

## **Rideau Carleton Raceway's 62nd season starts March 24, 2024**

*Events for the whole family, local horses racing for \$100K, and the first female announcer in the sport will make for a great season at the Raceway!*

**Ottawa, March 21, 2024** - The first call to the post for the Rideau Carleton Raceway's 62nd season is scheduled for Sunday, March 24, and it promises to be a great season with numerous special events, two local Colts racing for \$100,000 at the Ontario Sires Stakes, and the sport's first full-time female announcer joining the team!

"As the only harness racing facility in Eastern Ontario, and the oldest in the country, we know we can offer a unique experience for families and groups," said Rideau Carleton Casino, Future Hard Rock President Christine Crump. "We are leaning fully into that experience this year, and will amplify the season for the whole community!"

The preliminary list of fun events, includes:

- Sunday, May 19: Homecoming (Celebrate our racing heritage)
- Sunday, June 23: Ontario Sires Stakes featuring Ontario's best 3 year-old pacing colts and fillies, including two local Colts vying for a \$100,000 prize
- Sunday, June 30: Race for Wishes – fundraiser for Make-a-Wish Canada
- Sunday, August 11: Family Fun Day
- Sunday, September 1: Coville Cup for amateur racers
- Sunday, December 15: Fan Appreciation Night

"After a paddock fire nearly prevented the Raceway from operating in 2023, the season was not only saved thanks to a herculean effort by the team, Ontario Racing and the region's horse people, but it was one of the most successful in its history!" said Rideau Carleton Raceway Racing Manager Peter Andrusek. "This year, the team is returning stronger than ever, and planning memorable events that will be fun for harness racing fans, and the broader community alike."

Rideau Carleton Casino, Future Hard Rock is also planning a full weekend of fun activities, including a fireworks display, for Canada Day weekend. Stay tuned to [www.rideaucarletoncasino.com](http://www.rideaucarletoncasino.com) for more information on these special events.

### ***Local Colts race Ontario's best for \$100,000 prize at the Ontario Sires Stakes***

On June 23rd, the Ontario Sires Stakes will not only feature Ontario's best 3-year-old pacing colts and fillies racing for the \$100,000 prize, but two local Colts will also be lining up for the first time at this event.

TH McMurray, coming off the North American Cup, and McWicked Time were brought up in the same barn. They will be racing each other for the first time.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if we saw a track record broken on June 23rd,” said Andrusek. “It’ll be an exciting day for sure.”

### ***Melissa Keith joins as harness racing’s first full-time female race announcer***

Rideau Carleton Raceway is proud to welcome Melissa Keith as its new race announcer, replacing long-time announcer John MacMillan, who is stepping down for personal reasons. Ms. Keith is well-known across the country as a guest announcer, handicapper, and harness racing journalist.

“An opportunity like this doesn’t come along very often, so I am thrilled,” says Keith. “I have fond memories of visiting the Rideau Carleton Raceway with my father when I was a university student. Watching and betting on harness racing has always been part of our family, and of my life. Taking on the role of full-time announcer at this racetrack brings it full-circle for me.”

In addition to her announcing duties, race enthusiasts will be happy to know that Keith will continue to provide analysis as Rideau Carleton Raceway handicapper.

“Hard Rock is recognized globally as one of the best employers for women. It’s fitting we now have the honour of being the first raceway in Canada to hire a female full-time announcer,” continued Christine Crump. “We are excited to introduce Melissa to the community and know that she’ll enthusiastically carry on the tradition of exceptional racing insights that our racing fans have come to expect during John’s remarkable tenure!”

The Rideau Carleton Raceway operates Thursdays and Sundays. Sunday races will start on March 24. Thursday races will begin April 25th.

The 2024 racing schedule, which has been approved by Ontario Racing, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency, is available at <https://www.rideaucarletoncasino.com/racetrack.asp>.

### **About Rideau Carleton Casino**

Rideau Carleton Casino officially opened as Rideau Carleton Raceway on September 1st, 1962, as Canada’s first-ever five-eighths mile oval and has been a key part of Ontario’s harness racing community ever since. Since the gaming site was added in February 2000, the City of Ottawa has received approximately \$6 million annually and over \$95 million in total payments for hosting Rideau Carleton Casino within the National Capital Region. Rideau Carleton Casino also invests in multiple local sponsorships and nonprofits annually, benefiting the community and residents. In May 2017, OLG selected Hard Rock Ottawa as the successful new Casino partner for this site. Hard Rock is working to build a new state-of-the-art entertainment facility that will soon bring the iconic Hard Rock brand to Ottawa and enliven the

city like never before. The facility is a significant driver of job creation and is expected to employ over 700 local residents once the facility expansion has been completed. Rideau Carleton Casino is operated by [Hard Rock International](#) and governed by [Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation \(OLG\)](#). For more information on Rideau Carleton Casino, visit [www.rideaucarletoncasino.com](http://www.rideaucarletoncasino.com).

### **About Hard Rock**

[Hard Rock International](#) (HRI) is one of the most globally recognized companies with venues in over 70 countries spanning 290 locations that include owned/licensed or managed Hotels, Casinos, Rock Shops®, Live Performance Venues and Cafes. HRI also launched a joint venture named Hard Rock Digital in 2020, an online sportsbook, retail sportsbook and internet gaming platform. Beginning with an Eric Clapton guitar, Hard Rock owns the world's largest and most valuable collection of authentic music memorabilia at more than 87,000 pieces, which are displayed at its locations around the globe. In 2023, Hard Rock Hotels was honored by J.D. Power's North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Study as the number one brand in Outstanding Guest Satisfaction for the fourth time over the last five years. Hard Rock was also honored by Forbes among the World's Best Employers, as well as Best Employers for Women, Diversity and New Grads, Best Brands for Social Impact, Customer Service All-Star and a Top Large Employer in the Travel & Leisure, Gaming, and Entertainment Industry. HRI became the first privately-owned gaming company designated a U.S. Best Managed Company by Deloitte Private and The Wall Street Journal in 2021, and has since been honored threefold. In the 2022 Global Gaming Awards, Hard Rock was named Land-Based Operator of the Year for the second time in four years. In 2021, Hard Rock Hotels & Casinos received first place ranking in the Casino Gaming Executive Satisfaction Survey conducted by Bristol Associates Inc. and Spectrum Gaming Group for six of the last seven years. Hard Rock International currently holds investment grades from primary investment rating agencies: S&P Global Ratings (BBB) and Fitch Ratings (BBB). For more information on Hard Rock International, visit [www.hardrock.com](http://www.hardrock.com) or [shop.hardrock.com](http://shop.hardrock.com).