Insurance Agent

Just as accountants and attorneys may specialize in horses, so do insurance agents. Policies are customized to meet the risk requirements of each racehorse owner and a value is assigned to each horse which is tricky since the value can change based on the horse's current form and earnings potential.

Equine insurance advisors must be properly accredited and generally have previous insurance experience.

## Scientist/Lab Technician

Qualified personnel are needed by laboratories that deal with racehorse-related matters. Some of these laboratories are independent businesses; others are affiliated with universities or state agencies. These labs analyze blood and urine samples to determine health problems and to ensure prohibited substances have not been used by equines or humans during races. Related lab positions in artificial insemination, embryo transfer and blood typing to verify parentage are also available.

## Photographer/Videographer

Most often, an independent photographer contracts with the racetrack to provide winner's circle pictures. There are also opportunities for independent photographers and videographers to work with commercial websites, trade journals and other media sources.



## Veterinarian

The veterinarian is an important member of the team required for a racehorse to maintain good health as well as to reach its racing potential. Veterinarians may be independent practitioners who center their work at racetracks or at public clinics; employees of breeding farms caring for mares, stallions and foals; or researchers and instructors at universities conducting research related to equine health. Racetracks are required to have a veterinarian on call during the races. They evaluate lameness at the request of the judges and deal with accidents or injuries occurring on the racetrack or in the paddock.



## Veterinary Assistant

The job of veterinary assistant is an attractive alternative for those who choose to not pursue a full veterinary degree. These individuals assist the veterinarian in his/her daily rounds

by giving basic care, administering medication under the doctor's instruction as well as assisting with surgeries and providing pre- and post-surgical care. There are many certification programs available.

## Equine Therapist

In addition to traditional therapy methods of equine massage, acupuncture and acupressure, there are increasing therapy options including equine hydro spas, hyperbaric chambers, treadmills and others. Equine therapy continues to mirror the advancements being made in human therapy techniques. Some practitioners are mobile, moving among many farms, racetracks or training centers, while others have their own permanent facility.



# Other Related Careers

## Association Staff

There are an abundance of groups related to the racing industry, each of which requires knowledgeable individuals to fulfill the purpose(s) of the specific organization. From state horsemen's and racetrack associations to equine welfare groups, these entities benefit greatly by hiring employees already familiar with the racing industry.



## Bloodstock Agent

A bloodstock agent is an expert in assessing pedigrees and physical conformation of horses. He/she attends horse sales as well as researching horses available for private purchase on behalf of a client. Sometimes he/she also negotiates stallion syndications and racehorse partnerships.

## Farmer

Racehorses should be fed high quality hay and grain to ensure success on the racetrack. In addition to providing basic horse feed, there is also a demand for special mixes for specific dietary needs. An understanding of equine nutrition and cutting edge research helps the farmer to better serve his equine clients.

## Journalist/Media Professional

Trade journals, racing podcasts and alternative media as well as many of the associations and organizations affiliated with horse racing all require full-time and freelance writers to cover major industry events.



## Regulatory Staff

State and provincial racing commission staff traditionally work out of central offices when racetracks are closed but when open, personnel usually work at the racetrack. Regulatory staff work in conjunction with racetrack management and other racing commission officials to assure the integrity of racing for both the industry and the public. Responsibilities may include:

- Licensing and fingerprinting all participants – trainers, drivers, jockeys, caretakers, owners, racetrack employees and others;
- Disbursing wagering handle for taxes (in cooperation with support personnel, accountants and clerical workers);
- Verifying all wagers, pools, and payout prices and checking for unusual betting patterns;
- Supervising collection of blood and urine, pre- and post-race, as dictated by state or provincial regulations to ensure no prohibited substances are being used by horses or humans.



