

Racing

From its conception, Keeneland was intended to be a special racetrack—one that would cultivate an enduring appreciation and respect for Thoroughbred racing. Since that first meet in October of 1936, Keeneland's racing program has continued to strive for excellence. It ranks among the nation's best in terms of purse distribution, number of starters per race, and quality of racing. In 2008, 29 stakes races will carry a graded designation, including eight Grade 1 events—the Ashland, Maker's Mark Mile (promoted to Grade 1 for 2008), Toyota Blue Grass, Lane's End Breeders' Futurity, Juddmonte Spinster, Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup, Shadwell Turf Mile and Royal Chase for the Sport of Kings. Two other stakes were upgraded for 2008 by the American Graded Stakes Committee of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association - the \$200,000 Fifth Third Elkhorn was promoted from Grade 3 to Grade 2, and the \$125,000 Appalachian earned Grade 3 status.

That Keeneland is such a special place is no accident. It took the grand thinking of Jack Keene coupled with shared aspirations by a group of high-minded horsemen, most notably Hal Price Headley and Major Louie Beard, and the careful stewardship by subsequent management to produce the results we see today.

With the demise of the Kentucky Association track in 1933, area horsemen faced a dilemma: For the first time in more than 100 years, Lexington was without an operational racetrack. Concerned citizens began meeting in 1934 after determining it wasn't feasible to reopen the shuttered track. A committee investigated potential sites for a new racetrack.

Ultimately, the decision was made to negotiate with Keene for a portion of the property on Versailles Pike his family had owned since 1783. Part of the rationale was that it would cost less to finish what Keene had begun than to start from scratch elsewhere.

Keene, who dreamed of establishing a haven for horses and people, had begun a racetrack, a stone building and an indoor training track. He envisioned a model track where racing would be conducted just for sport.

Work continued in spurts, but the Depression ended his project, until the newly incorporated Keeneland Association stepped in, buying 147.5 acres of Keene's property in August of 1935. Ground was broken for a grandstand in November and Keeneland opened the following year, on October 15, 1936, for its first race meeting.

The arbored drive, manicured lawns, tree-shaded saddling area, ivy-covered walls, and the Japanese yews in the infield that spell out "KEENELAND" in bushy greenery produce a postcard setting.

Keeneland's motto—"Racing as it was meant to be"—continues to express the philosophy of the track's first president, Hal Price Headley. "We want a place where those who love horses can come and picnic with us and thrill to the sport of the Bluegrass," Headley

W.B. Rogers Beasley, Director of Racing



After serving as Keeneland's Director of Sales for 19 years, Rogers Beasley was named to a new position, Director of Racing, in 2001.

"I loved the sales," the New Orleans native said. "I met a lot of wonderful people. But racing was always my first love."

While he served as Director of Sales, he led several initiatives, including the introduction of preferred sessions to the September Yearling Sale, the creation of a repository to house X-rays and health information, institution of the wind arbitration process, and inauguration of the April Two-Year-Olds in Training Sale.

As Director of Racing, Beasley spearheaded Keeneland's installation of a Polytrack surface on its 5/8-mile training track in 2004 - the first public racing or training facility in

North America to use the surface - and Keeneland's main track in 2006.

Beasley graduated from Transylvania University in Lexington and went to work for Lexington's Bank of Commerce and then Second National Bank. He later worked for trainer Mike Bell on the racetrack before taking a job in the racing office in 1982 with the late Howard Battle, Keeneland's longtime racing secretary.

Currently, Beasley's racing-related responsibilities include oversight of the condition book; development of new stakes races; working with the sponsorship department to find new race sponsors; providing hospitality for owners and trainers; recruiting top jockeys, trainers and horses for the race meetings; and maintaining the Keeneland training center. Beasley also continues to assist the Sales staff in maintaining its long-established contacts with Asian buyers and consignors.

Ben Huffman, Racing Secretary



Ben Huffman became Keeneland's Racing Secretary in early 2002. The Louisville native is the son of trainer William G. (Blackie) Huffman and his uncle and brother are also Thoroughbred trainers.

Huffman attended Western Kentucky University and the University of Louisville. He began working for his father as a teenager and for three years was his assistant. His first job in a racing office was at Ellis Park in 1990 when he worked as the claims clerk. His first job at Keeneland was also as a claims clerk.

