

Midlantic May Two-Year-Olds in Training

Sale Dates: May 18-19 | Under Tack Show: May 12-14

What exactly are the changes you have made to the Midlantic May Under Tack Show?

Boyd Browning: For 2026, we're implementing two meaningful enhancements to the under-tack show: untimed workouts and restricted use of the riding crop. The goal is to showcase each horse's natural athleticism in a way that supports safety and produces a sounder horse that can move forward after the sale.

So when you say "untimed workout," what does that mean?

Bayne Welker: It means all under tack show performances will be untimed. Fasig-Tipton will not time the workouts, and no official times will be recorded or published by Fasig-Tipton.

Are horses only galloping, or are they breezing?

Browning: Either is acceptable. Consignors may breeze or gallop, whichever they feel is most appropriate for that individual horse.

Can horses work any distance?

Browning: In short order yes, the emphasis is not prescribing one "ideal" distance or one "ideal" look. The point is to give consignors flexibility to present each horse appropriately, and to let buyers evaluate how the horse moves and finishes, rather than forcing every horse into the same outcome for a published time.

What are the new whip rules?

Welker: A rider will no longer be permitted to remove their hands from the reins to strike a horse at any point before a breeze, during a breeze, or while galloping out. A rider's hands may only come off the reins in the case of horse or rider safety. A tap on the shoulder while both hands remain on the reins to keep the horse focused will be permitted.

In addition to under tack changes, will there be increased veterinary checks of horses leading up to the under-tack show?

Welker: Yes. For 2026, Fasig-Tipton will have a Safety Officer onsite from the time horses ship in and train up to the sale. If a horse is flagged by the Safety Officer, an appointed veterinary team will examine that horse. Following that exam, the horse will either be cleared or placed on a probationary list to be monitored further. If a horse is on that list, the consignor will be required to provide a certificate from their attending veterinarian supporting their eligibility to preview for the sale. The sales company will have the ultimate say on the horse's ability to participate in the under-tack show.

Browning: This is about reinforcing safety, consistency, and buyer confidence somewhat mirroring safety procedures we now see on all major racing circuits.

What prompted these changes and how did last year's weather-disrupted under-tack show play into things?

Browning: In 2025, we experienced an unprecedented amount of rain at Timonium. That disruption created an unplanned trial that gave the industry a different optic for evaluating these horses. What we saw both in the marketplace and later on the racetrack demonstrated that buyers can identify quality without relying solely on published times.

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What has been the reaction from buyers to these changes and how have horses performed that were sold or offered off untimed workouts?

Welker: Overall, the reaction has been very constructive and, frankly, validating. Buyers want to see these horses presented in a way that emphasizes athleticism and long-term potential, and they recognize that you can identify quality without being penalized or rewarded for a time that will not be asked of them again in their racing career.

Browning: And the best indicator of buyer acceptance is that the market acted accordingly. The Midlantic May Sale produced all-time records for gross, average, and median: \$44,317,500 gross, a \$135,528 average, and a \$60,000 median. It was a powerful validation of both the quality of the horses and buyer demand at Timonium.

What sets the standard for what an “acceptable” under tack show looks like if it isn’t timed?

Browning: The standard remains a professional, consistent under tack show that allows meaningful comparison. Horses will still be previewed in a structured environment with clear expectations. The difference is that we are intentionally prioritizing a horse’s way of going over a published number, and that supports both safety and horses that can move right into a purchaser’s stable and continue training up to a start. Buyers should expect the same practical access they rely on to evaluate horses. Video remains a key tool for assessment, and we will ensure the under-tack show is presented and captured in a way that supports confident purchasing decisions.

How have horses performed that were sold or offered off untimed workouts?

Welker: What we have seen is that the quality coming out of Timonium is translating directly to the racetrack. Several horses that were sold or offered off untimed gallops and breezes have gone on to be named TDN Rising Stars, and others have developed into graded stakes winners and graded performers. Just as importantly, these graduates are winning at major North American circuits for leading trainers like Bob Baffert, Brad Cox, Kelsey Danner, Saffie Joseph, Bill Mott, Todd Pletcher, and Ian Wilkes, which is a testament of both the sale and the revised format. We have also seen multiple winners in Dubai, reinforcing that the talent sourced at Midlantic May is competing successfully on an international stage.

What are the dates and deadlines for the 2026 Midlantic May Two-Year-Olds in Training Sale?

Browning: The Midlantic May 2-Year-Olds in Training Sale will be May 18-19, 2026, with the under tack show May 12-14 in Timonium, Maryland. Entries close February 2.

Any other thoughts?

Browning: I would close by saying this: Since 1952 when Humphrey Finney and Joe O’Farrell started the first two-year olds in training sale at Hialeah, Fasig-Tipton has been committed to the two-year-old marketplace. It has been an important part of our business for decades, and we believe it continues to serve a vital purpose. That history matters because it reflects a long-standing commitment and the continual evolution of how we present young horses to the market.

Welker: And the consignor community is at the center of that. Two-year-old consignors are among the finest horsemen and horsewomen anywhere, and they do an exceptional job preparing these horses for their next step. Our 2026 format is designed to support their work and enhance the ability of these horses to progress successfully after the sale, where it ultimately counts: on the racetrack.