

PIECE ON FINANCIAL IMPACT OF DRUGS IN RACING NOMINATED FOR AWARD BILL FINLEY'S *TDN* COLUMN UP FOR STAN BERGSTEIN WRITING HONOR STARTS PER HORSE DOWN 38% SINCE LASIX USE BECAME RAMPANT IN '70s

Clear ties between permissive raceday medication in American racing and a major decline in average starts per horse are examined in a *Thoroughbred Daily News* column by Bill Finley that Team Valor has nominated for the Stan Bergstein Writing Award.

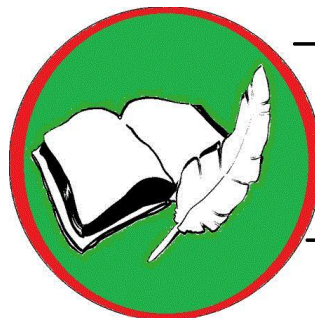


In "Drugs = Fewer Starts = Less Money For the Owner," Finley cites a 38 percent drop in average career starts per horse in the U.S. and Canada since 1975, when Lasix use first became widespread in North America. That includes an 18 percent dip since 1995, when New York became the last state or province to approve the drug for use on raceday.

In the same 19-year-period, Finley found that the average number of starts per horse has increased by 17.6 percent for flat racing in Great Britain, by 10.9 percent in France and by 12.6 percent in Hong Kong, all jurisdictions that still ban the use of raceday drugs.

"There are positives to giving a horse Lasix and other medications," Finley writes. "But what of the negatives? There is overwhelming evidence that these drugs have led horses to race less frequently and make fewer career starts. The less a horse races, the less opportunity there is for an owner to make money. With that mind, owners need to start asking themselves if the very same drugs they have been led to believe have helped put more in their pockets have actually done the opposite. The numbers say that's exactly what has happened."

Finley wrote two pieces last year that were nominated for the Stan Bergstein Award and were part of a *TDN* series on drugs in racing titled "A Painful Truth." Finley's stories were "The International Difference," comparing rules in North America with the rest of the racing world, and "As the Science Gets Better, Catching the Cheats Becomes Easier," on drug testing.



The Stanley Bergstein Award

Finley also writes for ESPN.com and HarnessRacingUpdate.com.

For the 2014 award, Team Valor has previously nominated stories from Frank Angst in the *Blood-Horse* on drug compounders, Joe Drape in the *New York Times* on a rash of drug issues across the U.S., and Ed Donnelly on jockeys' use of illegal electrical devices.

Last year, *Paulick Report* publisher Ray Paulick won the second annual writing honor, which carries a winning prize of \$25,000.

Team Valor encourages writers and editors to submit stories for consideration for the award to Jeff Lowe at jeff@teamvalor.com by November 1.