

# Always Looking For An Edge



**JONATHAN HUNTINGTON,  
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Kelly Hoerdts is always looking for an edge. With millions of dollars in purses available, he'd be foolish if he wasn't looking for a competitive advantage.

So, that explains why he jumped at the opportunity to become the first Canadian harness trainer to try a radically different water system in his Northlands Park stable.

SEAIR - a publicly traded Edmonton-based company - has installed an oxygen-diffusion system in his barn that has "raised the level of oxygen (in the water in the barn) to five times the amount (found) in Edmonton (tap) water," according to Hoerdts.

The system was installed last month - and the results are very intriguing.

## EARNED \$15,000 IN TWO RACES

Eye Promise U - a three-year-old gelding - started drinking the new water last month and has earned \$15,000 in just two races.

Bought for \$15,000 by Hoerdts and two partners on Nov. 20, the gelding finished third in his first start the following week and then won a stake race in his next start.

"What a Cinderella story," said Mike McAllister, one of his owners. "The horse is paid for (already). I'm not saying (this new water system) is the cause for (the wins) but I'm sure it's a great help."

Skip The Run - a veteran pacer - has two wins and a third-place finish since trying the water.

In total, 10 horses in Hoerdts's barn are being used as a testing case with the new water.

"It's not an overnight cure," commented Hoerdts. "(The water system) is not going to be the end-all and be-all (for racing), but it adds to the (training) program we already have. And I'm very pleased.

"I know the horses I am using it on are performing very well for this time of year. More oxygen in the water means more oxygen in a horse's system and that means more oxygen is being carried by red blood cells, thus more energy and more stamina."

There are other benefits.

"The horses love the taste of it," continued Hoerdts, referring to the slightly sweeter taste. "The horses drink almost double the amount of water they do from the tap and I add different vitamins and minerals to my water.

"And having that much oxygen in their system is obviously going to help their immune system, which is crucial at this time of the year because of the weather change."

## INTRIGUING RESULTS

This isn't the first time SEAIR has witnessed intriguing results while testing the oxygen-diffusion system with horses.

The only other testing period occurred last year at famous Santa Anita Park in California with a relatively unknown thoroughbred trainer.

"We tried (the water) with six maiden (thoroughbreds) and all six broke their maiden within two months," said SEAIR president Harold Kinasewich. "Some of them paid \$100 or more to win. There was a five-year-old thoroughbred ... that always finished 14 or 15 lengths behind. The day he won he came from behind and passed the pack like they were standing still. He won by almost 13 lengths. It made the hair on the back of your neck stand up just watching this horse."

But the testing period didn't last much longer.

So, Hoerdts is the only trainer in North America using the technology.

But his competitive edge might not last long.

In exchange for using the system at no cost during this fall meet, Hoerdts agreed to promote the product.

The publicity means some competing trainers could pay \$7,500 to buy an identical SEAIR system.

Hoerdts realizes that might happen - but also knows something else.

"I'm not pushing (this product) just because I'm getting to use it for free," he said. "If I thought it didn't do anything I certainly wouldn't be here talking.

"I definitely believe it helps the horses."