



The *Saratoga*
Special

That's All

Saratoga wraps up strange but true 2020 season



FIRST SAMURAI

(Giant's Causeway - Freddie Frisson)

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Five Across. Civil Union
(second from left) leads everyone
home in Saturday's Glens Falls.



Tod Marks

here&there...in racing

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NAME OF THE DAY Guest Edition

The following name caught my eye winning a maiden race at Saratoga Sept. 2. It doesn't exactly fit any of your list categories, but I thought your team might think of a way of having some fun with it.

The name is Nashville. Drop back to 1956, and the first defeat of Bold Ruler at 2 was administered in an allowance race by a colt also named Nashville.

Bold Ruler then bounced back to win his Futurity Prep and then the Futurity before some later losses presumably cost him the juvenile championship. The 1956 2-year-old named Nashville went on to be a nice stakes winner on the West Coast at 3. He was a Nasrullah colt bred by Belair Stud, but raced by Liz Tippet in her Llangollen Stable colors. He was trained by Charlie Whittingham.

— Ed Bowen

IN EARLY DERBY NEWS...

When Mr. Big News finished third in the Kentucky Derby at 46-1, The Special's Joe Clancy thought he remembered something about the horse and found an interview with trainer Bret Calhoun from April. It started with a simple question along the lines of, "Got anything for the Derby now that it's moved to September?"

Calhoun didn't hesitate, and named his Giant's Causeway colt owned by Allied Racing Stable.

"He's an up and comer," Calhoun said. "He's got a ton of pedigree and should get better with age and with distance so we're excited about him. We had a few we backed off of, this, that and the other. He's the one standing who looks like he's got a legitimate chance. As soon as we can find out where the races are, what the points races are going to be, we'll start pointing for those. The Kentucky Derby is five months away."

BY THE NUMBERS

80: Bottles of Saratoga Water consumed by Andy Serling during Talking Horses during the meet, two per day.

19,200: Projected 2021 North American foal crop, down from 20,500 in 2020, based on statistics from The Jockey Club.

126 million: Dollars wagered from all sources on Kentucky Derby Day program at Churchill Downs, down 49.8 percent from \$250.9 million last year. All sources wagering on the Derby was \$79.4 million compared to \$165.5 million in 2019.

702,535,468: Dollars in total handle for the 2020 Saratoga meeting, second best in history behind the \$705,343,949 wagered last year.

17,563,387: Dollars in average daily handle for the 40-day Saratoga meet, down slightly from \$18,085,742 for the 39-day meet in 2019.

3: Naps taken by The Special's Tom Law Sept. 8.

The Saratoga Special

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And Another Thing... Bill Mott pleads his case to fellow trainer Todd Pletcher during the races Saturday.

Tod Marks

The Chief

"I'm proud of her. I'm proud of my lieutenants."
After Society Selection won the Test in 2004

"I tried to get her light on her feet."
about breezing Society Selection four times
in 14 days before winning the Test in 2004

– *Trainer H. Allen Jerkens, 1929-2015*



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WORTH REPEATING

"We have fun. He wants the best for me and I want the best for him. There's no hate between us. I have no hate for nobody. I just come here every day, do my job. I trust God, do my business and ride the horses with confidence."

Saratoga's leading jockey Irad Ortiz Jr., on his brother Jose and overall outlook

"I had a great spot this year. Next to Jonathan Thomas so I looked at good horses all day and got to see Tiz The Law every day out the back window."

Trainer Kerry Metivier, about his barn location on the main track this season

"It's going to get real quiet here. When we got here this morning there were 10 trucks lined up and they're all gone now. So that's 90 horses gone in an hour. They're like an army, they move an entire community in an hour. Unbelievable."

Metivier, watching the barn area clear out Monday morning

"Next time Clancy is on the time clock."

Trainer Todd Pletcher, when told how doing double duty on Fasig-Tipton Stable Tours in 2020 – including more than an hour's time with Sean Clancy – helped bring positive vibes to the barn

"I had several messages from some that follow my selections. They were very complimentary. I think I did OK, but just OK. I'll do better next year, promise."

The Special's top handicapper John Shapazian, after a record 135 winners at the meet (we think that's way better than OK)

"I feel like I have blinkers on."

Pedestrian on Broadway Friday night, in compliance with facial covering directive

"They need to get him back here, he's a good stallion."

Trainer Ken McPeck, on the banished-to-Turkey stallion Daredevil, sire of Kentucky Oaks runner-up and Alabama winner Swiss Skydiver

"He's saying, 'Way to go, Kathryn! What took you so long?'"

Kathryn Davey, Milt Wolfson's widow who took over the training of his stable after he passed away in April and won her first race with her 25th starter Saturday at Gulfstream Park with Spinning Kitten

"The Win And You're In is key, trust me, having paid the \$150,000 for the Breeders' Cup Classic."
Trainer Chad Summers, who saddled Mind Your Biscuits to an 11th in the 2018 edition for that price

POETRY CORNER

THE AFTERMATH

Tiz The Law didn't finish on top
The tears that were shed needed a mop
But Tiz gave as much as he had
All we can ask, and that's not bad
The Preakness will be another test
To see if Tiz can outrun the rest
Win or lose, it won't be a Triple Crown
But he won our hearts, now that's safe and sound.

– *Peter Finley*

STALLION RACE

Leading stallions at the 2020 Saratoga meet (compiled by The Special using dutiful, if somewhat haphazard statistical analysis from free sources):

Sire	Wins
Into Mischief	16
Hard Spun	9
Maclean's Music	9
More Than Ready	9
Tapit	9
Uncle Mo	9
Central Banker	7
Declaration Of War	7
Candy Ride	6
Freud	6
American Pharoah	5
Big Brown	5
Cairo Prince	5
City Zip	5
Curlin	5
First Samurai	5
Malibu Moon	5
Speightstown	5
Summer Front	5
Verrazano	5
Violence	5

POSTCARD TO SARATOGA

Dear Saratoga,

My intentions were to send this first thing Tuesday morning but my real job got in the way. Who am I kidding? It's really because I was in that, "the day after the meet ends" state of mind, the day you can't seem to put a coherent thought together. You know the day:

- The first 24 hours of trying to reckon with reality.
- The foggy brain.
- The feelings of melancholy.
- The denial that it is over.
- The already longing for Opening Day next year.
- The reminiscing.
- The feelings of gratitude for new friends.
- The wishing for more time with the same friends with whom you have shared Saratoga for so many years.

• The longing of sunrises above the Oklahoma that are accompanied with the sounds of hoofs galloping over the track.

• The thoughts of the security workers who greet you every morning as you drive onto the Oklahoma, or the ones who stop traffic for you to walk across Union Avenue (even though you say "No, I can wait") and especially the ones who try to brighten an old woman's day by insisting on stopping traffic and saying with grin, "You are a traffic stopper."

• The wondering (with some amount of fear) of how our lives will change between now and July 2021 (who would have thought that this year we would be wearing masks and there would be no spectators filling the historic and hallowed grounds?).

OK, enough of that. These are things most of you already know, and understand. More than anything, I am thankful for three months in Saratoga, thankful there was racing, thankful to attend several races, thankful for being on the backside in the mornings, with the sun rising and hopes building, all while the sounds of feed buckets clanging, horses nickering, workers bantering, trainers giving instructions, the occasional siren indicating a loose horse, and the many discussions about how different it was this year.

Yes, 2020 certainly was different – but it was still the place to be!

– Paula Gillman

A native Kentuckian who lives in Rock Hill, S.C., Paula Gillman, is a partner in Donegal Racing.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The leaves changing are nice but once they start falling off and there's nothing to replace them it's time to get back to Ocala."

Trainer Phil Gleaves, on Saratoga weather



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With the Little Guys

Many traditions went on hiatus for this year's Saratoga meet, but one we weren't about to let slide to 2021 is our annual check in with the men and women we admire for their work ethic.

The annual Glenn DiSanto Little Guy Stable Tour appears in the final edition for the sixth consecutive season and even though our approach to pulling it all together changed drastically we still uncovered some horses to watch from folks who don't make a lot of headlines. The hunt typically starts a day or two before the final edition and our team of three (Sean, Joe and Tom) often takes a break halfway through the last Saturday

of work in the stable area to run a 5k at the Spa Park before returning to the grind and fanning out in search of a few more horses and horsemen. We text back and forth, letting each other know we found Mike Shevy, Oscar Barrera, Roy Lerman, Peter Pugh, Pat Quick, Jimmy Ferraro or Fran Raia. The tour takes us to the Oklahoma, main track, harness track and private barns on Gridley.

