

The 2017 edition of the [Kentucky Sires Stakes](#) (KYSS) begins on Thursday, August 17 with six divisions of freshmen trotters split evenly between fillies and colts, each for a purse of \$30,000 at The Red Mile.

The big news for the KYSS program this year is that the 2015 foals (2-year-olds in 2017) will benefit from a mare residency policy for the first time. That policy contains language that states the resulting foals of all horses bred during the 2014 breeding season will be eligible for nomination to the KYSS if the horse is out of a mare, even if sired by an out-of-state stallion, that resided in Kentucky during the year of conception for 180 consecutive days and nominated to the fund or by a stallion that stood in Kentucky and nominated to the fund for that breeding season.

In addition to the change in eligibility, funding for the program has seen significant increases, largely due to the pari-mutuel tax on historical horse racing, which is now offered at The Red Mile.

As a result, 52 fashionably-bred freshmen, many from the finest Standardbred nurseries in the Bluegrass, along with many of the sport's top trainers and drivers will compete in the first of three legs leading up to the \$250,000 Finals on Sunday, September 17.

The colts will cover the first three races and the new format certainly makes for an interesting mix. Horses have been shipped to The Red Mile from the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-West and Ontario for these races.

Trainer Tony Alagna has brought a pair of colts in with Dawson Springs in what looks like a good spot in the opener and Godspell Hall in the second. Both are beautifully bred colts by sires that stand out of state but were raised on Lexington area ground and fetched hefty prices as yearlings for their breeders and consignors, buoyed in part by the dual eligibility.

Frank Antonacci has a strong presence in the colt divisions, sending out three very diverse contenders. They include Eurobound, a colt by French sire Love You, American Moni, the first and only Muscle Hill from the great Moni Maker and a half-brother to Hambletonian heat winner American Moni and the flashy Hat Trick Habit a Donato Hanover half to the million dollar winner Habitat.

Jimmy Takter has a pair of colts and three fillies to go, led by the Ohio-sired Wolfgang from the first crop of 2012 Kentucky Futurity winner My MVP. Wolfgang was gangbusters over the

Meadowlands mile track and it's not a stretch to predict he may love the Lexington clay mile oval.

America's annual leading trainer Ron Burke is represented as well as Lexington native and top trot man Bob Stewart, Pennsylvania-based stalwarts John Butenschoen and Charlie Norris and even the latest sensation in fractional ownership, Anthony MacDonald's TheStable.CA is in the house.

Among the drivers competing at The Red Mile on Thursday are the winningest driver in the sport's history in Dave Palone who recently broke the 18,000 career win barrier, North America's leading dash winner in 2016 and thus far in 2017 Aaron Merriman, 2016 Hambletonian winner Scott Zeron, Ohio stars Ron Wrenn, Jr and Josh Sutton and Meadowlands leading driver Corey Callahan.

Local horsepersons like Jack Gray, Rodney Debeck, Tom T. Tetrick, Randy Jerrell and Anette Lorentzon who have been loyal through the thin and the very thin are here for what are becoming good times for Kentucky harness racing.

The Kentucky Sires Stakes is funded by the Kentucky Standardbred Development Fund (KSDF) and the Kentucky Standardbred Breeders' Incentive Fund (KSBIF).

"The support from the Standardbred community has been phenomenal, we had over 500 mares nominate the first year (2014), and here we are—3 splits in both divisions this Thursday—it's an exciting time for the industry, Kentucky & The Red Mile" said KHRC Executive Director Marc A. Guilfoil

Post time at The Red Mile on Thursday is 7:00 p.m. Greater detail on the races may be accessed [on the web](#).

