

Hannah Miller is USHWA National Amateur Driver of the Year

- by John Manzi, for USHWA

Monticello, NY --- She's known as "Hurricane Hannah" because she has taken amateur racing by storm. This year, in her first full season of driving, and primarily against male counterparts, Hannah Miller has won 32 races and will finish with a .425 UDR in 118 drives, and for her prowess the United States Harness Writers Association has unanimously named her the National Amateur Driver of the Year.

Hannah is the first woman to win this award.



Geri Schwarz photo

Hannah Miller has been named USHWA's National Amateur Driver of the Year.

"I am thrilled to be named amateur driver of the year," Miller said when reached by phone. "I never expected this success but I have so many great people behind me that have done so much to help me achieve this award. (My boyfriend) Nick (Surick) has put so much work into this and I wouldn't be able to drive such good horses without him. He has made it possible for me to travel all over the country and overseas to compete in amateur races. Trish Coyle and Miriam Kraemer have also done so much for me and put in endless hours at the barn, on the road, and at the racetrack to make all of this possible. My family continuously supports me and I am so grateful for everyone that has helped me get to this point."

This year Hannah has driven at 21 different racetracks in the United States and Canada and she also represented the USA in an international amateur driving competition in Majorca, Spain earlier

this year.

She is a member of multiple amateur driving clubs and 'danced every dance' including as a participant in the granddaddy of them all, the CKG Billings Series, which she dominated this season. There Hannah finished as the combined points champion and she won the east region final at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono. But unfortunately for her, in the Billings Gold Cup final at Harrah's Philadelphia her horse, who was sent off at odds of 3-10, made a break early in the mile and she finished back.

"Hannah took the series by storm, winning 12 Billings races while earning the overall point championship title," said Billings Series vice president Steve Oldford. "She bested her male counterparts in three of the five seasonal series and she exemplified complete competence and professionalism while dominating. She worked hard and earned the respect of her fellow drivers all season and according to Billings President Tony Verruso, 'She is a tremendous addition to the Billings.'" Along the way this year Hannah also won a NAADA trotting series and a Catskill Amateur Club's pacing series and she went two-for-two in amateur contests at Red Mile this past fall.

"Winning is always fun," Miller [told Harness Racing Communications' Ken Weingartner](#) last week. "It makes you want to win more and it definitely helps keep you going. But I'm trying to push myself harder, make fewer mistakes and figure out what I can do better."

Her accomplishments -- many at Monticello Raceway -- didn't go unnoticed and she was named Amateur Driver of the Year by the Monticello-Goshen Chapter USHWA at their awards banquet in late November.

Miller, the daughter of veteran trainer Erv Miller and the sister of driver Marcus Miller, has put a degree in business from the University of Central Florida on hold for now while she drives in the amateur races.

"I'm going to use the degree eventually, but right now I'm just having fun racing the amateurs," she said.