Of course 2020 being 2020 the process changed this year and Tom went at it solo, starting his search before he even interviewed Bill Mott for the penultimate Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour in the Sept. 5 edition. Tom even checked in with one Little Guy Tour mainstay early in the meet, watching a set train on Clare Court and walking the shedrow to see a couple hopefuls.

Every year there seems to be fewer Little Guys stabled in Saratoga, folks like the late DiSanto, who appeared in the first after Sean scaled a fence to get out of the harness track so he could catch the local horseman headed for his string on Gridley. We named the tour for DiSanto after he died in 2017 and continue the tradition in 2020.

Here goes this year's edition, more like a small Stable Tour, courtesy of The Special's man on the ground for the 2020 meet, Tom Law.

Eddie Barker (Run Smitty Run): Baker bought American Pharoah colt on behalf of Iris Smith for \$180,000 at this year's Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-old sale. He breezed seven times in Saratoga, including a half on the Oklahoma from the gate Aug. 31 in :48.29. "We got him at the right price because the morning of the sale I was having him vetted out. My vet called and said 'There's nobody here but I think this horse had



testicle surgery. I'm not 100 percent sure.' He told me everything else was perfect, X-rays perfect, scopes perfect. So I went to the guys at the sale and asked if he had anything done. They called the consignor and said he had testicle surgery in January. When they came out and made the announcement it just cooled down. I thought he was going to go back (unsold).

So is he a ridgling? "No, he's a horse. They still consider him a horse. "He's going to grow this son of a gun. I'm going to take my time with him. He could be the real deal."

Phil Gleaves (Yes And Yes): A runner in 2018 and 2019 at Saratoga for Gleaves and co-owners Joseph Straus and Hugh Fitzsimons, 4-year-old by Sidney's Candy didn't make the meet after winning a starter allowance June 27 at Belmont Park. He's 2-2-2 in 12 starts with \$104,460 earned. "He had knee surgery in the fall and this winter I cut him. He's come back strong. He had two starts, got beat a nose at Belmont in a nice race, three-quarters in 8, then he won a seven-eighths in 21 and change. Then he bruised his foot. We're over that now and ready to go again. So I'm looking forward to getting him going again, especially at Belmont, he loves it there."

Phil Gleaves (Berhanu): Peter Vegso's homebred 2-year-old gelding by The Factor finished third in first two starts, including at Saratoga July 18, before a 10th in a maiden race on the grass Aug. 1. "He ran twice on the dirt, ran well, then I ran him on the grass and he stopped badly. We found out he had a paralyzed flap. So we did a tie-back surgery on him. He's one I'm looking for a big improvement from down the road."

Phil Gleaves (Vivazano): A \$100,000 buy out of the 2018 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale by owners Steven Crist and Ken deRegt, 3-year-old daughter of Verrazano made two starts at the meet and finished third both times. "She's one I'm looking forward to at Belmont. She's started four times, third, fourth, third again, then third the oth-

Tod Marks
New York-bred Rapt represented the Bob Ribaud barn at Saratoga and will look for a spot at Belmont this fall.

er day (Aug. 13). We just had our first start on the grass. Looking forward to getting her back to Belmont and either running dirt or grass with her."

Arch Kingsley Jr. (Hurtgen Forest): Carrington Holdings' 2-year-old homebred American gelding finished eighth in his debut in 1 1/16-mile maiden special weight on the grass Sept. 4. "Big, leggy 2-year-old out of Bourbon Twist. He's the third foal out of Bourbon Twist, who we bought in the New York fall sale here to make a jumper out of. She had broken her maiden first time out with Chad Brown. She's a Langfuhr out of a nice Darby Dan family. I liked the pedigree and we had a backup plan if the jumping didn't work out. It didn't and she became a broodmare. The first foal was a horse that broke his maiden at Belmont and paid \$150 in his third start (Bourbonfuhrme, \$148.50 to win in September 2017). Completely overlooked. This horse is by American. Cool stallion, uncommercial but has that Dynaformer. Melbourne Cup winner out of an Arazi mare. Totally non-conventional pedigree and form for an American type horse. He's likely bred to run over jumps, but I like him as a 2-year-old right now. He's big and he'll take some time to come into himself, but he's certainly answered every question we've asked of him. It's a German name. There was a big battle in World War II. Bill Price's horse (Carrington is Price's wife). In his gameness he bought a jumper and backed into the breeding business and was like, 'OK, we'll do this now.'"

Arch Kingsley Jr. (Sherkali): Hurricana Farm's 4-year-old Irish-bred by Siyouni broke his maiden on the flat in his native country in 2019. Started three times on the flat for Kingsley before finishing second in a maiden hurdle race Aug. 2 at Colonial Downs. "He'll run this fall as a maiden. He was second in his one start over jumps down at Colonial. He was fourth in the a-other-than at Belmont before that on the flat."

Arch Kingsley Jr. (Tolaga Bay): Mark Buyck Jr.'s 4-year-old Fierce Wind gelding provided one of trainer's three wins this year, a \$40,000 maiden claimer on the grass at Colonial July 29 under seven-pound apprentice Rebecca LaBarre. He's entered at Delaware Park Monday. "He'll also be running over jumps, so we're trying to exhaust all our flat options before we switch to jumps. He's not without talent. He might have hit his level on the flat where he might already be bouncing against the wall a little bit. There's a little time before a jump race for him but we're here and I thought we should try him. He ran respectably in the maiden 40 at Belmont. Respectably, but finished nowhere. I think he was probably beaten 6 lengths but rallying, then flattened, that kind of thing. Then he went and won the maiden 40 at Colonial with my girl Rebecca in the

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 6

irons. That was very sweet and satisfying to give her a win. She worked for me.”

Arch Kingsley Jr. (Hypnotist): Kingsley and LaBarre teamed up to win again in another maiden claimer Aug. 3 at Colonial. Bred by Juddmonte Farm, 4-year-old Malibu Moon gelding joined the stable over the winter after a private purchase. “He’ll be running over jumps this fall. He’s mine so I’ll probably run him cheap. There’s a race at Monmouth I’m going to try on the flat. I got him from Andrew McKeever. You know him? The Bull. I’m not sure how he got into him. One of those horses, I was out there for the January sale, I believe, and it was cold, crappy weather. The horse had run twice on the grass only and one time he’d been second in a maiden special at Keeneland. The other time he was fifth sprinting at Kentucky Downs. They ran out of grass, he moved to Polytrack and was getting stuffed for maiden nothing. I bought him for a ham sandwich. He’s crooked but he’s got pedigree and he’s good looking. He’s sound, I got on him, liked him. Damn near gave him away. I thought I’d put an owner into him, have a house horse and he won at first asking for the 10 at Colonial. He would have gone right back in that spot at Colonial then they closed. He’s only 4, got plenty of ability, I’ve schooled out there in the infield and he already knows how to jump a hurdle.”

Arch Kingsley Jr. (Cainudothetwist): Three-year-old full sister to Hurtgen Forest, she finished second in New York-bred maiden claimer on the grass July 2 at Belmont then fourth in off-the-turf maiden claimer Aug. 28 at Saratoga. “I probably will run her over jumps in 3-year-old races this fall. I ran her off the turf the other day. Andy Serling was like, ‘I don’t even know why he’s running her in here.’ Basically because I’ve been all over the place trying to run. Here we are in a corner and I’ve got nothing else to go for, the turf keeps getting taken away.”

Robbie Davis (Dancers For Token): Davis finishes giving Glas-Tipp Stable’s homebred 4-year-old Big Brown gelding a bath and talks about the New York-bred who finished sixth and seventh in allowance races at the meet. “He’s a pretty nice horse. Broke his maiden in June at Belmont. We had the option of seven-eighths or the mile-and-an-eighth. I’d wormed him and it knocked him out a little bit, the wormer. So I missed the seven-eighths and went to the mile-and-an-eighth (July 29). They went in :49 and change and he was so rank. Checked like six times. Got into a switch. Just emptied out that way. We charged his batteries back up, got him good and ran him again and I thought it was a good spot. They went :46 for a mile-and-an-eighth, but he was only a length out of the lead and he was

running himself out again. (Late last year) I brought Katie in to ride him, and said, ‘Just reach and get him out of the gate.’ She did and he got beat a head at 21-1. That’s when we knew we had to get him first jump, can’t let him get into stride and start running himself out. Some horses are just eager and won’t settle. He’s one of those kind. He just doesn’t want to settle. He just wants to go.”

