

IcaHOG sizzles, leads the field of hogs heading into Triple Pig Crown Series

The story all weekend during the pig races at Maris Farms was IcaHOG, the second-year racing swine who represents KMPS morning show personality Ihabod Caine.

The hearty and newly fit hog sizzled all weekend with five victories in six races against his four-pig field, which is sponsored by Anytime Fitness. It was a 180-degree turnaround from 2008, when IcaHOG failed to notch a single victory in 27 attempts.

"He's obviously benefited from his off-season training program with the Fitness Group," said longtime pig-racing announcer and self-proclaimed Pig Whisperer, Dennis Riley. "I'm not sure what he's doing, but he looks like a different pig all together."

Besides IcaHOG, the fitness group includes Arnold SchwartzenHOGGER, Richard SOWmmons and Jack LaLOIN. SOWmmons had the only other victory of the weekend for this group.

This past weekend served as a warm-up to the Triple "Pig" Crown pig-racing series, which kicks off this upcoming Sunday with the PIGtucky Derby (Sunday, 4 pm PDLT). The SQUEAKness follows on Oct. 18 and the series wraps up with The BOARMont Stakes on Oct. 25.

Folks can donate at a mock "betting" window, and the entire amount goes to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. They then receive a raffle ticket and place it in the pig slot of the pig they feel will win. For their donation, folks are given a special pignostication pig nose, and are eligible (by drawing) for other prizes should their pig win.

In its first weekend, the pig races raised more than \$140 and had more than 160 "mock" bets placed on the 9 individual races that were run. IcaHOG wasn't the only high-octane hog on the track this past weekend.

Other pigs that fared well included: Denny HAMlin (3 victories) from the NASCAR group, presented by American Thunder Monster Truck; PIG Brown, Seattle SUUU and SOW Bisquit (each with 2 victories), all from the Thoroughbred Group, presented by Famous Dave's Barbeque.

The top four pigs (in terms of victories) leading up to each leg of the Triple "Pig" Crown will race in that weekend's marquee race. Right now, it looks like IcaHOG and HAMlin may be the TOP HOGS in 2009, but you never know what's going to happen once they start cross-group racing.

"We saw it last year with PIG Brown," explained Pig Whisperer Riley. "He won his first four races and then didn't win again. As long as IcaHOG doesn't get pig-headed and stays focused on the task at hand, he should do alright."