



cThom Pye

E-NEWS AND E-NOTES FOR TUESDAY MAY 12th, 2026

# Some Junior Champions...

★ ★ ★ MERCY, MERCER ME ★ ★ ★

**CELINA, OHIO** - 61 fillies and colts went behind the gate in 15 Matinee races on Saturday, May 9, at Mercer County Fairgrounds on a breezy but sunny and warm early Saturday afternoon.

And it was the start of something good: The 2026 Ohio Fair Season.

For 55 years in a row the precocious youngsters have displayed their talents in the very first exhibition of the year as all the matches were time bars and schooling races. It was more of an educational experience for the babies and the culmination of showcasing the training that began last summer.

For many of the horsefolk it was satisfaction to see their homegrown get behind the gate as they remember the journey of initially putting a yearling halter on a timid yet curious foal.

Then after they're used to it they won't leave you alone as you do your chores.



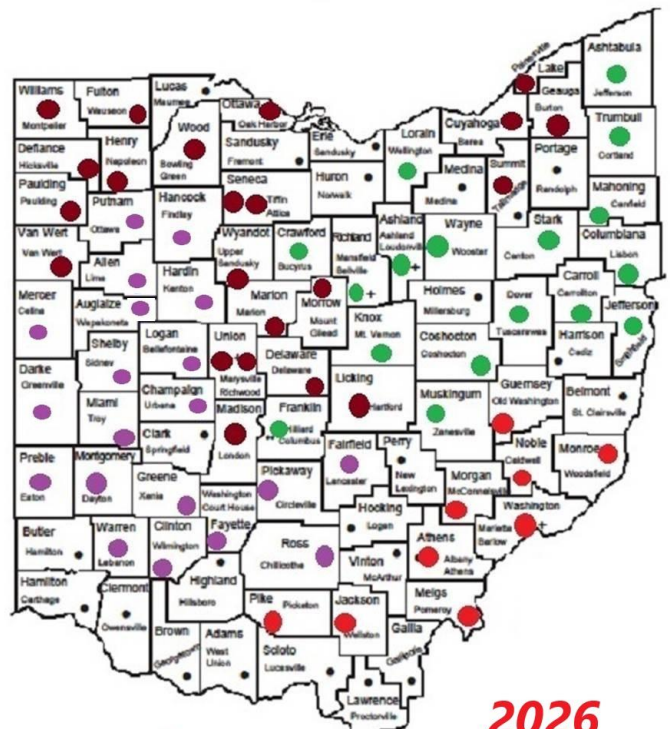
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**Mike Woekenberg** guides the juveniles to their schooling behind one of his numerous new and well-maintained fleet of customized starting gates.

The resident of Farmersville, Ohio was once the youngest harness driver in the country.



## Ohio County Fair Racing







The namesake of Mercer County, Ohio (as well as numerous spots throughout the U.S.A.) was Scottish-born **Hugh Mercer** (1726) who would become a physician and serve under Bonnie Prince Charlie and the House of Stuart.

After Charlie was defeated, Mercer fled back to Scotland and eventually to the Colonies. He joined the King's forces against the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and befriended a fellow Colonel by the name of **George Washington**. He would even become George's mother Mary Ball Washington's private physician. When the Rebellion broke out in 1776 he commanded American troops in the Battle of Trenton (NJ) - he advised Washington to cross the Delaware - & was mortally wounded in the Battle of Princeton (NJ) in 1777. Mercer's descendants include songwriter **Johnny Mercer** (*Moon River, Days of Wine and Roses*) & WWII Cavalryman General **George S. Patton** (1885-1945)



## More Matinees...

See the Stars of Tomorrow shine today!

GREENVILLE MAY 16<sup>th</sup> at NOON

(Darke County Fairgrounds)

(937) 548-9977

WASHINGTON C.H. MAY 17<sup>th</sup> NOON

(Fayette County Fairgrounds)

(740) 572-6107

URBANA MAY 24<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m.

(Champaign County Fairgrounds)

(937) 653-2640

BUCYRUS MAY 31<sup>st</sup> at 11 a.m.

(Crawford County Fairgrounds)

(419) 569-7008

XENIA MAY 31<sup>st</sup> at NOON

(Greene County Fairgrounds)

Randy Smith: (401) 286-0839

Dave Elliot: (937) 672-3219

**Rambling Willie** (1970-1995) was a World Champion that raced from 1973-1983, accruing over \$2,000,000 from his 305 lifetime starts. He began his record-setting career of 128 victories with a 5<sup>th</sup> place finish right here at the Mercer County Fairgrounds in 1973. What announcer called that race?

- A) Roger Huston
- B) Doug Ballinger
- C) Chris Patterson
- D) Ray Henley

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