Robbie Davis (Dancing Slippers): Glas-Tipp’s 4-year-old Catienus homebred filly finished sixth in Aug. 21 maiden special weight. She’s 0-for-20 with two seconds and two thirds for \$62,390 in earnings. “She keeps knocking on the door, seconds and thirds. She got beat (11 1/4 lengths) in a maiden special weight over here. She ran well. She likes the mile and there’s no mile here and they didn’t write a seven-eighths for New York-bred fillies. They don’t use the seven-eighths as much as they used to. It’s either 5 1/2 on the grass or 6 furlongs. There’s no happy medium sometimes with horses that can’t get a mile-and-an-eighth and just aren’t quick enough for the short ones.”

Robbie Davis (Dublin Green): The veteran of the Little Guy Stable Tour, 6-year-old Dublin gelding owned by the trainer’s wife Marguerite ran twice for a tag at Saratoga and finished fifth and eighth. He’s 1-for-15 with \$44,136 earned. “The big guy. He pulls my arms out every morning about another inch. I’m pushing 60 so I have to take a nap every time I get home so I can get up. He’s such a bear. He’s 1,200 pounds. He’s got some arthritis and it’s so hard to keep him cooled down and work him and run him. We’re probably going to try Finger Lakes a little bit, give him some break in class. That will help him a bunch. These horses here are pretty tough for \$20,000. You have to run your eyeballs out, they’re tough. We’re getting them around there, staying busy. It beats sitting on the couch.”

Keith O’Brien (Lonhtwist): Corrib Racing’s stakes-placed 5-year-old by Lonhro horse finished sixth in the Grade 3 Troy after a sixth in the Grade 1 Jaipur Stakes June 20 at Belmont. “When he was making his run he was trying like hell and Johnny (Velazquez) said he could hear something. So we scoped him and he was partially paralyzed on one side. He’s always kind of made a noise but you don’t like to go in there if you don’t have to. But now we had to. Basically he was getting 80 to 90 percent of his air. If you get him another 10 percent he would win a stake at that level. He’s worth doing that. Worth giving him the time, giving him the chance. Basically it’s 30 days of hand walking then you can start jogging incrementally. See how he reacts, make sure he scopes OK. In terms of fitness he shouldn’t go back too far and we’re hoping to have him running in October. That’s the goal. If he could get two races in that would be

Continued On Page 8

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Stable Tour —

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great. You don't have a lot of options (with turf season running out). It couldn't have happened at a worse time but I guess it sums up the year."

Keith O'Brien (Noble Mischief): A \$5,000 buy at the 2018 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale by Gary Downey and Lisa Beige, 3-year-old by Noble Mission is looking for his first win after three maiden runs. He finished sixth in state-bred maiden special weight on the grass last Saturday. "The first time he ran fifth, ran really well, and then the next time it wasn't the right spot, mile and three-eighths, open. It didn't turn out well but he was in this time against New York-breds. He's a nice horse. Big, good looking horse. Over time he might be all right."

Keith O'Brien (On Our Way Boyz): Patrick O'Sullivan's 2-year-old Central Banker gelding missed the chance to run at the meet, breezing three times after joining the stable from Parx in early August. He breezed a half from the gate in :47.77 Aug. 9 and twice on the Oklahoma turf Aug. 16 and Aug. 23. "I was going to run him on (Aug. 30). He pulled a muscle in his last work so that put an end to that. We'll see how he is at the end of September. He's fast. I don't get many 2-year-olds, and I certainly don't get many fast ones but he seems very fast. The Central Bankers can run a little bit and he's out of a dam from the Coolmore line. So there's some back class there. He could be all right. Not very big, but compact and put together. He seems fine now but we have to give them the time. With 2-year-olds if you rush them that doesn't work."

Chad Summers (2018 Exaggerator-Zenith colt): Half-brother to Grade 1 winner Great Hunter, stakes-placed Glitzen Glory and the dam of graded stakes winner Owendale is back at Belmont Park readying for debut. "He's a horse I loved as a yearling, couldn't buy him at the sale. Then I saw him at a 2-year-old sale in Ocala . . . he ended up in the sale and it was one of those things you just have to have. It's funny, I'm cheap, right, so at the sales you're battling \$5,000, \$10,000, \$25,000 a time. With this one the reserve was \$37,000 and we're going up \$1,000 a time, me and Keith Desormeaux. Because we're both so cheap. They're looking at us like, 'Come on guys.' He sold for \$47,000. That's a good number, Mind Your Biscuits' original purchase price. He's a two-turn horse. One you get excited about in the morning. You have to take your time now, you can't make Saratoga, you don't push it, you don't rush it. He's got a stride that's a mile long and hopefully you just try to keep him in one piece and he'll be OK."

Chad Summers (My Delicious): Adrienne DeVaux went to \$20,000 to purchase daughter of Not This Time in 2019 as a yearling. She didn't make the trip upstate and was working at Belmont, including 5 furlongs in 1:01.88 last Saturday. "We were in on Not This Time from the beginning. He was stabled across from us at the Breeders' Cup when he was a 2-year-old. He's gorgeous, got hurt in the race, still ran second, showed a lot of heart. People forgot about him in the beginning when he went to stud. Taylor Made did a great job of marketing him and getting him out there. I think the dam of Beholder was bred to him a couple years later. After Princess Noor (won the Grade 1 Del Mar Debutante Sept. 6) I don't think anybody can afford one. You won't see anymore Not This Times in the Little Guy Stable Tour. This might be the last time. I have two. They're going to run in the auction races at Belmont because I got them both for \$20,000. My partner named him. She wanted to buy one so she could name a horse. That one got approved

over some of the others that can't be printed in the paper. Very forward horse, she's ready but unfortunately they only had the one auction race. We love the auction idea. She's been ready to run for about a month but the race isn't until Oct. 3. We just have to bubble wrap her for another month. She's a nice filly. All the Not This Times are very quick. Precocious and all have a little attitude to them. You can't not pay attention for a second. They'll get you."

Chad Summers (2018 Not This Time-Magic Appointment colt): Third foal out of stakes-placed Grand Appointment mare was purchased privately after not selling in a spring 2-year-old in training sale. "Really, really nice horse, forward horse, fast horse. He might run October 4 in the other auction race. He's OK."

Chad Summers (Freedom And Whisky): The trainer's 2020 Saratoga winner scored in maiden claimer Aug. 15 then finished seventh in starter allowance Closing Day. "I call him Buster Douglas. Apparently he has 17 nicknames. People asked why I call him Buster Douglas. I said, 'If he were to win the race it would be the biggest upset since Buster Douglas knocked out Mike Tyson.' And it was."

Chad Summers (Truth Hurts): Co-owned by Summers and J Stables, 3-year-old Ontario-bred filly by Tonalist shipped to Toronto for today's \$250,000 Bison City Stakes at Woodbine. She drew post three in the field of eight in the 1 1/16-mile stakes. "She started her career 2-for-2. She was awesome. After she did that we started thinking Queen's Plate, Kentucky Oaks, all that stuff. We turned down some offers and of course as soon as you turn down the offers inevitably they get hurt and she did in the Busanda. She comes back but there's no

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 8

where to run her. We could have pointed her to the Woodbine Oaks but it's a mile-and-an-eighth, a little tough, so it was either the Test against Gamine or the Audubon Oaks. I'm thinking it will be a six-horse field, it's Ellis Park, we'll take a shot. Little do I know that Dan Bork is phenomenal at entries. So there's 11 in that race, an ungraded \$100,000 race and I'm only eligible for \$75,000 because she's Canadian-bred. I find out on the road to Kentucky. She finishes fourth, they set the track record, Mundaye Call, like Baby Gamine. She ran super, just lost for second. The horse that was third (Sconsin) came back and won the Eight Belles Friday. Hopefully a key race. To run against straight Canadian-breds, it's a great opportunity. The horse was bred by Bill Graham, he passed away a few years ago but was a stalwart of the Canadian breeding program. She might be the second or third choice and we've got the leading rider, Rafael Hernandez, aboard. If she were to run well and win we'd look at races like the Beldame and Black-Eyed Susan."

