



CANTERBURY PARK

1100 Canterbury Road
Shakopee, MN 55379

Canterbury Park's 25th Horse Racing Season Begins Friday

66-day meet kicks off with two days of live racing and Kentucky Derby simulcast

For Immediate Release:

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Contact: Jeff Maday
Media Relations Manager
(952) 496-6408
jmaday@canterburypark.com

Shakopee, Minn. -- Canterbury Park opens its 25th season of live horse racing, celebrating a milestone many thought impossible, with a two-day weekend beginning Friday at 6:00 p.m. Racing continues Saturday at 12:45 p.m. and includes a simulcast of the 145th Kentucky Derby from Churchill Downs. Wagering on Kentucky Derby Day attracts more betting than any other at the Shakopee, Minn. racetrack. Post time for the Kentucky Derby is 5:50 p.m. Canterbury Park's 66-day race meet, projected to pay \$14 million in purse money, runs through Sept. 14. Friday's program consists of eight races while Saturday's is expected to have nine races.

The racetrack, located southwest of the Twin Cities, originally opened in 1985 as Canterbury Downs but closed shortly after the 1992 season concluded. The track sat dark for 15 months before Randy Sampson, his father Curtis, and businessman Dale Schenian, all involved in horse breeding and racing, purchased the track and surrounding property in late March of 1994 and re-opened for simulcast racing in May of that year. With a new name, Canterbury Park, and a business plan that included year-round simulcasting, special events, and the notion of land development in the future, live horse racing returned to the state in the summer of 1995. A race meet has been conducted each year since. Randy Sampson serves as CEO and president of the publically-held company. His father is chairman of the board, and Schenian is vice chairman.

“This is an exciting time for Minnesota horse players, horse owners, and breeders that have long supported this sport and industry in Minnesota,” Randy Sampson said. “Derby weekend just increases that excitement as thousands of fans will flood the grandstand and track apron on Kentucky Derby Day, making it a festive party.”

Many wished the venture well in the early years, but doubted that long term success was possible. Sampson, who had an extensive background in financial accounting and analysis, had a different opinion.

“I became very familiar with the numbers before the purchase and thought that with a new model this would work, and that racing deserved another chance in this beautiful facility,” Sampson said.

Through hard work by a dedicated staff and great support from the public, the racetrack persevered. In 2000, the Canterbury Card Casino opened, providing additional funding for racing purses. A 2012 cooperative marketing and purse enhancement agreement with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, owners and operators of nearby Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, provides \$83 million toward purse supplements and joint marketing of the two properties and the region known as RiverSouth-Land of Big Fun. That agreement runs through 2022. In October of 2018, ground was broken for Canterbury Commons, a multi-use redevelopment expected to attract more than \$400 million in private investment.

“The commitment of many has made it possible for us to celebrate the start of our 25th season of racing and to look forward to many more,” Sampson said. “I am proud of past and current staff that worked tirelessly to make Canterbury Park not only a successful business and racetrack but also a valuable community member. We came a long way from 1994 and we have plans for an exciting future.”

Fridays are billed as Music In The Park with live music on the Mystic Lake® Music Stage. Opening night music is provided by Rubber Soul. There are also several food and drink specials throughout the facility. General admission is \$7 on Friday.

On Saturday, Canterbury hosts the Biggest Kentucky Derby Party in Minnesota featuring live music from Boogie Wonderland, a Derby Hat Contest, Best-Dressed Couple Contest, and Red Carpet Selfie Station. Mint Juleps, the official drink of the Derby, will also be served. Pony rides and face painters will be available to children. General admission on Saturday is \$9. Children 17 and younger are admitted free all season. There is no cost for general parking. For additional information, call the Canterbury Box Office at (952) 445-7224 or visit www.canterburypark.com .

###

Live racing action photographs: <https://canterburypark.egnyte.com/fl/Hb1oLQ6XPq>

Please Credit Coady Photography

Canterbury Park logo: <https://canterburypark.egnyte.com/dl/WLCo0y2c8U>