

## **Pickaway County Fair: Inaugural High School Harness Challenge to be contested Monday**

by Tami Hartman

Rivalry between the four Pickaway county high schools is nothing new, but the rivalry will take a new turn on Monday (June 18), the final day of harness racing at this year's Pickaway County Fair.

Representatives of each high school's athletic department will be competing for a portion of a \$1,000 purse donated by the Senior Fair Board. Participating schools will earn \$200, and the winner of the exhibition race will earn \$400. Each high school rep will be paired with a professional harness driver in a double-seated jog cart. The race horses are being provided by local trainer Jim Arledge Jr.

Circleville High School fans will see assistant football coach Tom Strawser in action against Teays Valley football coach Mark Weber, Logan Elm Girls Varsity Basketball coach Tom Congrove, and Westfall High School's athletic director Trevor Thomas.

"The schools have shown a lot of enthusiasm for the idea," said Speed Committee chairman Sean Mayhugh. "The trash talk started as soon as I pitched the idea."

Thomas didn't even give his coaches the chance to get on board. According to Mayhugh, "As soon as he heard the idea, his response was 'I'm in!'"

The High School Harness Challenge will join other youth-oriented activities in Monday night's race card, including the fair king and queen acting as honorary starters and 4H outhouse races.

Once again this year, the marquee race of the evening will be the Steamin Demon pace, named after the world champion double-gaited horse born and trained right here in Circleville. This race brings high-quality older pacers to the fairgrounds and continues to grow in prestige and purse value. This year's field will be competing for a purse of \$8,500.

Post time for Monday's races is 5 p.m. Grandstand admission is free with fairgrounds admission price. Pari-mutuel wagering will be available.