

# Fourteen Stakes Set for Aqueduct Spring Meet

By [Blood-Horse Staff](#)

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The \$1 million Twinspires.com Wood Memorial Stakes (gr. I) will be supported by 13 other stakes worth an additional \$2.3 million when racing moves to the main track April 1 for [Aqueduct Racetrack's](#) 19-day "Spring Showcase" meet.

New York's traditional prep for the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I), the 1 1/8-mile Wood Memorial is one of five stakes April 4 including the \$400,000 Carter Handicap (gr. I) at seven furlongs. Joining the first two grade I events on the New York Racing Association calendar that Saturday will be the \$300,000 Gazelle Stakes (gr. II) for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/8 miles, \$300,000 Bay Shore Stakes (gr. III) for 3-year-olds going seven furlongs, and the season's first turf stakes, the inaugural \$100,000 Danger's Hour for 4-year-olds and up at one mile on the grass.

Other additions to the Big A spring meet include the \$100,000, one-mile Plenty of Grace for turf fillies and mares April 11; the \$100,000, 1 1/16-mile Woodhaven for 3-year-olds on the grass April 18 and its sister race, the \$100,000 Memories of Silver for 3-year-old turf fillies, April 19; and the \$100,000, 6 1/2-furlong Belle Harbor for 3-year-old fillies on closing day, April 26.

Racing will be held Wednesdays through Sundays, with the exception of Easter Sunday, April 5. Stall applications for the Aqueduct spring meet and [Belmont Park](#) spring/summer meet are due Feb. 26.

"The 'Spring Showcase' meet at Aqueduct will usher in the season with at least one stakes on every Saturday and Sunday that we run," said Martin Panza, senior vice president of racing

operations for the New York Racing Association. "As well, the addition of four new stakes on the turf in conjunction with the return of racing to the main track will further enhance the meet for horsemen and fans alike."

Overnight purses will increase during the Aqueduct spring meet with maiden special weight purses rising to \$70,000. Purses for first-, second-, and third-level allowance races will rise to \$72,000, \$74,000, and \$78,000, respectively.

"Overnight races comprise the backbone of our racing schedule, and the purses will rise in accordance with the new focus on this special meet," said Panza, who noted that the only "Spring Showcase" races that will not receive a hike in purses are claiming races that already are at their statutory limits.

Rounding out the stakes schedule for the 19-day meet is a trio of traditional graded stakes: the \$200,000 Top Flight Handicap (gr. III) for fillies and mares at 1 1/8 miles April 11; the \$200,000 Distaff Handicap (gr. II) for filly and mare sprinters April 18, and the \$200,000 Excelsior (gr. III) at 1 1/4 miles April 25.

Joining the Belle Harbor on closing day at the Big A are two 6 1/2-furlong New York Stallion Series races for 3-year-olds: the \$100,000 Times Square and the \$100,000 Park Avenue for fillies.

Following the conclusion of the spring meet April 26, racing will return to Belmont Park April 29 for the 59-day Belmont spring/summer meet. The centerpiece of the meet is the 2015 Belmont Stakes Racing Festival, featuring the 147th running of the Belmont Stakes (gr. I) June 6.