

WYOMING HORSE RACING 2026 UPDATE

JANUARY 28, 2026

Over the last six months, there has been significant progress in the future of Wyoming horse racing. In August, the Wyoming HBPA was formed to work with Wyoming Downs. CJ Thoroughbreds President Corey Johnsen is on the Board of the new organization and has been active in negotiations with the track. Last week, the Wyoming HBPA and Wyoming Downs signed a one-year contract with improvements in all major areas of operation. The Wyoming HBPA has been approved as an affiliate of the National HBPA. Here are some of the highlights of the contract:

- **More Racing Opportunities** - Last year, Wyoming Downs offered 18 live race days. In 2026, that number will be 32, with a duration from June 5 to Aug. 9. Wyoming Downs agreed to run at least 10 races per day, with the goal to be a 50/50 split among Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses. There will also be six live days at Energy Downs in Gillette and 18 at Sweetwater Downs in Rock Springs.
- **Stable Area/Track Improvements** - Wyoming Downs has added 400 stalls, so the total number is now 1,100. The track surface will be open six days a week, up from the five days a week in the past. These improvements provide a safer environment for the equine and human athletes. Also, the Wyoming Downs stable area will open in May to provide more time for trainers to develop their horses.
- **Racing Committee** - Wyoming HBPA has formed a racing committee which will work closely with Wyoming Downs management on key issues like the stakes schedule, purse structure, stall allotments, the condition book and safety. This input is welcomed by the racing officials and will be critical to the continued growth of racing in the state.
- **Breeder Award Program** - A portion of handle on historical horse racing (HHR) is dedicated to the Wyoming-bred program. In 2025, more than \$10 million was earned for the program, which is paid out 40% to owners, 40% to breeders and 20% to stallion owners of accredited Wyoming-breds participating in racing in the state.
- **Gaming Revenues/Purses** - Track owners continue to expand their gaming facilities, especially those on the border of Colorado and Utah. Pacesetter Gaming, which operates Sweetwater Downs, will open the Gateway Horse Palace in Evanston in February. Based on the increase in handle produced by HHR, purses in Wyoming will increase at least \$2 million in 2026. Per the new contract between the Wyoming HBPA and Wyoming Downs, purses at that track will increase \$300,000+.