



Guest Forum

# East Versus West in Coast-To-Coast Racefest

by **MAGNA ENTERTAINMENT CORP.**

The best in the East versus the best in the West, with a championship title and millions of dollars on the line.

It's a tried and tested formula that sports fans love. And it's the formula that lies at the heart of the second annual Sunshine Millions™, one of Thoroughbred racing's newest—and richest—days of racing.

Taking place on Saturday, Jan. 24, this year's Sunshine Millions™ once again pits the top-rated California-breds against the top-rated Florida-breds in a head-to-head showdown that will be carried live on NBC Sports.

Created last year by Magna Entertainment Corp. (MEC), North America's number one owner and operator of Thoroughbred racetracks, the Sunshine Millions™ has already become one of the top racing events on the winter racing calendar. This year's action will take place at two of MEC's flagship racetracks—Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, California, home of the legendary Seabiscuit, and Gulfstream Park in Hallandale, Florida. Total purse money for the day is \$3.6 million.

Four stakes races will run at Gulfstream and another four stakes races are slated for Santa Anita, with horses battling for purses ranging from \$250,000 to \$1 million per race on one action-packed afternoon. Fans attending those tracks will also have an array of on-track entertainment available—everything from skydivers and sizzling tropical beach parties to calypso bands and samba dancers. Fans will also enjoy a number of on-track contests, national promotions and give-aways that include drawings for cars and all-inclusive trips to New Zealand and the Preakness Stakes, as well as one of last year's fan favorites—the Hawaiian Tropic model search bikini contest.

"For racing fans, the Sunshine Millions™ is all about big-time fun," says MEC President and CEO Jim McAlpine. "For the betting customers, the day will offer full fields and great wagering opportunities. For horse owners, it's one of the biggest days on the racing calendar. And for the California and Florida Thoroughbred owners' and breeders' associations, the



*The second annual Sunshine Millions™ gears up for more action and excitement*

Sunshine Millions™ is about boosting the value of horses bred within their respective states."

This year's event promises to offer high-caliber racing and fierce competition on the track with more than 80 horses expected to take part in the eight stakes races. One of the top-flight Thoroughbreds among the more than 300 early nominations is Peace Rules, one of the best 3-year olds in America and winner of the \$1-million Haskell Invitational last year.

Conceived by MEC Chairman Frank Stronach, the initial running of the Sunshine Millions™ was one of horseracing's most successful inaugural

events. The statistics speak for themselves—single-day attendance across MEC's network of racetracks was up more than 40 percent for the running of the 2003 Sunshine Millions™, while overall handle increased by 32 percent. Total handle from all sources at Gulfstream and Santa Anita exceeded \$35 million and approximately 36,000 fans witnessed the races live at the two tracks, while an estimated 1.4 million viewers across North America tuned into the NBC Sports telecast.

The Sunshine Millions™ extravaganza wouldn't be possible without the strong support of various industry associations, especially: the California Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Thoroughbred Owners of California, Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association, and the Florida Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association. MEC has also enjoyed tremendous support from owners, trainers and jockeys across the country. "The Sunshine Millions™ is an example of how the Thoroughbred industry can work together to provide racing fans with an exciting and innovative product," says Chairman Frank Stronach. "I have no doubt that the Sunshine Millions™ will become a major event on the horse racing calendar."

Horse racing fans are encouraged to attend Santa Anita or Gulfstream in person on Jan. 24 to experience all the action and entertainment first-hand. The event will also be carried on the NBC television network as part of a two-hour Saturday afternoon broadcast beginning at 1:00 p.m. PST. In addition, wagering will be available at all MEC racetracks and at numerous OTB (off-track betting) outlets throughout America, as well as online or by phone through XpressBet™ (1-866-88XPRESS or visit [www.xpressbet.com](http://www.xpressbet.com)), wherever permitted by law.