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It's 'post time' for Turkosz

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

For Steve Turkosz, it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you call the race.

The Acton man, who has called harness horse races in front of his TV since his tot years, fulfilled a dream at Flamboro Downs recently by competing in the Dundas track's Race Caller contest.

On Friday, the 18-year-old was one of six participants remaining of the 18 who began the competition. His "job" was the fourth race, featuring eight horses.

Turkosz finished a close second out of three contestants Friday, and is now relaxing at his family's Burk's Falls cottage.

"I was really nervous two weeks ago, but after the post parade I did a lot better because I knew what to look for at the start and realized the first three horses would be good (making it easier to call)," Turkosz said.

However, race calling isn't Turkosz's first career choice. In September, he will return to Acton High to complete Grade 13 and then hopes to attend McMaster University to study Physical Education and major in Kinesiology.

But he couldn't resist the thrill of being perched up in the announcer's booth for the first time.

"I was amazed that I was actually doing what I always wanted to do. I didn't think I would ever do it," states Turkosz, who was well-prepared for each race he called, having been given the programs two nights before.

Turkosz was blessed by having Ken Hornick, who regularly calls races at Flamboro, ease him into the hot seat.

"He made me feel a lot better because he'd stand with me in the announcer's booth," said Turkosz,



CRAFTY CALLER: Steve Turkosz, 18, fulfilled a lifelong dream of calling a live harness horse race Friday at Flamboro Downs, where he had advanced to semi-final competition in the track's Race Caller contest. (Doug Harrison photo)

who was interviewed by Hornick at 7 each night before heading upstairs to the booth.

Turkosz cautions that watching horses blaze around the half-mile track is harder than it looks.

"There's more to it than calling a two-minute race," he explained. "There's the post parade, winner's circle and the payoffs. It works out to a 20 to 25-minute process."

Not bad if it's a good race. "The closer the race the better.

If the race is close the fans really help," Turkosz admitted. "If a horse is winning by 10 lengths, you (as the announcer) have to keep it lively, can't repeat yourself, have to announce the leading time with punch and mention the driver and horse's name."

One reason Turkosz doesn't see himself calling as a career, is because "you work five nights per week and there's not much family life. Plus I'm a cottage boy."

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