

# Harness the Stars!!

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## Ben DeLong

***“All I wanna do is race daddy!”***

For many years, harness racing was labeled as an ‘old timer’s’ game. It’s one of the few sports where athletes can participate competitively well into their 60’s, 70’s and 80’s. However, there’s a new wave of young talent in town – one of which being the 17 year old Benjamin DeLong.

The DeLong name is a force to be reckoned with in the State of Wisconsin. As members of the Wisconsin Harness Racing Hall of Fame, the DeLong family knows harness racing like the back of their hands. Ben, a third generation horseman, has picked up the knack for driving early on as this is only his second official year in the sulky.

Ben grew up in the horse business and worked his way into the sulky from the ground up under the supervision of his father, Jay. When he’s not on the family’s training center in Clinton, he’s attending classes as a high school senior. Lately, he’s been having to juggle racing horses and playing football—both very time consuming sports.

Ben is his own individual who tries to create his own driving style, which comes naturally. He displays the patience of one of his idols, Dave Magee. In the next race, he will display the aggressiveness of Tim Tetrick or his brother, John DeLong (who has posted over 500 wins in just 7 short years of driving.)

A win at the Elkhorn fair last year behind Braunmaster is cited as Ben’s most memorable win. Why, do you ask? “Because driving against my brother John and beating him both heats because that doesn’t happen very often,” Ben said. Since then, Ben has posted ten more victories, including hitting the winner’s circle in the Northern Illinois Colt Stakes this season.

Outside of a win, Ben also has a memorable 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. “I was driving Southbound Plane against Speedy Whisky, and I made a break at the gate and spotted the field 20 lengths. He trotted back and went nose to nose to the wire and almost won.”

The Elkhorn Fair is one of Ben’s favorite places to drive, and he’s driven throughout Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. “The track is usually in great condition and it’s close to home. It’s a lot of fun racing there. I also enjoy racing at Richland Center because my grandma gets to come and watch me race in her hometown.” True DeLong family values at their best.

Ben is on track to possibly be crowned Wisconsin’s Driver of the Year as he is currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> place with eyes on the top prize. If Ben keeps up his hot driving hand, he will be the youngest Driver of the Year in Wisconsin history! (Coincidentally, the current youngest title holder is Ben’s father Jay.) Winning this title will not only unseat reigning champion Gabe Wand, but he will also be upstaging his father’s accomplishment as well. Talk about killing two birds with 1 stone. GO GET ‘EM BEN!

