

NEWS FARGO

North Dakota Horse Park in Fargo receives \$60,000 boost in purse funds for July races

The horse park in Fargo will operate races over the course of three weekends in July of 2023.



Ron Beverly riding Hidden Charms, left, battles Zack Ziegler riding Special Dipper during a 350-yard Quarter Horse race at the North Dakota Horse Park on Friday, July 15, 2022. David Samson/The Forum



By **Wendy Reuer**

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FARGO — The North Dakota Horse Park is on track to run six days of racing in July after the state approved funding on Thursday, Feb. 16.

The North Dakota Racing Commission approved giving the North Dakota Horse Park in Fargo \$180,00 in promotional funds and \$168,000 in purse funds to host live horse racing at the track for three weekends in July. The Fargo track received \$108,000 in purse funding last year.

The Racing Commission, which regulates horse racing and off-track betting sites licensed with the state, generally awards race dates then grants funding requests from two pots of money each spring. One amount is granted for purse money and the other is for track operations or promotions. Purse money determines the value of each race.

The commission also granted Chippewa Downs in Belcourt, North Dakota, \$180,000 of promotional funds and \$168,000 of purse funds. Chippewa Downs plans to host eight days of racing, or four weekends of racing that will begin the last weekend of May through June.

The Fargo track also received a grant of \$15,000 for track resurfacing. The track surface has shifted and needs to be leveled off and angled appropriately to remain safe for horses and jockeys when running. The resurfacing will also allow for better drainage of the track surface, according to Hugh Alan Drexler, general manager of the North Dakota Horse Park.

The Racing Commission also granted the Fargo track \$10,000 to install 10 to 15 electricity hookups, allowing horsemen the ability to camp on location.

"The cost of hotel rooms in Fargo area during July are outrageous," Drexler said. "In order to have these horsemen come in for the weekend, I'm looking for an alternative for them to stay."

Drexler said horsemen would then only have to cover the cost of electricity, which would average about \$250 per spot.

The Fargo horse park ran three consecutive weekend races in July 2022 and is hoping to increase its race days in future years.

Last summer the two tracks discussed altering the dates to allow races in Fargo [to begin in June and wrap up at Chippewa Downs in July](https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/live-horse-racing-may-come-to-fargo-in-june-next-year)(<https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/live-horse-racing-may-come-to-fargo-in-june-next-year>) in an effort to increase attendance at both venues. The Fargo races in the middle of July compete with other regional events all happening simultaneously like the Red River Valley Fair, Fargo's street fair and a semi-annual air show.

The idea, however, had to be delayed at least one year due to the barn agreement the track has with North Dakota State University. The horse park rents stalls from NDSU to house the horses during the live race meet. The university had already scheduled events for June 2023, but Drexler plans to request a change in schedule in 2024.

Both tracks in Fargo and Belcourt will reveal their 2023 dates at a later date.

Horse racing is funded in the state by taxes paid by off-track betting sites and Advance Deposit Wagering (ADW) companies, many of which operate across the nation and world. ADW is a form of gambling on horse races in which bettors must fund their accounts before being allowed to place bets. ADW companies operating in the state are licensed by the commission and then taxed through the state.

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