

Attendance at the Wood Memorial

Perhaps nothing shows where we are in racing in New York more than the statistic that just 6,636 people attended the Wood Memorial at Aqueduct on Saturday April 8. Sure, we've seen low attendance figures before for the Wood and the weather was rainy, but 6,636. How did we reach this level? The figures below show how we've digressed to 6, 636.

The Wood has been for eight decades the major New York prep for the Kentucky Derby. Up until 1959, it was run at Jamaica –since it was named in honor of Eugene D. Wood, who was an Albany lobbyist and the largest stockholder in Jamaica. Wood died in 1924, and his widow started the race in 1925. With the closing of Jamaica, it has been run at Aqueduct since 1960.

Wood was an active Democratic lobbyist, long associated with the work of Tammany Hall. This means that NYRA's two major three year old stakes in the spring – the Wood and the Belmont are named after major Democratic Party activists. August Belmont had been the head of the National Democratic Committee during the Civil War.

1927 – 15,000 approx

1929 – 10,000 approx

1934 – 12,000 approx.

1941 – 28, 176

1942 – 36,785

1944- 41,412 The crowd bet \$3,176,553 on track. That translates to \$33.9 million in today's dollars.

1946 – 46,965

1947- 50, 840

1949 – 43,669

1958 – 44,078

1959 – 40,063 last Wood at Jamaica

1963 – 58,064

1964 – 58,132

1968 – 55,716

1969 – 46,709

1971 – 51, 103

1972 – 37, 451 – awful weather day

1973 – 43,416 Secretariat beaten

1977- 36,178 Seattle Slew

1978 – 32,056 Believe It

1980 – 44,814 – giveaways

1982 – 32,313

1984 -32,410

1987 -20,586

1988- 20,149

1989 – 21,170 Easy Goer

1990 - 24,468
1995 - 14, 528
1997 - 11,151 lousy weather - Captain Bodgit
1998 - 15,293
1999- 15,104
2000 - 15,684
2002 - 20,103
2004 -17,354
2005 - 9,944
2006 - 6,636