

# Aqueduct racino opens in Queens; Controversial gambling zone anticipates big crowd on first day

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Joe Marino for Daily News

The race track gaming mecca has 2,300 video slot machines and 2,000 electronic game tables.

The Aqueduct racino opens Friday, and the operators say they expect long lines of gamblers looking for short odds.

"There's an old tradition that folks who game think their odds are better on opening day," said [Stefan Friedman](#), a spokesman for Resorts World New York.

"So I think you'll see a big crowd."

A ribbon-cutting celebrating the completion of the first phase of the controversial race track gaming mecca will be held at 11 a.m. - and the doors open to the public at 1p.m.

Inside are 2,300 video slot machines - and 2,000 electronic table games like baccarat and roulette, which some critics say oversteps the state ban on full-fledged casinos.

There are several restaurants and a bar with "the largest television in Queens," Friedman said.

There's room for 5,000 people, and [Malaysia](#)-based Genting, which will run the joint, doesn't think it will have trouble filling it this weekend.

"Given that we're right next to JFK, this is big news," Friedman said. "You'll have locals. You'll have people from the city, some gamers from [Atlantic City](#)."

Residents of [South Ozone Park](#) said they are ready to roll the dice in the hope of an economic boost for the area - in addition to the millions in government revenue.

"We can't wait till it opens. It's going to bring people here from other cities, people who didn't even know where we were on the map," said [Cesar Mojica](#), 30, owner of [El Showtime Barbershop](#).

"People do have concerns, saying the casino may also bring drugs and prostitution, but I'm not sure that would even happen. For us it would mean more business."

[Rolando Gil](#), 28, a real estate broker, said he hopes the racino will bring more attention to an under-recognized community.

"Nobody really comes here at all," Gil said. "This casino will do for us what the other casino did for [Yonkers](#). People know where Yonkers is now."

The second phase of the racino will open in mid-December with 2,515 games, two big restaurants, an event space and a skybridge connecting to the subway.

Thoroughbred racing resumes at the track on Nov. 2.