

Saturday, October 24th (Albany, NY)



Long Island Handicappers Dominate First-Ever NYS OTB Championship

By Noel Michaels

This year thanks to New York State's six regional off-track betting companies, New York Showcase Day not only featured competition amongst the best New York-bred horses, it also featured a great competition among the state's best horseplayers. In addition to six high-stakes races for state-breds, New York Showcase Day '09 also was headlined by high-stakes action for horseplayers thanks to the finals of the first-ever **New York State OTB Handicapping Championship**.

The New York State OTB Handicapping Championship is in the books after a field of 30 top OTB handicappers from all across the state battled it out in a one-day state finals tournament at the Capital OTB Albany Teletheater on what was a rainy New York Showcase Day, Saturday, October 24. In the end, the state championship's top three money positions – plus state bragging rights – all went to Long Island-based horseplayers with Nassau OTB handicapper **Jeffrey Barone** leading the way atop the contest's final standings, followed closely by runner-up **Stephen Jenny** from Suffolk OTB and third-place finisher, fellow Nassau OTB finalist **Peter "Chet" Wankmiller**.

Barone, an avid horseplayer from Floral Park, amassed a final contest-winning total of \$113.50 based on mythical \$2 win-and-place bets on the entire 10-race Showcase Day card from Belmont Park. The winning bankroll was enough to lead a Long Island sweep of the top three spots on the leaderboard, which combined offered prize money of \$40,000 to the three best finishers. Barone's first-place finish earned him the top prize of nearly \$28,000, while Jenny and Wankmiller took home approximately \$8,000 and \$4,000, respectively.

Long Island players did so well, in fact, that the fourth- and fifth-place finishers, Anthony Rogers and John Scott Basillcato, also hailed from Long Island – both representing Suffolk OTB.

NYS OTB HANDICAPPING CHAMPIONSHIP LEADERBOARD

<u>Place</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>OTB</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Approx. Prize</u>
1st	Jeffrey Barone	Nassau	\$113.50	\$28,000
2nd	Stephen Jenny	Suffolk	\$98.50	\$8,000
3rd	Chet Wankmiller	Nassau	\$97.90	\$4,000
4th	Anthony Rogers	Suffolk	\$76.60	--
5th	John Basillcato	Suffolk	\$70.90	--

The NYS OTB Handicapping Championship was the product of a joint venture among the state's six regional OTB companies – New York City, Nassau County, Suffolk County, Capital, Catskill, and Western. The two-round contest began on Saturday, Oct. 3 when 987 entrants statewide submitted first-round entries at a cost of only \$20 apiece.

The top five finishers in each region's preliminary round – for a total of 30 players total – qualified for the final round by picking the most winners in their regions on Belmont's Oct. 3 eleven-race card. Each of the 30 qualifiers earned \$500 prizes (New York City winners each won \$1,000), plus \$250 in travel expense money to get them to the finals in Albany.

The purse money in the preliminary and finals was arrived at by adding together the players' \$20 entry fees, plus a \$30,000 added purse supplement paid by the six OTB regions (each region paid \$5,000 into the purse). This marked the first time in known handicapping contest history that so much added money was up for grabs in a single tournament.

In addition to prize money, the top three finishers also all qualified for the Horseplayer World Series national handicapping contest to be held in Las Vegas on Feb. 18-20, 2010. Barone, Jenny, and Wankmiller will all be representing New York State's OTB's in that prestigious annual contest free of charge. The trio will each receive paid contest entries and hotel stays at the host property, the Orleans Hotel and Casino, complete with paid round-trip airfare to Las Vegas.

Best of luck to OTB's three Horseplayer World Series qualifiers, and congratulations on your hard-fought and well-earned victories in the first New York State OTB Handicapping Championship!



(LEFT) Contest winners
**Stephen Jenny,
Jeffrey Barone and
Chet Wankmiller.**