

And... They're Off!

GOS Off to the Races

The call to post brings four calm, relaxed young racers to the starting gates. Each wanders casually into an empty stall and moves to the front, testing the gate to see if it will open for them. When it doesn't, each one searches the ground. They find a sweet treat and gobble it. As they stand ready to begin the race, the announcer introduces each one. "In the first lane, wearing the orange, number 1. He's named for a famous Alaskan gold rush character. That guy was a con man, so you'll want to watch out for this little pig. Let's hear it for Soapy Smith!"

For the past several years GOS weaners from Clevenger Farms have been the stars of the show for All-Alaskan Racing Pigs. Heritage breeds have been part of the show for many years, but the white pigs with the big black spots and floppy ears are now the whole show. They are natural show-biz pigs, with their photogenic look and happy disposition. Each season thousands of race fans photograph and video the racers and post their products to social media or share directly with friends and family. If you visit a county or state fair on the west coast you are likely to find racing pigs, and most likely they will be these speedy little porkers.

The primary attraction is the demeanor of GOS. They adapt more easily than other breeds to traveling and being handled. After their first long-distance trip in the "Piggy Penthouse," these little athletes are hearty travelers. And performing in front of crowds up to a couple of thousand cheering fans, they readily become accustomed to all the commotion. They are frequently picked up for veterinary health inspections, daily wellness checks, or just for a little special attention. As frequent interstate travelers, they are subject to a lengthy regimen of vaccinations, administration of which is helped by their calm personalities. And at the end of each race, while they are chomping on their chocolate chip reward, young hands are usually petting the only pig those hands have ever touched. The little pigs have no objection. They have come to enjoy the scratches and pets and look forward to their next trip around the track. They make memories for hundreds of fans every time they circle their short track, jumping hurdles and zooming past their teammates as they make a corner and zip down the back stretch.

You can learn more about these little racers at www.pigrace.com. Or better yet, check for them at a county or state fair near you. You will find a list of events for each season on the website, along with photos and videos of their performances over the years. With the 31st season approaching its end, there are years of memories already made. And year 32 will be starting in a few months, with another trip to Clevenger's to recruit new prospects for Spring Training 2018.