Bob Ribaud (Rapt): Marc Keller's 7-year-old New York-bred Hat Trick gelding has won four of 30 starts with six seconds and eight thirds for \$376,090 in earnings. A \$125,000 buy at the 2014 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale, he finished second to Cross Border in the Lubash Stakes July 22 and fifth in the West Point Stakes Sept. 4. "He's earned close to \$400,000 in his life. He's only run three times this year, and not in the spots I wanted to run. He ran in the West Point the other day just because the two-lifetime New York-bred race — one we entered (Rapt and Opt) as an entry three times — doesn't go. So he ran in the West Point, finished fifth, got a small check. Opt didn't get to run at all."

Bob Ribaud (Pulsate): Keller's multiple stakes-placed 4-year-old Speightstown colt pressed the pace and finished second behind 20-1 longshot Battle Station in last Sunday's \$85,000 Lucky Coin Stakes. Fifth in the Grade 3 Troy before that, he's won three of 14 and earned \$215,855. "He's a three-other-than. We went in the three-other-than twice at the beginning of the meet, didn't fill. So I ended up in the Troy. He went to his knees at the eighth pole, finished fifth and probably should have been third. Then there's no three-other-than in the book but there's a restricted turf sprint (Lucky Coin), looked like just as good. He ran good, finished second. Rob (Atras) is doing good and his horse ran well."

Bob Ribaud (Opt): Keller's 4-year-old multiple winning gelding by Will Take Charge ran once at the meet, finishing fourth in 1 1/16-mile state-bred optional won by eventual West Point Stakes winner Rinaldi. A \$190,000 buy at the 2017 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale, he's 2-1-2 in eight starts and with \$116,690 in earnings. "He's sound, the kind of horse you want to run eight or nine times a year. Tried to get him to develop, he looked potentially like he could be one of those New York-bred stakes horses, hit the board, like a Rapt kind of horse. He's a fully developed horse right now, looks great. I'm sure you could get that story from a lot of people. It's been one of those years, you know? With a New York-bred grass horse, your season is short enough because of grass. You're not a winter horse. And if you can't run..."

Bob Ribaud (Quashana): Keller spent \$55,000 for 2-year-old filly by Exaggerator at last year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale. She's out of the Medaglia d'Oro mare Rare Medal, a half-sister to the dam of Opt. "So the mothers are sisters. Same family and she looks like turf. She's a little long and lanky. I want to get a race into her this fall and then put her away. She'll be all right next year. I've been watch-

ing Exaggerators all over the country, they've won a couple races but they're not supposed to really get going until next year anyway. Late, later on. He was distance, son of Curlin. Palace Malice is a son of Curlin, too, and he's turned out to be a decent sire. I think Exaggerator will, too. Sound as a dollar. That's her there, she looks nothing like Opt. Opt is a giant. He's by Will Take Charge and most of them are pretty big."

Kerry Metivier (Brenda's Voice): Homebred for trainer and wife Sandra, 2-year-old filly by Laoban out of the Lion Hearted mare Heaven's Voice. Metivier purchased the mare with the filly in utero for \$1,200 at 2017 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga October mixed sale. "Every day, knock on wood, I think to wrap her in bubble wrap and hope she doesn't run through a fence. She's so fast. I've never trained a horse so fast."

Kerry Metivier (Handle The Truth): Unraced New York-bred 2-year-old filly by Speightster out of the stakes-placed Yes It's True mare Southern Truth. "We got really lucky a couple weeks ago. I sent a guy to Lone Star to claim a horse. We lost a shake. While he was out there he met a woman who had a horse that was a New York-bred, a Speightster filly. The Speightsters you can't touch for less than \$75,000, \$80,000. The woman was in a jam so he bought the horse for peanuts. She's all class. She was being trained by Bret Calhoun. I guess the owner said she didn't need New York-breds in Texas, shipped her east and east she came. Three days later she's in the barn."

Kerry Metivier (Superbloodwolfmoon): H. Bud Wolf's 3-year-old Malibu Moon filly, claimed for \$50,000 Feb. 1, finished seventh Aug. 5 in her second start for new connections. "She's the star of the barn. She comes back on the 20th of September. We picked her up in the winter from Rudy Rodriguez, she's all class, just a big strapping mare and needs some time. She'll be fine."

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The Return

Pletcher outlasts Brown to win 14th trainers' crown at Saratoga



Todd Pletcher kept an eye on a runner Sunday.

Tod Marks

BY SEAN CLANCY

After 13 wins in 17 days at Saratoga, Todd Pletcher brushed off being leading trainer at this year's meet.

When asked about it specifically, he answered it vaguely.

"We've had a pretty good start to it. Honestly, a little better start than I anticipated," Pletcher said. "I felt like the stable was performing well at Belmont but I didn't feel like the volume of starters would be there, we'll probably still be below where we would normally be but hopefully things pick up in that area towards the latter part of the meet when we have more 2-year-olds ready to go."

Pletcher won another 19 races over the next 23 days to earn his 14th trainers' title and first since 2017. Chad Brown, champion in 2016, '18-19, finished second with 28. Christophe Clement and Mike Maker produced stellar seasons with 20 wins

SARATOGA TRAINERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

apiece. Linda Rice and Bill Mott tied for fifth with 15 wins. Steve Asmussen, Rudy Rodriguez, James Bond, Jorge Abreu and Wesley Ward rounded out the top 11.

The title went down to the last card of the meet Monday. Pletcher, five in front to start the day, entered 15 horses in 10 races. Brown countered with 12 entries in eight races. After four races, it was far from over as Fort Worth lost as the favorite for Pletcher in the second and Brown won the next two.

Surely, he can't win...

"It's not very often that you go into Closing Day with a five-win lead and you're mathematically not home. The first race was a steeplechase, we lost the second with a prohibitive favorite, Chad won the next two, all of a sudden, you're up three and he's still got six more live chances on the card, you

couldn't rest on it," Pletcher said. "You think going into the last day five up, you would be able to enjoy the day. We were still sweating it out until it was mathematically secure."

Per Capita, a horse formerly trained by Brown, won the fifth for Pletcher. That allowed an exhale from Pletcher and the team. Both trainers were blanked over the rest of the card to finish at 32-28.

"In some ways it's the most rewarding and next to the first one in 1998, the most surprising," Pletcher said. "Going into 1998, in our third year of training, it just totally caught me off guard that we were able to even do that. I wasn't at all expecting to have that as a possibility."

Pletcher won 20 races that year, securing his first title. Bill Mott had won three in a row before that (tied with John Kimmel for one) and came back to win another three before Pletcher began his reign

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Trainers —

■ Continued from page 12

for real. He won the next five, missed three (Kiaran McLaughlin, Linda Rice, Mott) before winning another six in a row. Brown bested him in 2016, Pletcher came back to win a meet-long battle with Brown in 2017 but hasn't been close to his powerhouse rival in the past two seasons, losing 46-19 in 2018 and 41-21 in 2019.

"This one was rewarding from a number of standpoints, to regain the title is fun and there is a lot of enjoyment from the entire team. Especially because everyone was working overtime because of the shortage of visa workers we could get in, everybody was pulling extra weight the whole meet," Pletcher said. "I was proud of everyone, the whole team kept their heads down and kept plugging along. We knew everyone was doing a lot of extra things, putting in a lot of overtime, but no one was complaining about it, just doing it. You get two-thirds through the meet and you're like, 'Hey, we're having a pretty good meet.' That part of it was cool."

Pletcher ran the board with winners this year. Stakes with Halladay, Spinoff, Nonna Madeline and Moretti. Claimers with Last Judgement, Fried Rice King, Bean Counter, Intrepid Heart and Mandate. Allowance races with Per Capita, Unrighteous, En Wye Cee (off the turf), Cap de Creus, Mo



Tod Marks

Chad Brown won 28 races to place second in the standings.

Ready, Fort Worth, Happy Saver, Midnight Surprise and Colonel Liam. New York-bred maidens with Chocolate Cookie, Ancient Times and Micro-second. Maidens with Prairie Wings (off the turf), Ashiham, Thankful, Ima Pharoah and Irish Front. Two-year-old races with Restored Order, Fifth Risk, Mutasabeq and Lucifers Lair. Maiden claimers with Assume and Eternal Summer.

"Like most of the times when you have successful meets, you need the entire balance of the stable to run well. We had horses with conditions, we were able to break some maidens and one-oth-er-thans, some preliminary allowance races, that's always key," Pletcher said. "A few 2-year-olds

stepped up toward the end of the meet and were able to break their maidens, a few stake winners, Halladay was able to step up and win the Fourstar-dave. We won some main track only entries, things like that you need to fall your way to win some of the jump balls."

