



Sunland Park Racetrack & Casino
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Sunland Park's live racing season is one week away. Opening day is Thursday, December 26

Live racing at Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino is only one week away. The 61st live racing season begins on Thursday, December 26 and extends through Tuesday, April 21, 2020.

\$700,000 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) happens on Sunday, March 22, 2020

The highly anticipated 68-day meet offers some of the most attractive races in the Southwest. The season is powered by the \$700,000 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) and a sparkling stakes schedule worth \$5 million filled with 33 stakes races worth \$100,000 or more.

Over \$1.5 million in purses will be on the line during Sunland Derby (Gr. III) day - Sunday, March 22, 2020. The 17th running of the \$700,000 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) at one and one-eighth miles is the richest and most important race of the meet for three-year-olds seeking a berth in the 2020 Kentucky Derby. The Sunland Derby (Gr. III) winner receives 50 crucial qualifying points for entry into the Kentucky Derby. 2017 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) winner went on to win the Iowa Derby. Irap, fourth place finisher in the 2017 Sunland Derby (Gr. III), went on to win the Blue Grass Stakes (Gr. II) at Keeneland, the Ohio Derby (Gr. III) and the Indiana Derby (Gr. III) and was third in the Grade 1 Travers Stakes at Saratoga.

A new state record all-sources handle of over \$4.8 million was set on the 2019 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) day card. The tally was the most ever bet on a single card in the history of New Mexico racing. A record crowd of 19,081 fans came out to cheer the 2015 edition of the Sunland Derby (Gr. III) won by Firing Line. He would run second to eventual Triple Crown winner American Pharoah in the 2015 Kentucky Derby.

In addition to the Sunland Derby (Gr. III), the \$200,000 Sunland Park Oaks, \$100,000 Harry W. Henson Handicap, \$100,000 Bill Thomas Memorial Stakes, \$120,000 New Mexico State University Stakes, \$120,000 New Mexico Breeders' Oaks and \$120,000 New Mexico Breeders' Derby help propel Sunland Park's greatest day on March 22.

All New Mexico-bred stakes races are worth at least \$100,000. The \$100,000 New Mexico State Racing Commission Handicap on Saturday, Dec. 28, the \$100,000 La Senora Stakes on Saturday, Jan. 18, the \$100,000 Johnie L. Jamison Stakes on Sunday, Jan. 26 and the \$100,000 Peppers Pride Handicap on Sunday, April 5 consistently draw top notch New Mexico-bred fields.



Leading trainers Justin Evans, Todd Fincher, Miguel Hernandez and Susan Arnett are absolutely loaded with powerful Thoroughbred barns for the upcoming season. Defending champion Justin Evans has won 6 Sunland Park training titles in the last 7 years. Fincher won the 2018 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) and 2019 Sunland Park Handicap with Runaway Ghost and is armed with plenty of stakes winners. Hernandez and Arnett finished second and fourth, respectively in last year's training standings.

Luis Contreras, the runaway leading rider last season with 71 wins, is expected to defend his Sunland riding title.

Judge Lanier Racing, one of Sunland Park's all-time leading owners, will once again pack a mighty punch.

The \$100,000 Riley Allison Derby at one mile on Sunday, Jan. 26 and the \$100,000 Mine That Bird Derby at one and one-sixteenth miles on Sunday, Feb. 23 serve as the local prep races for the \$700,000 Sunland Derby (Gr. III).

The \$75,000 Island Fashion Stakes at one mile for three-year-old fillies on Sunday, Feb. 23 is the main lead in race for the \$200,000 Sunland Park Oaks at one and one-sixteenth miles.

Lucrative open Thoroughbred stakes are abundant with the \$65,000 KLAQ Handicap on Saturday, Dec. 28, the \$65,000 Bold Ego Handicap on Saturday, Jan. 4, the \$75,000 Ft. Bliss Stakes on Saturday, Jan. 25, the \$65,000 Borderplex Stakes on Sunday, Jan. 26, the \$65,000 Winsham Lad Handicap on Sunday, Feb. 9, the \$75,000 Curribot Handicap on Sunday, March 15 and the \$75,000 Neon Desert Handicap on Saturday, April 18.

On Saturday, April 18, the best older runners compete in the \$150,000 Sunland Park Handicap at one and one-eighth miles. 2018 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) winner Runaway Ghost won last year's edition. The \$130,000-added Copper Top Futurity happens on closing day, Tuesday, April 21.

\$350,000 Championship at Sunland Park set for Sunday, Dec. 29

A world class field of Quarter Horses is expected for the 19th running of the \$350,000 Championship at Sunland Park (Gr. I) at 400 yards on Sunday, Dec. 29. Former World Champion Quarter Horse Jessies First Down won last year's Championship at Sunland Park (Gr. I). Multiple stakes winners Ryansmanonthemoon and Valiant Tiberias are nominated to his year's Championship.

The \$200,000 est. West Texas Derby will be run on Sunday, March 7. The \$375,000 est. New Mexican Spring Futurity and the \$275,000 est. West Texas Futurity will be run on Sunday, April 19.

Except for opening day Thursday, Dec. 26, live racing at Sunland Park takes place on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday basis through Tuesday, April 21, 2020. Post time to start the season is 12:25 p.m. Nine races will be carded on weekdays. Ten races will be presented on Saturdays and Sundays.