

Age is Nothing but a Number

27 year old Victor Escobar is looking forward to the challenge of being a New Mexico State Steward

They say age is like the newest software, it has a bunch of great new features, but you lose all the cool features the original version had. The same can be said about Stewards. Most Racing Commissions would covet the opportunity to have Stewards that are up to date with the newest innovative technology but yet, have the experience of the formidable stewards of our time that have the knowledge and experience to confidently venture through the litigious territories that Stewards venture almost on a daily basis. New Mexico Racing Commission Executive Director Ismael "Izzy" Trejo feels that he is very close to having that luxury in recently hired Victor A. Escobar, a 27 year old native of New Mexico. Trejo said, "Victor is beyond his age in mindset. He is a student of the game having grown up at the race track under the watchful eye of his father, retired jockey Victor Escobar. Although there are numerous reasons to appreciate Victor, such as his calm demeanor, ability to speak fluent Spanish and strong communication skills, the thing I like most about Victor is that he took an opportunity to step away from racing, pursuing a career in the financial field with a major banking firm, allowing him to develop a level of professionalism sometimes lacking in our industry, it's refreshing".

The road to becoming a steward has literally been a 27 year journey for Escobar. Prior to his hiring in New Mexico, Escobar put his time in as a clocker, jockey agent and placing judge. He initially proved himself as a steward in the rough and tumble territory of Tucson, Arizona at the storied Rillito Park. While in Tucson, he was in good hands. Escobar was mentored at Rillito Park by Arizona State Steward Dr. Scot Waterman and The Arizona Department of Gaming's Racing Enforcement and Operations Manager Greg Stiles. Both were instrumental in Escobar's early development as a freshman Steward at Rillito Park. Waterman said, "While in Tucson, Victor showed the willingness to learn and a desire to get things right. I saw this on a day to day basis." Escobar feels he will have similar guidance at Sunland Park in which he will be working under the supervision of longtime Steward Violet "Pinkie" Smith. Escobar states, "I am fortunate to be surrounded by people who have served this industry for decades. This includes a regulation expert of over 30 years in Sunland Park's Presiding Steward, Violet "Pinkie" Smith".

Escobar realizes that he will face challenges and will have to earn his stripes while in his role as a New Mexico Steward. Escobar said, "Like most children, one of my earliest lessons was that respect must be earned. Now I do not deny the fact that time is the greatest of all teachers. I treat every interaction I have with fellow regulators and licensees as a learning experience. The biggest challenge I face is not my age but rather the same challenge all regulators must face regardless of experience or age. That is maintaining the highest level of integrity in our industry and providing the best product possible to our patrons." Those seem like words spoken by a wise man that understands what is best for the New Mexico horse racing industry.

