

Harness the Stars!!

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BEN GALD

“Go to the front . . .”

Harness racing has always been a family tradition in Wisconsin, and the Gald family of Richland Center is a perfect example of that. Today you will see horses going postward trained by Russ Gald. Russ' two sons are active in the day-to-day training. Scott doubles as the Superintendent of Speed at the Richland County Fair, and Ben doubles as one of Wisconsin's leading drivers.

Ben began driving horses some 12 years ago on the track. He won his very first *licensed* drive behind Unasox at the Waushara County Fair in Wautoma. From there, Ben has now posted 68 wins and driven for over \$45,000 on the county fair circuit.

Daily training takes place right here at the Richland County Fairgrounds where Ben, now 33, learned the tricks of the trade from his father and other local horsemen. One in particular provided Ben with a lot of insight and guidance, the late Robert Nevel. When speaking of Nevel, Ben recalls one of his great quotes: “Go to the front, and improve your position!”

Ben is most comfortable sitting behind trotters which he proves to handle with care. He is often piloting trotters owned by Jeanne Marquis to victory throughout Wisconsin and Illinois. Ben has given careful education on the track to great horses such as Carry The Mar who went on to win over \$170,000. Ben also co-owns two track records in the State of Wisconsin: Weyauwega with Carry The Mar (2:03.1) and Viroqua with Muskiemar I (2:05). “Patience is the key,” Ben said.

The Wisconsin Harness Horse Association has twice named Ben their Runner-Up Driver of the Year, and he has added 5 more top ten finishes to his growing list of accomplishments.

Obviously, the hometown Richland County Fair is Ben's all-time favorite, but he also loves to compete at the Vernon County Fair in Viroqua. “Back-to-back weekends with nice cool weather, leaves changing, and a great atmosphere is a great way to finish off the racing season.” Although Ben prefers to drive at the fairs because “they are more laid back and a lot more fun,” he also is no stranger to pari-mutuel driving. Braving the freezing January temperatures back in January of 2006, Ben piloted Barus Oxford Lady to a wire to wire victory at Maywood Park.

Ben has his work cut out for him. Horse time is squeezed in as he is a full time plant superintendent at Cardinal Glass CG where he runs the day to day operations of the plant (which employs 250 people!) The majority of his time however is spent chasing after three little ones (ages 4, 3 & 1) that he shares with his wife Charlene.

When we asked Ben if he sings to his horses while jogging, he simply replied: “No, I usually jog alone most days so I listen to my iPod . . . I don't want the horses to have sore legs and ears both!”