There haven't been many jump balls in a career with 4,976 wins, \$394 million in earnings, seven Eclipse Awards, five Triple Crown race wins, 11 Breeders' Cup wins and 14 titles at Saratoga. A first-ballot Hall of Famer when he's eligible next year, still Pletcher takes nothing for granted.

"I don't think I ever went into a meet thinking, 'You got this.' Especially at Saratoga, it's so hard to win here. I fully appreciate how difficult it is to do, I never went into a meet saying it's definitely going to happen," Pletcher said. "I always fear a slump or a losing streak any time but especially Saratoga. I don't think I ever took any for granted and still have a full appreciation for how hard it is to win at Saratoga and how difficult it is to win a training title."

After two demolition jobs by Brown, Pletcher had to be wondering if he would ever win another title at Saratoga.

"Oh yeah, I have all those thoughts," Pletcher said. "I don't think I ever gave up on the fact that we would win another one, but I didn't think it would be this year going into the meet. Somewhere about two-thirds through, I thought, 'Well, if things fell perfectly, we would have a fighting chance.'"

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A Team

Pletcher barn crew fuels success on track

As Todd Pletcher said, it took a village to win the 2020 training championship at Saratoga Race Course. A few of the villagers:

Juan Aguayo Navarro (foreman): "I've been working for Todd for 20 years, I started in August of 2000. I started working with D. Wayne Lukas in California on the farm. Then we traveled with some horses in California from the training center to the racetrack, so they sent me to travel with the horses. Just to watch them on the plane. Because no plane came back soon, I had to stay for two weeks. At that time the meet started in Belmont. When I saw all the horses in the races and winning races on the track, I liked it. I asked Lukas if I could stay longer to work the races. My favorite part is win-

Continued On Page 16



Tod Marks

A Todd Pletcher trainee gets set to gallop at Saratoga this summer.

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[VIEW CATALOG](#)



SEPTEMBER

SUN. 13 - FRI. 25

SALE BEGINS TOMORROW

Team —

■ Continued from page 14

ning races. The feeling you have when you are up there and winning, I liked that. I've only worked in four different stables. When I left Todd's, I wanted to see what it was like to work for someone else, the spirit of it, but I wasn't too happy. After I tried working for someone else, I went back to Mexico for three years, and when I came back, I came back with Pletcher. I feel here is more my home than any other place. I like it here because we've known all these people for a long time. You'll see there's a lot of people working here for years. We are like a big family, we know each other. We've all been together for a long time, it makes it easier to work with someone you know. Todd is one of the coolest people I know. He doesn't look like it for the rest of the outside people, but for us, he is. You know him, tu sabes."

Paul Perry (groom/hotwalker): "I've been here for 25 years. It's a good job and I like it. The trainer is cool, you know, and I like the horses. I just like working with horses. Walking around, I was looking for a job and I found this one. I started as a hotwalker and then I went into a groom. He just tested me, you know, to see what's going on. Then I started rubbing good horses. I rubbed, it's been a minute, but I had Speightstown, I had Mission



Todd Marks

Fourstardave winner Halladay bides his time at the barn.

Impazible. I can't forget about Close Up, he wasn't a stakes horse, but we had fun. I had a lot of those crazy horses and I would make 'em calm. This year was very different. With no fans, it just don't seem right but we made it, you know."

Catherine Galbraith (hotwalker/secretary/Saratoga Special alumni): "Working for Todd is being part of a well-oiled machine. The horses come out at 5 a.m., each is checked by Todd. You can see the care he has for each animal, whether unstarted or a seasoned champion. Every horse, every person here gets a fair chance and are treated equally. The people come to work every day and pick up where

another team member might need the help. At the beginning of the meet, it felt like we would never be able to do it, short on help with more horses shipping in daily. But we did it and did it well. Not able to go the races, employees would be watching on cell phones down the shedrow and the cheers are the same whether it's an undercard race or a graded stakes. Todd is just cool to be around. He makes you want to be better, to impress him. He's always on his game. He's quiet but quick with a great sense of humor. When the meet ends, the routine stays the same. The people are here for the horses, the winning is just a reward for the daily grind."

Amelia Green (exercise rider/foreman): "It was nice for the team to get it done. This is the first title for me. It was exciting toward the end, it was tight. We were short on riders, short on hotwalkers, short on grooms. We had exercise riders grooming in the afternoon, everybody was doing what they could to get us through the meet, luckily, it paid off for everybody. Everyone pulled together. You're busy so it's hard to chat a whole lot or talk about it. Everyone supports each other, everyone is happy for the whole team. Todd is very professional, you don't see much emotion, but he did seem more grateful this meet, he's always grateful, but he saw how we pulled together, he comes back in the afternoon and sees the exercise riders cleaning stalls. I'm lucky to ride Halladay so that was my standout win. He's a

Continued On Page 17



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Team —

■ Continued from page 16

very happy horse training every day but he was jumping out of his skin, the day before the Fourstardave, I told Todd, 'He's ready, he nearly dropped me today, he's ready.' It was the best year since I've been here so everybody is happier. When Chad won two the last day, we were like, 'Surely, he can't win...' When we won another, we breathed a little. It made it more exciting being that close."

Miguel Rivera Lopez (groom): "Mucho, maybe 19 years. I have groomed muchos, muchos caballos. English Channel, Wait A While, this year Happy Saver. Saratoga, the climate, cold in the morning, is bonita. Mas power for the working, for the horses. I like it here, this barn, the people, he's a nice person and the company is very good."

Rob Massey (exercise rider, moved to Pletcher's after Kiaran McLaughlin retired in May): "It's different, after working for Kiaran for so long, anything was going to be different. It's been an interesting experience to see it through a different set of eyes. His observation for a horse is second to none as far as I can tell. He's there before any of us, you've seen the pictures of him looking through the binoculars, well, what he can see through those binoculars most people can't tell by being on the back of the horse. That is no joke. His observation of a horse is very special, very unique. He's a man of very few words. Unflustered. His horse sense is nearly a sixth sense. He doesn't need a lot of opinion, he doesn't ask for a lot of opinion, but when he gives his opinion to you, you

stand there, like, 'yeah, that's off the charts.' I was aware of it but until you are around it for say a Saratoga meet, you don't appreciate how good an eye he has for a horse. He doesn't have to say anything, you just know. To be leading trainer at this meet, after what everybody has gone through this entire year, with a staff shortage that everybody dealt with, is a pretty big achievement. It was getting down to the wire, I was lucky enough to get on a couple of horses that were going to run the last few days, thankfully, one of them won. Per Capita. You do take a bit of pleasure out of that. He was a bit of a project. To get that horse to win was a training achievement on its own. If you had seen him breeze on the Oklahoma before the meet started, you would have said there is no way this fellow is going to tie up the meet for him. No way. No way. You do take some self-satisfaction and it's just fun to be around horses who are running well. The name of the game is being around good horses and being around successful people."

Maggie Sweet (perhaps the only COO of a racing stable): "I never thought we could actually pull it off. We had an unbelievable amount of new employees this year because a lot of our visas didn't come through. We were the Island of the Misfit Toys. Absolutely no clue how it all came together. This office was a war room the last day of entries. Scheming and strategizing and analyzing every horse and race available (they even asked about one for Monday's jump race; we think they were kidding). And the mood in here on Monday after Fort Worth finished third at even-money and Chad won the next two . . . the boss came in and a black cloud came with him. Absolutely palpable. Made my stomach hurt."

Klaravich wins owners' crown

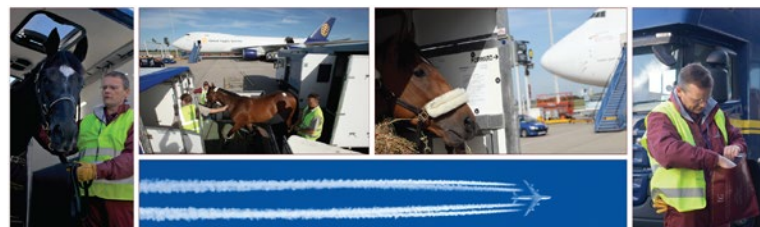
While it lacked the drama of the jockeys' and trainers' races, the owners' leaderboard was fairly competitive with Klaravich Stable showing the way with 13 wins and \$1,131,906 from 58 starts. Trained by Chad Brown and Jorge Abreu, Seth Klarman's stable was led by stakes winners Selflessly in the Lake George and Domestic Spending in the Saratoga Derby Invitational.