## Sales Company Staff

While the fall yearling sales are the highest profile auctions for both harness and flat racing, sales involving older race horses and breeding stock are held year-round. There are numerous full-time and part-time positions available with the sales company, ranging from the general manager to pedigree writers (who research a horse's lineage to assemble the catalog information which best highlights the sale entry's successful relatives) to those who lead and present the horses for inspection by potential buyers at the sale. Auctioneers, pedigree readers and bid spotters are active in the sales arena.

## Staking Service Staff

A staking service acts as an agent for owners, making payments to various organizations on certain dates in order to make and keep horses eligible for particular races. Individuals employed in this field must have comprehensive understanding of the racing business and must be computer literate. They keep detailed records in order to make sure they do not miss important deadlines. Individuals should have good interpersonal skills as well.

## Tack & Equipment Manufacturer

There are many manufacturing jobs in horse racing including harness, tack supplies, trailers, farm machinery, color/silk makers, helmet designers, and other racing accessories. Research and development for new products is also a growing field.



## Tack & Equipment Sales Staff

The sale of tack, equipment, and related equine merchandise offers many opportunities. As with any sales positions, knowledge of the product is critical as is the ability to successfully interact with potential customers.



## Equine Transporter

While many trainers transport their own horses, larger racing stables are often spread among multiple racetracks so there is increasing demand for horse transportation providers. These companies may offer services from basic trucking arranging international schedules, and in some cases, may offer airline transport services. Experience in driving a truck-trailer rig and in handling horses is necessary.

# Industry Resources

## **Amplify Horse Racing**

<http://www.amplifyhorseracing.org>

## **AQHA Racing**

<http://www.aqha.com/racing-overview>

## **BloodHorse**

<http://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing>

## **Certified Horsemanship Association**

<http://www.cha-ahse.org>

## **Daily Racing Form**

<http://www.drform.com/>

## **Equine Education Network**

<http://www.equusfoundation.org/een/een.php>

## **Equisearch**

<http://www.equisearch.com>

## **Extension Horses**

<http://www.extensionhorses.org>

## **Harness Horse Youth Foundation**

<http://www.hhyf.org>

## **Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame**

<http://www.harnessmuseum.com>

## **Harness Racing Update**

<http://www.harnessracingupdate.com>

## **IMH – The Standardbred Horse**

<http://www.imh.org/exhibits/online/breeds-of-the-world/north-america/standardbred/>

## **Inside Track**

<http://www.insidetrackblog.com>

## **Kentucky Derby Museum**

<http://www.derbymuseum.org>

## **National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame**

<http://www.racingmuseum.org>

## **PA Horse Racing**

<http://www.pennhorseracing.com>

## **Paulick Report**

<http://www.paulickreport.com>

## **Standardbred Canada**

<http://www.standardbredcanada.ca>

## **The Jockey Club**

<http://www.jockeyclub.com>

## **Thoroughbred Daily News**

<http://www.thoroughbreddailynews.com>

## **Thoroughbred Racing Commentary**

<http://www.thoroughbredracing.com>

## **Time To Ride**

<http://www.timetoride.org>

## **Together For Racing International**

<http://www.togetherforracinginternational.com>

## **United States Trotting Association**

<http://www.ustrotting.com>





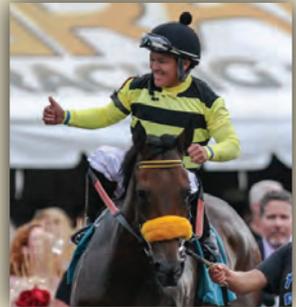
## Do You Want A Career

- That combines sport, entertainment and business?
- That offers diverse opportunities working with and around horses?
- That provides entrepreneurial opportunities and a wide variety of positions?
- That affords opportunities for personal growth and individual accomplishment?

## Then A Horse Racing Career Is For You!

While the industry focus is on the racetrack, there is an enormous support system including breeding operations, farms and training centers, as well as manufacturers, sales and administrative organizations. Horse racing also employs talented individuals in other areas including accounting, restaurant management, farming and many others.

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