Huffman worked as a paddock judge, patrol judge, stakes coordinator and placing judge before becoming co-assistant racing secretary at Saratoga in 1996 and 1997. He became the late Howard Battle's assistant racing secretary at Keeneland in 1994. At 30, Huffman was named racing secretary at Ellis Park. He also has served as assistant racing secretary at Turfway Park. Huffman was stakes coordinator at the Fair Grounds in 2002-2003, and Racing Secretary and Director of Racing at Fair Grounds from 2003-2006. He was named Racing Secretary and Director of Racing at Churchill Downs in the fall of 2006.

"I had great teachers in Howard Battle, Jerry Botts and Rick Leigh," he said.

said. "We are not running a race plant to hear the click of the mutuel machines."

The late Howard Battle, Keeneland's longtime racing secretary, put the track's appeal this way: "Keeneland should be the national park of racing. The beauty of spring with the clean, clear air and the blooms of the pears, crab apples and dogwoods are excelled only in October by the yellows, golds, ambers, oranges and reds of the same flora. Besides the aesthetic atmosphere and multitudinous contradictions to most racing establishments—tree-lined parking, one-mile-and-a-sixteenth course, two finish lines, facing the sun and being near the horses in their natural setting—we are still the best road to the Kentucky Derby and Oaks and now the Breeders' Cup in the fall."

As a prep race for the Kentucky Derby, the Toyota Blue Grass Stakes is clearly a standout. Since 1936, 19 horses have run in the Blue Grass and then gone on to win the Derby. Last year Street Sense finished second by a nose to Dominican in the Blue Grass, his final prep before capturing the Derby three weeks later.

During one 14-year period, the Blue Grass produced nine Derby victors—*Tomy Lee (1959), Decidedly (1962), Chateaugay (1963), Northern Dancer (1964), Lucky Debonair (1965), Proud Clarion (1967), Forward Pass (1968), Dust Commander (1970) and Riva Ridge (1972). Other recent successes have been posted by Unbridled (1990), Strike the Gold (1991), Sea Hero (1993) and Thunder Gulch (1995). Peace Rules, winner of the 2003 Blue Grass, ran third in the Derby.

Trainers of Derby winners—from Frank Childs to Horatio Luro to Nick Zito—have spoken of the benefits of prepping a horse at Keeneland.

“As far as I’m concerned, there is no place in the world a horse blossoms more in the spring than right here in the Bluegrass,” said Childs, who trained Tomy Lee.

More recently, the Coolmore Lexington Stakes has surfaced as an important Triple Crown prep. The 1999 winner, Charismatic, won both the Derby and Preakness Stakes. Commendable, who ran fourth in 2000, won the Belmont Stakes. Other participants in the Lexington who won one or more of the classics are Swale, runner-up in the 1984 Lexington, who won the Derby and Belmont; 1988 winner Risen Star, who won the Preakness and Belmont; Hansel, the 1991 victor, who won the Preakness and Belmont; and 1997 winner Touch Gold, who spoiled Silver Charm’s Triple Crown bid by winning the Belmont.

The fall meeting’s stakes, meanwhile, have become a springboard for the Breeders’ Cup Championship. Twenty-four horses have

prepped in Keeneland’s fall stakes on their way to victories in the Breeders’ Cup. Last fall, Nownownow used a second-place finish in Keeneland’s Bourbon Stakes as a stepping stone to victory in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Turf. In 2006, Street Sense rebounded from a third-place effort in the Breeders’ Futurity to capture the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile (G1) and two-year-old colt honors. Four other colts also have used the Breeders’ Futurity as a stepping stone for victory in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile—Tasso (1985), Boston Harbor (1996), Favorite Trick (1997) and Answer Lively (1998).

The single most important prep for a Breeders’ Cup race in North America is the Juddmonte Spinster Stakes. Pleasant Home (2005) follows Princess Rooney (1984), Life’s Magic (1985), Sacahuista (1987), Bayakoa (1989-1990), Paseana (Arg) (1992), Inside Information (1995), Spain (2000) and Unbridled Elaine (2001) as the ninth Spinster participant to win the Breeders’ Cup Distaff (G1).

Intercontinental (GB) (2005) and Perfect Sting (2000) used the WinStar Galaxy (now

run as the First Lady) as a springboard to victory in the Filly & Mare Turf (G1).

Cash Run, winner of the 1999 Juvenile Fillies (G1), followed Eliza (1992), Countess Diana (1997) and Silverbulletday (1998) as the fourth filly to run in the Alcibiades before winning the Juvenile Fillies. The 2004 winner, Runway Model, ran third in the Juvenile Fillies.