Repole Stable finished second with 10 wins, one in partnership with Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners while Three Diamonds Farm won eight races and piled up \$711,857 in earnings, led by stakes winners Fire At Will and Cross Border (who won two stakes). Solo or in partners with several others, Mike Dubb also was part of eight wins at the meet.

Foxtail led all horses with three wins (from four tries) at the meet.

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Winning Walk

Irada Ortiz Jr. nabs third riding title since 2015 by one over brother Jose

Irada Ortiz Jr. flashes his championship form aboard Assume Aug. 26.



Tod Marks

BY TOM LAW

Day after day, race after a race at the 2020 Saratoga Race Course meeting jockeys made the walk. Through the winner's circle into the clubhouse, barely passing anyone, out onto the backyard pavement, again barely passing anyone, and eventually to the jocks' room or makeshift jocks' room that used to be offices for everything from NYRA's communications staff to The Jockey Club.

Not much changed during those walks, aside from about a week into the meet when cones and ropes were put up to mark the path. Here's hoping that's a one-off deal. Once in a while the riders would walk with trainers or owners, sometimes both, but never were met by kids with programs and Sharpies in hand, other autograph seekers or opportunistic youngsters asking for goggles. Never were the walks so quick and reflective.

SARATOGA JOCKEYS' CHAMPIONSHIP

Irada Ortiz Jr. made the walk 282 times, more than any of his 27 colleagues with at least one mount at the meet, and he wound up with the most reasons to enjoy the short stroll. Ortiz won 59 races, one more than his younger brother and defending riding champion Jose Ortiz, 11 more than third-place Joel Rosario and 14 more than fourth-place Luis Saez.

Irada Ortiz made the walk after riding Improbable to victory in the Grade 1 Whitney, Come Dancing in the Grade 2 Honorable Miss and Country Grammer in the Grade 3 Peter Pan on Opening Day. He hugged Angel Cordero Jr., one of his early mentors in the winner's circle after receiving the riding title that bears the Hall of Famer's name, and met briefly with the media to discuss his third riding title.

"It's very special," Ortiz said. "My agent (Steve Rushing) did a great job and I'm very thankful for all the trainers and owners, and the horses, without them none of this would be possible."

A few minutes later Ortiz again found himself alone, walking from the back of the clubhouse to the jocks' room, until he met another mentor Pito Rosa. The two shared a long hug and Ortiz wiped away tears when he stepped away and into the room.

Rosa, a racetracker to the core and longtime peace officer for NYRA, played a key role in bringing the Ortiz brothers to New York from their native Puerto Rico. Irada rode his first race in New York at Aqueduct in April 2011 and has since become not only one of the best on the circuit but in

Continued On Page 20

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Cat Country	Ladinos Bambino	Redeemed
Cherokee's Boy	La Reine's Terms	Regal American
Cruisin' Dixie	Lion Hearted	Rock Slide
Crypto Star	Louis Quatorze	Rush Bay
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Domestic Dispute	Modern Cowboy	Standing Room Only
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Eternal Star	Mr. Shoplifter	Super Ninety Nine
Fantasticat	Nicanor	Tomahawk Lake
Fleet Foot	No Armistice	Trial Prep
Freedom Child	Norumbega	Tritap
Friesan Fire	Not Abroad	Two Punch
Gandhi	Not For Love	Unbridled Mate
Gators N Bears	Oratory	Unfettered
Giacomo	Orientate	Waquoit
Go for Gin	Outflanker	Wayne County (IRE)
Golden Lad	Parker's Storm Cat	Yarrow Brae

The above list shows nominated stallions with horses of racing age. Stallion must have been nominated for the specific year the horse was conceived. Some stallions listed here may not be eligible for every year.

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Jockeys —

Continued from page 18

the world. He's won more than 2,600 races, the last two Eclipse Awards as North America's outstanding jockey and now a third Saratoga title. An Eclipse winner in 2017, Jose Ortiz has also topped 2,000 career wins.

The 2020 Saratoga crown didn't come easy. The Ortiz brothers came into the final day of racing tied at 57 wins, with Irad's total amassed despite missing three days with an injury to his left wrist suffered in the last race Aug. 26. He didn't ride three consecutive days — including missing the chance aboard eventual stakes winners Captain Bombastic and Selflessly the second day he was out — and lost what was a three-win lead on his brother.

"Because of my injury I had to take off a couple days, three days, and (trainers) still named me on their horses and gave me the confidence, trusted me when I said I was OK and they gave me the opportunity," Ortiz said. "Glad to be here and thankful to them."

Ortiz admitted to feeling anxious watching the races from home.

"I pushed a little bit, I rushed a little bit honestly because I had some nice horses and I want to be here," he said. "I don't want to miss any day but the days I missed was because I can't really be here. I was hurt badly. I just couldn't do it. I wanted to come here but it was something that was really, really hard."



Susie Raisher
Pito Rosa hugs 2020 jockey champion Irad Ortiz Jr. after the last race of the season.

Saratoga Leaders

JOCKEYS	1ST
Irado Ortiz Jr.	59
Jose Ortiz	58
Joel Rosario	48
Luis Saez	45
Jose Lezcano	27
Javier Castellano	26
Junior Alvarado	19
Manny Franco	18
Dylan Davis	17
John Velazquez	16
Ricardo Santana Jr.	12
Kendrick Carmouche	10
Eric Cancel	8
David Cohen	7
Benjamin Hernandez	5



Jose (left) and Irad Ortiz Jr. flank Hall of Famer Angel Cordero Jr.

Susie Raisher

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*Clockwise from top left: 2019 Santa Anita Derby-G1 winner **ROADSTER**; 2019 Champion & Horse of the Year **BRICKS AND MORTAR**; Undefeated Grade 1 SW **MASTERY**; 2020 Dance Smartly S.-G2 winner **THEODORA B.**; European Champion 2YO Colt **AIR FORCE BLUE***

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World Beater

Connections savor Grade 1 score with traveler Global Campaign



Global Campaign (right) keeps Tacitus at bay late in the Woodward.

Tod Marks

BY TOM LAW

Global Campaign spent five days in Saratoga leading up to the Grade 1 Woodward Handicap and his human companions spent five days worrying and fretting about the colt who in the words of his trainer has “been his own worst enemy in the past.”

He’s not a bad actor per se, just a good-feeling, playful kind of colt who could find trouble if there’s trouble to find. Like many in Saratoga this year, Global Campaign didn’t find much trouble – at least not by Saratoga standards – and the hassle-free stay precluded a victory in the Grade 1 Woodward Stakes.

Global Campaign and Luis Saez did all the work in Saturday’s 10-furlong Woodward, staying in front of 3-5 favorite Tacitus early and withstanding a stiff challenge from that rival in the stretch to win by 1 3/4 lengths. He won his second straight graded stakes in the \$500,000 Woodward and gave his connections reason to finally exhale.

WOODWARD HANDICAP RECAP

“That whole week, you know how things can go, they can do one thing and it can change,” said Jocelyn Brooks, chief of staff for Kevin Plank’s Sagamore Racing, which owns the 4-year-old Curlin colt in partnership with his breeder WinStar Farm. “Laz (Cruz), Stan Hough’s assistant, that first night I don’t think he slept.

“Anything small you just start worrying and you just want to get him there. Especially with him. The whole team spent so much time trying to get him right. He’s been doing so well so you try to do anything you can so he doesn’t figure out a way to rip off a shoe or something to jeopardize all the hard work. Especially when it seems like he’s doing so well and ready to run.”

Global Campaign, plagued by foot issues that started last March and cost him a chance at the Triple Crown and later the Travers, showed up ready and delivered.

Sent off the 5-2 second choice in the field of five – depleted by one with the scratch of Moretti – Global Campaign clicked off quarters in :24.65, :24.24 and :23.01 to hit the 6-furlong mark on the backstretch in 1:11.90.

Saez, who once thought Global Campaign could be his 2019 Kentucky Derby mount before he wound up on Maximum Security, sensed an improved horse under him than the one he rode to back-to-back victories last January and February at Gulfstream before a fifth in the Fountain of Youth. Global Campaign grabbed a quarter in the Fountain of Youth and made only two starts the rest of 2019 – a win in the Grade 3 Peter Pan at Belmont Park and a third in the Grade 2 Jim Dandy at Saratoga – when the foot issues resurfaced.

