

Huston to announce at Scioto Downs anniversary

Roger Huston, the voice of the Little Brown Jug for the past 40 years, will call the races at Scioto Downs in Columbus on Saturday, May 24 as part of the track's 50th Anniversary celebration.

Huston, 66, is a native of Ohio but now lives in western Pennsylvania where he has served as the announcer at The Meadows racetrack for more than 30 years. He is the most famous harness racing announcer in the world.

Huston is a member of the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame and he'll be joined by other members of that select group, such as Howard Beissinger, a three-time Hambletonian winner, on Saturday evening at Scioto Downs. Huston is also a member of the Communicators Corner at the Harness Racing Museum in Goshen, New York.

Each year more than 50,000 people crowd the Delaware County Fairgrounds for the Little Brown Jug and Huston has been the voice of the Jug since 1968. He had called some races at Delaware the previous year, but not the Little Brown Jug. For the past 40 years, however, his voice has been a fixture at the greatest pacing race in the world.

Very few announcers can put as much excitement into a race as Huston can. He does it not only for the Little Brown Jug, but also for the ordinary races.

“Just remember,” he often says, “those races may seem ordinary to many people, but each horse has a caretaker, a trainer, and an owner and that race is very special to those people.”

Huston has more style than a circus showman and his announcing style can definitely bring a racetrack crowd to its feet. He's also famed for his collection of rings which he wears on the fingers of both hands.

Huston says that when he takes the microphone for the first race at Scioto Downs, it will be the 148,133rd race he's announced in his life.

Yes, he keeps a running total of the races he's called in working at 125 different tracks in such places as Australia, Norway, Finland, and Sweden, in addition to the United States and Canada.

“I'm an Ohio boy at heart and coming back to call races at Scioto Downs will be a great thrill for me,” says Huston.

Huston called his first race at the Clinton County Fair in Wilmington in 1960.

“That summer I worked at five county fairs, announced 99 races, and earned \$399,” recalls Huston.

In addition to his announcing duties, Huston has hosted The Meadows Racing Network television show on a regular basis since 1983. He also has driven in amateur races and compiled an outstanding winning percentage in the sulky.