



- News, views and insights that matter to breeders, owners and racing industry professionals - December 2024 -

### In This Issue

How a New Jersey-bred Won a Maryland Million Race

TBANJ Election Reminder TBANJ

Equine Equipment is the Best Value for Your Hard Earned Money

New Jersey Top Breeders

Membership Application

## How a New Jersey-bred Won a Maryland Million Race

By Bill Finley

It's not a misprint. New Jersey-bred Starstruck Notion won a race in the Maryland Million on Oct. 12, the Maryland Million Turf Stakes. Trainer Pat McBurney and owner-breeder Ken Garcia took advantage of a loophole becoming more prevalent as races for state bred horses are more and more for horses by sires standing in that particular state than for horses foaled in the state.

That's how Starstruck Notion qualified for the race. He is a 4-year-old by the Maryland-

based sire Great Notion, who stands at the Northview Stallion Station. He was foaled in Cream Ridge, New Jersey.

"I've hit the jackpot," Garcia said. "I'm not rich, but I try to make smart decisions."

On the same card, a Pennsylvania-bred named Foxy Junior won the Maryland Distaff Sprint.

Races restricted to horses by New Jersey sires wouldn't work as the breeding program in

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the state remains a work in progress, and there are not many sires in the state. But states like Maryland and Pennsylvania are writing more and more races where horses sired in that state are given preference over horses foaled in the state. It's a loophole that a smart breeder and owner of a New Jersey bred can take advantage of if they have the right horse.

Starstruck Notion finished second in the 2023 Maryland Turf in what was, at the time, the best race of his career. He only raced against New Jersey-breds once this year. McBurney is convinced that the horse is far better on the turf than the dirt, and there are not many Jersey-bred races carded for the turf.

His 3-year-old campaign concluded with the Maryland Turf, and he didn't return to the races until April 26 at Tampa Bay Downs. He would win two races prior to the Laurel victory, both open allowance races at Monmouth.

The Maryland Million race was far from an easy sport as Starstruck Notion had to take on some tough Maryland grass horses, including race favorite Sky's Not Falling, who was coming off a blowout win in a handicap race at Colonial Downs. Seventy yards from the wire it looked like Starstruck Notion had no chance as he was third and was not making up much ground. But he kicked into high gear in deep stretch under

Forest Boyce to win by a nose over Sky's Not Falling.

"In mid-stretch, I was hoping he'd hang on for second. A horse was gaining behind us and we weren't making headway into the leader. The jockey said she just kept on digging," McBurney said "Maybe that other horse stopped a little, but it looked like our horse was reaching for ground pretty good to the finish line.

Starstruck Notion broke his maiden in his second start as 2-year-old, but then went to the sidelines and didn't race for six months. It was during that time that he was gelded, which Garcia believes is why he came back at three as an improved horse.

"He had a slight bone problem in his front legs because he's such a big horse and has a lot of power in back," Garcia said. "The vets said the best thing for him would be to geld him. They said it would take four to six months for him to get healthy. Once he got healthy, he was as happy as you could imagine. I didn't want to cut him, but it might have been what kept him alive. I'm worried this horse might outlive me. I'll be 65 next month. I don't want my horses ever to be put in a bad situation. or be with people who don't know what they are doing."

This is one of those stories that shows that a good horse can come from

anywhere. Starstruck Notion's dam is Star on Broadway and her dam is L. Fontanne. L Fontanne, who never raced, was owned by an individual who was dying of cancer, and he gave the filly to Garcia because he trusted he would take good care of her. Her first foal was Star on Broadway. She was a mid-level claimer who won one of 13 starts.

They bred Star on Broadway to Latent Heat in 2013, and the result was Star Flare, who earned \$86,317. It was neither a great start nor a terrible start to her career as a broodmare, but Garcia was in no hurry to breed her back. They didn't breed her again for six straight years until she was mated with the Maryland sire Great Notion.

McBurney believes that Starstruck Notion is still improving. He will start him off at Tampa Bay Downs next spring to prepare him for the 2025 meet. He said he wouldn't be afraid to run against older company. If he wins in New Jersey against open company, there will be a 40% bonus.

He'll likely start in the Irish War Cry Stakes, a race on the grass for New Jersey-breds, and after that, he can try open races like the Red Bank Stakes. There's always the chance he'll be back at Laurel next fall, trying to win the Maryland Million Turf again.

## TBANJ Election Reminder

The ballots for the 2025 Thoroughbred Breeders' Association of New Jersey's election will be mailed on November 12.

Members are reminded to mail in their ballots by December 12 so that the independent auditor can count them.



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## New Jersey Top Breeders

The following is a list of the top 20 highest-earning New Jersey breeders during the 59-day New Jersey racing season.

Breeder	Earnings
HOLLY CREST FARM	\$107,172.75
JOEL R. WEINER ESTATE	\$98,146.88
COLONIAL FARMS	\$96,143.25
ISABELLE DE TOMASO	\$60,350.00
BRIGHT VIEW FARM	\$56,618.75
JOHN BOWERS, JR.	\$40,500.00
JOSE GARCIA SALOMON	\$33,643.00
LAWRENCE DILIONE	\$32,843.75
NEW FARM	\$32,112.50
HOPE HASKELL JONES	\$29,725.00
ARM CONSULTING, LLC	\$28,156.25
FAZIO STABLES	\$28,087.50
DIANNE BOYKEN	\$25,625.00
HIDDEN ACRES 4-D FARM	\$23,693.75
REEVE SCHLEY, III	\$23,385.00
NEW SPICE STABLE, LLC	\$22,400.00
BARRISTER BREEDING, LLC	\$22,250.00
HELEN & JOSEPH BARBAZON	\$21,437.50
NICHOLAS & JOAN SACCO	\$21,342.19
KENNETH R. GARCIA	\$20,000.00



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## Membership Application

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### Member Information

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SS#/FEDERAL I.D.# \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Membership Categories

- Breeder      A breeder member shall be a person who owns the required interest in a broodmare or registered stallion domiciled in New Jersey; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. A breeder member shall have voting rights.
- Owner      An owner member shall be a person who owns a registered New Jersey- bred; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. An owner member will not have voting rights.
- Associate      An associate member is a person who is interested in owning, breeding, or racing horses in the State of New Jersey or in fostering economic activity through the breeding, ownership and/or racing of horses in the State of New Jersey. An associate member will not have voting rights.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Membership Dues

A check or money order for \$100.00 must accompany this form. Spouses are encouraged to join the **TBANJ** under joint membership status. This fee would total \$150.00 per couple. Each spouse must fill out a separate form to accompany the payment. Membership will be effective upon receipt and will be in force each calendar year and must be renewed annually.

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