“He’s grown a lot,” Saez said. “He’s a different kind of horse. He feels like more strong, he grew, he’s better.”

Continued On Page 24

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Woodward —

■ Continued from page 22

Global Campaign showed how much better when Tacitus, off since winning the Grade 2 Suburban at 10 furlongs July 4 at Belmont, took the race to him around the far turn. The two raced on almost even terms around the bend, well clear of the nearest chaser Spinoff with Prioritize and Math Wizard even farther back.

Global Campaign never let Tacitus closer than his shoulder and spurred away past the mile in 1:35.42. He opened 1 1/2 lengths in mid-stretch and, even though his connections conceded that he idled a bit in deep stretch, never looked in jeopardy of losing the lead in the lane. Tacitus held second 1 ¼ lengths in front of Prioritize, who was three-quarters of a length clear of Spinoff. Global Campaign won in 2:01.40.

“With a horse pressuring you, it’s not easy to do it like that,” said Hunter Rankin, Sagamore’s president. “Luis felt like he won with something in the tank. Once he gets out there in front he does kind of shut off the en-

gine so I think he had something left. I’m hoping he’s capable of even more than he did the other day.

“He seems to be doing really good right now. He came out of the race very well. Obviously we’re super excited. We dream about having horses like him, we don’t have as many chances as a lot of people do. We have a really good partnership with WinStar and we’re just really fortunate to have him.”

WinStar Farm bred Global Campaign out of the A.P. Indy mare Globe Trot and offered him through Select Sales at the 2017 Keeneland September yearling sale. Rankin said the colt’s slightly offset knees, which he’s grown out of, helped make him affordable to Sagamore and he sold for \$250,000. WinStar stayed in as a partner but he’s been part of the Sagamore program and with Hough for his entire career.

After his third in the Jim Dandy last summer behind Tax and Tacitus and with the Travers off the table due to the lingering foot issue, Global Campaign went to WinStar for time off, rehab and to start prepping for



Tod Marks

Continued On Page 25

Global Campaign focuses on the finish in his Woodward win.



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Woodward —

■ Continued from page 24

his 4-year-old campaign. The bothersome issues cleared up and he returned with Hough this past winter at Palm Meadows Training Center.

Global Campaign started 2020 with a win in a 7-furlong optional at Gulfstream in late April before a sixth in the Blame Stakes behind Owen-dale, Everfast and Silver Dust, an effort compromised by a poor start and a wide trip. He returned to win the Grade 3 Monmouth Cup as the 5-2 favorite July 16 and Hough set his sights on the Woodward.

After five works at home at Churchill, Global Campaign flew from Louisville to Albany and bedded down in the stakes barn behind the paddock. He trained every morning during the designated time for out-of-town stakes runners, showing improvement with every gallop over the main track.

Brooks, who handles everything from corporate communications to horse roster management to social media for Plank, Rankin and Sagamore, traveled too and went to work.

“Because of the situation with trying to get help to different tracks we really didn’t have anyone,” she said.

“I always volunteer my services as a hotwalker but this was the first time that they’ve actually accepted. So it was just me and Laz. Because I’m usually at the farm (in Maryland) I haven’t had much time to spend with him. It was cool to get to know him and his personality. They always talk about how cool he is. He is cool, even if he’s taking bites out of you. He’s just a real fun horse to be around.”

From all reports Global Campaign liked to be in the middle of the fun, or at least trying to get the good times rolling.

Hough said he’s grown out of that a bit and hopes the “the things that bothered him” and that he “caused himself” are in the past with an eye on the Breeders’ Cup Classic Nov. 7 at Keeneland Race Course down the road.

Brooks and Rankin hope for the same.

“Most likely in the Classic with a backup being the Dirt Mile. Because it’s two turns, I like that option,” Rankin said. “He’s got tactical speed. If everything goes right, I think he would end up in the Classic. He’s more lightly raced than some but he’s got the talent. Obviously you have to have a lot of things go your way to be successful in those races. He’s doing as good as he can right now.”



Tod Marks

Sagamore’s Jocelyn Brooks (right) accepts the Woodward trophies along with jockey Luis Saez and trainer Stan Hough’s assistant Laz Cruz.

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CHURCHILL DOWNS 2020 Derby Week & September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 27

THE CHAMPIONS DAY MARATHON OVERNIGHT STAKES

Runs Tues., Sept. 1
\$115,000
Three Years Old & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(No nomination fee)
1 1/2 Miles, Dirt

UNBRIDLED SIDNEY

Runs Wed., Sept. 2
\$150,000
Fillies & Mares,
Three Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$150 nomination fee)
5 1/2 Furlongs, Turf

POCAHONTAS (GIII)

“WIN AND YOU’RE IN BREEDERS’ CUP JUVENILE
FILLIES DIVISION”

Runs Thurs., Sept. 3
\$200,000
Fillies, Two Years Old

Closes Aug. 15
(\$200 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Dirt

OPENING VERSE OVERNIGHT STAKES

Runs Thurs., Sept. 3
\$115,000
Three Years Old & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(No nomination fee)
1 Mile, Turf

KENTUCKY OAKS DAY

LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS (GI)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$1,250,000
Second closing
Fillies, Three Years Old

Closes Aug. 15
(\$500 nomination fee)
1 1/8 Miles, Dirt

EDGEWOOD (GII)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$300,000
Fillies, Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Turf

EIGHT BELLES (GII)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$300,000
Fillies, Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
7 Furlongs, Dirt

LA TROienne (GI)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$500,000
Fillies & Mares,
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 1/16 Miles, Dirt

ALYSHEBA (GII)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$400,000
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 1/16 Mile, Dirt

TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (GII)

Runs Fri., Sept. 4
\$250,000
Three Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$250 nomination fee)
5 1/2 Furlongs, Turf

KENTUCKY DERBY DAY

OLD FORESTER BOURBON TURF CLASSIC (GI)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$1,000,000
Second Closing
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$500 nomination fee)
1 1/8 Miles, Turf

IROQUOIS (GIII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$200,000
Two Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$200 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Dirt

PAT DAY MILE (GII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$500,000
Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Dirt

DERBY CITY DISTAFF (GI)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$500,000
Fillies & Mares,
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
7 Furlongs, Dirt

AMERICAN TURF (GII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$500,000
Three Year Olds

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 1/16 Miles, Turf

LONGINES CHURCHILL DISTAFF TURF MILE (GII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 5
\$500,000
Fillies & Mares,
Four Year Olds & Up

Closes Aug. 15
(\$300 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Turf

ACK ACK (GIII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 26
\$100,000
Three Year Olds & Up

Closes Sept. 12
(\$100 nomination fee)
1 Mile, Dirt

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1. **Win Win Win:** Wild, wild, wild rally, rally, rally in Grade 1 Forego.
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2. **Tiz The Law:** Travers win was one of meet's magical moments.
3. **Gamine:** California-based 3YO filly left no doubt in Test.
4. **Serengeti Empress:** Fought like a lioness in Ballerina triumph.
5. **Rushing Fall:** Diana winner was gutsy in stretch battle.
6. **Vexatious:** Vanquished champ in Grade 1 Personal Ensign.
7. **Halladay:** Made fastball stand up against strong Fourstardave field.
8. **Improbable:** Beat quality group in Grade 1 Whitney.
9. **Volatile:** Speedster made it look easy in Vanderbilt.
10. **Swiss Skydiver:** 3YO filly got her G1 in Alabama.. Oaks.

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Tod Marks

Frank's Rockette (right) leads everybody home in Saturday's Prioress Stakes.

Blasting Off

Frank's Rockette runs 6-furlong record to 3-for-4

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Frank Fletcher was a 29-year-old manufacturer's representative for Walmart when Sam Walton called him into his office to deliver some bad news.

"He told me they were going to get rid of all the manufacturer's reps," Fletcher said this week. "I asked him why and he said, 'Because we need your commission.' "

The Walmart founder, whom Fletcher first met in 1967 when he was selling DuPont paint, did throw him a lifeline. "He told me, 'Go back and make something and I'll buy it if it's a good product.' "

Fletcher started making lamps and built Cheyenne/Silverwood Industries into a \$100 million company. Over the last 30 years he branched out into car dealerships, restaurants and hotels, achieving a high degree of success that carried over to racing.

Fletcher bought his first horse in 1989 and has owned some good ones, including C Z Rocket, who was claimed from him at Oaklawn Park in April and has since won four in a row, including the Grade 2 Pat O'Brien Stakes at Del Mar Aug. 29. His latest star was on display at Saratoga Race Course Sept. 5, when Frank's Rockette cruised to a 2 1/2-length win in the Grade 2 Prioress Stakes for 3-year-old fillies.