Keeneland’s other prestigious races include the Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup (G1) in the fall and the Royal Chase for the Sport of Kings (NSA-1) in the spring. Queen Elizabeth II herself visited Keeneland for the inaugural running of the Challenge Cup on Oct. 11, 1984, marking the only time she has attended the races in the United States. And the debut in 1998 of the Royal Chase has added one of the richest hurdle races in North America to the Keeneland stakes schedule. That year, Princess Anne presented the trophy to the winning connections of the Royal Chase.

Jack Keene, Hal Price Headley and Major Louie Beard would be proud of the continuing tradition of top-class racing that they envisioned.

Polytrack® Revolutionizes Racing at Keeneland

Keeneland celebrated its 70th anniversary in the fall of 2006 with the debut of a new Polytrack® racing surface on its main track.

The unveiling of Polytrack, following a five-month renovation which saw the main track reconfigured to widen the turns and lengthen the stretch, was a fitting way to mark such a milestone. Keeneland was founded in 1936 by a group of legendary horsemen who took a huge risk in the middle of the Depression to build a model racetrack in Central Kentucky. The Keeneland prospectus charged the track with being a symbol of excellence for the industry and with putting the horse first. Keeneland’s interest in Polytrack was the latest step toward the goal of increasing the safety of horses and riders.

“This is a classic example of what some people would say is radical or revolutionary,” said Keeneland President and CEO Nick Nicholson about installing Polytrack at Keeneland. “Yet it’s traditional. Tearing it up and putting down the safest track is true to our roots.”

Polytrack is a high-performance, low-maintenance surface for racetracks, training facilities and other uses related to the care of horses. It was developed in England more than 30 years ago by British horseman Martin Collins, whose involvement with show jumpers led him to pursue improving the surface over which horses trained and performed. In 1987, Collins first installed Polytrack at trainer Richard Hannon’s gallop in Wiltshire, England. Use of the surface spread to public and private facilities in England and Ireland, including the prestigious gallops at Newmarket and Ballydoyle training center, as well the all-weather track at Lingfield Park in England.

Soon, officials at Keeneland began hearing about Polytrack from European horsemen who attended Keeneland sales. The track’s director of racing, Rogers Beasley, and maintenance superintendent, Mike Young, traveled to

England to see Polytrack in action at Lingfield. They talked to everyone involved in the training and racing of Thoroughbreds and “to a person,” Beasley said, “everyone loved that surface.”

Beasley and Young returned home convinced that Polytrack would help to increase the safety of racing at Keeneland. In July of 2004, Keeneland Association and Martin Collins International formed Martin Collins Surfaces and Footings LLC as a joint venture to be the North American distributor of Polytrack. In September of 2004, Polytrack made its North American debut at a public training center when Keeneland’s five-furlong training track reopened with the revolutionary surface in place.

A year later, Turfway Park in Northern Kentucky became the first racetrack in North America to begin racing on Polytrack and experienced immediate success. In the spring of 2006, the Keeneland Board of Directors approved the installation of Polytrack on the main track in time for the fall race meeting. The massive renovation project at the historic oval began shortly after the spring meeting.

Currently, Polytrack has been installed at five North American racetracks – Keeneland, Turfway Park, Arlington Park, Del Mar and Woodbine in Canada. Polytrack surfaces are found on three racecourses in the UK, at Lingfield, Wolverhampton and Kempton Park; and one in Ireland at Dundalk. Globally, Martin Collins has 10 racetracks completed or under construction.

Martin Collins was recently granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment to HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, which will be effective for a period of five years from January 1, 2008. Royal Warrants are a mark of recognition to people or companies who have regularly supplied goods or services for at least five years to certain members of the Royal Family.

The Polytrack System

Revolutionary in its design, Polytrack is an entire system, encompassing a specially designed top layer that works in tandem with a unique vertical drainage structure. These elements work together to provide a safer and more consistent racing surface that requires less maintenance compared to a conventional dirt track.



Installation Steps

1. The existing surface is removed.
2. A new track base that is 18 inches deep is cut.
3. Dense grade aggregate rock is poured to form the foundation and is compacted for a smooth, hard subsurface.
4. The system of perforated drainage pipes that uses longitudinal drains together with cross drains is installed.
5. A layer of clean stone is added and is sealed with a layer of porous macadam (asphalt).
6. Water is sprayed on the surface to ensure the water successfully filters through the many layers and is swept into the underground drainage system.
7. A layer of approximately five inches of the Polytrack surface material is spread and is compacted.
8. The top layer of approximately three inches of loose Polytrack is distributed.
9. The surface is immediately available for use.

