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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

**GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES BELMONT STAKES RACING FESTIVAL TO RETURN
TO SARATOGA IN 2026**

***Final Saratoga Belmont Stakes Paves the Way for Grand Reopening and 2027 Breeders'
Cup at Reimagined Belmont Park***

Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York Racing Association, Inc. (NYRA) today announced that the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival will return to historic Saratoga Race Course in June 2026 for a third and final year to allow for the on-time and uninterrupted construction of a new Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y.

“New York is home to world class sports and entertainment and this final chapter of the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga Race Course honors our rich racing heritage while paving the way for a bold, new future at Belmont Park,” **Governor Hochul said**. “Bringing the race back to Saratoga next year will once again expand the audience for this storied leg of the Triple Crown and ensure fans continue to enjoy the full experience.”

The announcement follows the recently concluded 2025 Belmont Stakes Racing Festival which was highlighted by Sovereignty’s victory in Saturday’s 157th running of the Grade 1, \$2 million Belmont Stakes presented by NYRA Bets.

The reimagined Belmont Park remains on schedule to open to the public in September 2026. While NYRA had previously left open the possibility of hosting a Belmont Stakes in a partially completed facility with a limited number of fans, the decision to return to Saratoga Race Course for the 2026 Belmont Stakes Racing Festival will allow the event to be unhindered by various restrictions made necessary by ongoing construction.

New York Racing Association President and CEO Dave O’Rourke said, “Saratoga has served our fans and stakeholders extremely well as the temporary home of the Belmont Stakes during the construction of a new Belmont Park on Long Island. As we prepare for the opening of the new Belmont Park in the fall of 2026, NYRA is pleased to bring the Belmont Stakes to Saratoga for a third and final time next June. Belmont Park will always be the

home of the Belmont Stakes and we look forward to its return to the newly reimagined Belmont in 2027.”

Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight said, “Bringing the Belmont Stakes Festival to Saratoga Race Course the past two years has introduced new audiences and new visitors to Saratoga Springs and its surrounding communities, which supports our local small businesses and the Upstate tourism economy. By granting Saratoga a third opportunity to host the third leg of racing’s Triple Crown, even more fans will be inspired by this unique circumstance and plan a trip to experience the excitement, the history and the pageantry firsthand.”

State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. said, “The decision to once again bring the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival to Saratoga in 2026 demonstrates a strong commitment to both preserving tradition and ensuring the successful modernization of Belmont Park. This transition period has enabled top-notch racing to continue while providing an economic boom for Saratoga and enhancing the experience for horse racing fans. I look forward to the grand reopening of a state-of-the-art Belmont Park in 2027 and the continued economic and social impact these premier racing events bring to our state.”

Assemblymember Carrie Woerner said, “Saratoga Springs and Saratoga Race Course hosted two successful Belmont Stakes Racing Festivals and we are thrilled to be hosting the exciting third leg of the Triple Crown again. Once the reimagined Belmont Park opens, New York will be home to the most state-of-the-art and the most historical Thoroughbred racetracks in the country. I am already looking forward to next year and the bright future of this heritage sport in our state.”

Chairman of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors and Town of Clifton Park Supervisor Phil Barrett said, “Saratoga County has proudly partnered with many organizations to support events coinciding with the Belmont Stakes. We have been proud to host the Belmont and the event has drawn people to our county, providing the opportunity to showcase our recreational, cultural, and historical attractions. We will begin planning for 2026 with NYRA and partner organizations to deliver the best possible experience!”

City of Saratoga Springs Mayor John Safford said, “It has been an honor and a privilege for Saratoga Springs to host The Belmont over the past two years. The exceptional collaboration between NYRA, the Chamber, Discover Saratoga, and other dedicated community partners has created a memorable experience for all who visited our city. We are excited to continue these strong partnerships and welcome an additional year of the Belmont in Saratoga for 2026.”

Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce President Todd Shimkus said, “It’s been an honor for the local and regional community to help serve as stewards for the Belmont Stakes during the construction of the new Belmont Park, and we are excited to do so for one final year. The Chamber and our partners are already working on plans for a third Belmont on Broadway kick-off concert in 2026 to support the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival.”

Saratoga Economic Development Corporation President Greg Connors said, “In Saratoga County, we couldn't be more grateful and appreciative to both the Governor and NYRA for bringing back to Saratoga in 2026 the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival. The substantial economic impact on not only Saratoga but the Capital Region is significant. Historically, the traditional Saratoga meet contributes an estimated \$9M dollars per day to the local economy. And, with our partners in government, business and community development sectors, we have worked as a team, for the last 2 years, to showcase our community to the world and the world class thoroughbred racing industry, that Saratoga County and the City of Saratoga Springs is capable and ready to handle such a historic horse racing event of national and international interest. For one last time in 2026, Saratoga County is excited to welcome the world back to the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival at the Saratoga Race Course.”

Discover Saratoga President Darryl Leggieri said, “We are absolutely thrilled to welcome the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival back to Saratoga in 2026 for the third consecutive year. Hosting this iconic event is not only a tremendous honor—it’s a testament to Saratoga County's ability to safely and successfully accommodate major events on a national scale. The Belmont Stakes brings a remarkable boost to our local economy and provides incredible exposure for our community, our small businesses, and the world-class hospitality that defines Saratoga. We’re grateful to Governor Hochul and the New York Racing Association for their continued confidence in Saratoga as a premier destination for racing and tourism.”

The 2026 Belmont Stakes presented by NYRA Bets will be held Saturday, June 6. The race will once again be contested at 1.25 miles in 2026, rather than the traditional 1.5 miles due to the configuration of Saratoga’s main track.

In the coming weeks, Saratoga Race Course will serve as the home to a special July 4th Racing Festival which is traditionally held at Belmont Park. The four-day event will take place Thursday, July 3 to Sunday, July 6 and will serve as a prelude to the traditional 40-day Saratoga summer meet which gets underway on Thursday, July 10 and will continue through Labor Day, Monday, September 1. New York State and the NYRA are currently

redeveloping Belmont Park, with a \$455 million capital construction project transforming the facility into a world-class racing and entertainment destination.

Last month, [Governor Hochul announced Belmont Park will host the Breeders' Cup in 2027](#) for the first time in twenty years. It will be the fifth time New York will host the Breeders' Cup after hosting in 1990, 1995, 2001, and 2005. The Breeders' Cup at Belmont Park will be held Oct. 29-30, 2027. All race dates are pending approval by the New York State Gaming Commission. For more information, visit belmontstakes.com.

About the New York Racing Association, Inc.

NYRA is a not-for-profit corporation franchised by New York State to conduct thoroughbred racing at Aqueduct Racetrack, Belmont Park and Saratoga Race Course. NYRA tracks are the cornerstone of New York State's horse racing economy, which is responsible for 19,000 jobs and more than \$3 billion in annual statewide economic impact.

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