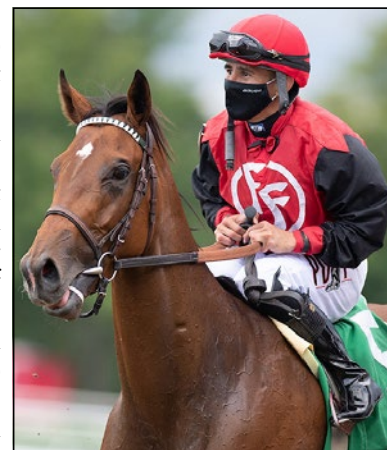
"That was her best race," Fletcher said from Arkansas, where he lives. "We're real pleased. She's gained weight

PRIORESS STAKES RECAP

and she's beautiful physically. She's better this year as a 3-year old."

And she was pretty good as a juvenile, finishing second in three consecutive graded stakes after breaking her maiden at Churchill Downs. Two of those placements came at Saratoga, in the Grade 2 Adirondack and Grade 1 Spinaway, when Frank's Rockette managed to beat everyone except Perfect Alibi.

Coming in with three wins in four starts this year, the Bill Mott trainee kept it going in the Prioress, as Junior Alvarado sat just off pacesetter Hello Beautiful, took the lead on the turn and left no doubt in the stretch, covering 6 furlongs in 1:08.89 while improv-



Tod Marks

Continued On Page 27 Frank's Rockette returns.

Priores —

■ Continued from page 26

ing to 5-4-0 from nine starts with \$523,603 in earnings. Reagan's Edge and Center Aisle followed her home, matching the finish in the Victory Ride at Belmont July 4.

"She made my job easy," said Alvarado, who rode the Into Mischief filly from Fletcher's Indian Charlie mare Rocket Twentyone for the first time. "At the five-sixteenth pole, I knew I had a ton of horse."

The success of Frank's Rockette bodes well for Fletcher, whose Rocket Twentyone foal by American Pharoah was born a few months ago. The mare is in foal to Into Mischief again, so a full-brother or sister will arrive next year.

As for the rest of Frank's Rockette's campaign, Fletcher said Mott will pick the spots, with the 7-furlong Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint a possibility. Though she has finished second at 7 furlongs, Fletcher thinks 6 furlongs is her best distance, and he is backed up by the filly's three wins and a second in four starts at the trip. If they are inclined to take on the boys, the Breeders' Cup Sprint is run at 6 furlongs.

"I know one thing, I won't be scared of any sprint," Fletcher said.

So what's with all the "Rocket" names?

"I had a German Shepherd named Rocket that



Tod Marks

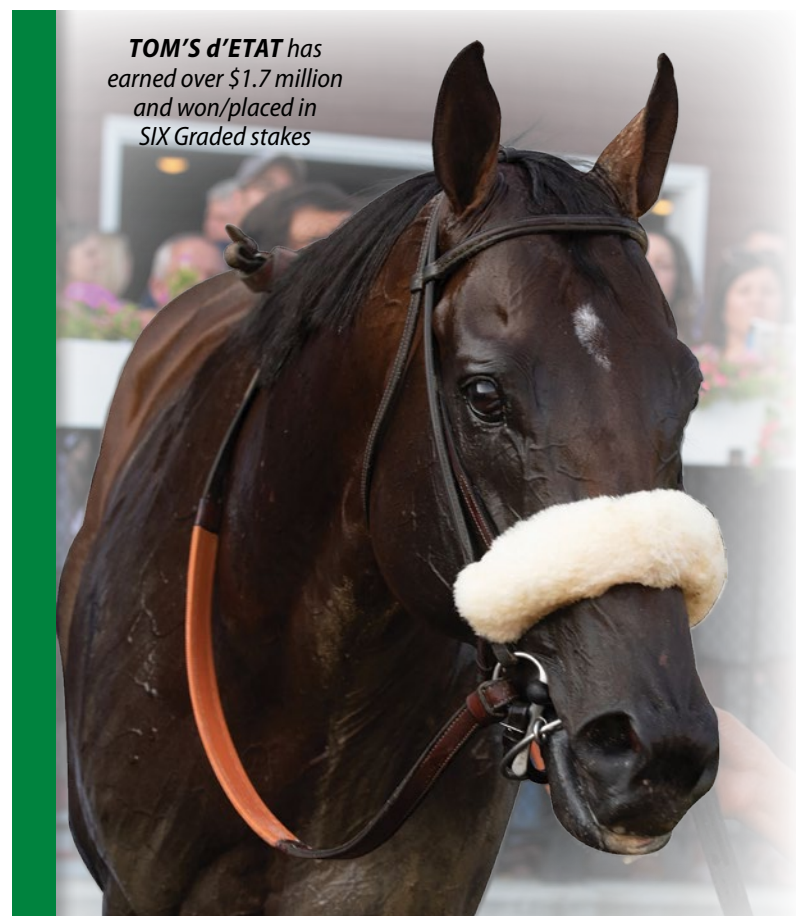
Frank's Rockette is all alone at the wire, while winning her second graded stakes.

went with me everywhere," he said. "When he died we had a funeral procession. I'm on my third one – Rocket 3. I've had 150 horses named Rocket."

That includes Lady Rocket, who broke her maiden in an impressive debut at Saratoga Aug. 28, stumbling at the start and coming off the rail in the

stretch to get up at the wire.

"She ran an amazing race," said Fletcher, who owns the filly in partnership with Ten Strike Racing. "She stumbled to her knees and still nipped them at the wire. She has the same kind of speed as Rockette. I'm anxious to see her next start."



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Classic Prep

Mystic Guide makes case for Preakness in Grade 2 score

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Mike Stidham was hopeful that if everything went exceptionally well for Mystic Guide, the 3-year-old colt might find his way into the winner's circle after a major stakes race on the first Saturday in September.

Mission accomplished. To a degree. Stidham did in fact lead in Mystic Guide to get his picture taken last Saturday, even if it was about 800 miles northeast of what was once a dream destination.

"We've always liked our horse," Stidham said after the Godolphin homebred won the Jim Dandy, a Travers prep race in non-Covid years. "Earlier in the year, we were even hoping we would make the Kentucky Derby."

JIM DANDY STAKES RECAP

Some minor injuries and issues resulted in Mystic Guide's running in a Grade 2 at Saratoga three hours before the 146th Derby at Churchill Downs. But his performance, a three-quarter-length win as the 2-1 second choice, left Stidham thinking about another classic race.

"We will look at (the Preakness)," said Stidham, a Mid-Atlantic-based trainer who sent out Godolphin's Pixelate to win the Grade 2 Del Mar Derby the day after the Jim Dandy. "If our horse comes out of the race really well and we like the way he is training in the next couple of weeks, the Preakness (Oct. 3) would certainly be on the table."



Tod Marks

Mystic Guide (right) holds off Liveyourbeastlife (and two birds) in the Jim Dandy.

Before the Derby was ruled out, Stidham and Godolphin considered the Aug. 8 Travers and entered Mystic Guide in the Grade 3 Peter Pan on Opening Day at Saratoga. His third as the favorite didn't motivate the connections to take on Tiz The Law.

"He didn't give us what we needed in the Peter Pan," Stidham said. "We just didn't feel confident enough to make that kind of move."

Jose Ortiz had barely landed when dismounting after the Peter Pan

Continued On Page 29

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Jim Dandy —

■ Continued from page 28

when he told Stidham he should add blinkers. Stidham agreed, the equipment change was made and it paid dividends in the Jim Dandy.

Although Mystic Guide, a son of Ghostzapper out of the A.P. Indy mare Music Note, was last of six going down the backstretch of the 1 1/8-mile stakes, he was within 5 lengths of the lead entering the far turn. Ortiz started asking and as he advanced he moved inside odds-on favorite Dr Post. Jesus' Team led as they straightened for home, but Ortiz had plenty of horse and he went right by at the sixteenth pole.

"Blinkers made the difference," Ortiz said. "It didn't give him any more speed early which I thought it would, but it did keep him more focused."

Stidham agreed. "The blinkers did exactly what I was hoping," he said. "He was last down the backside, but he was definitely there when Jose called on him. The blinkers made that happen."

Dr Post, second to Tiz The Law in the Belmont Stakes but a non-threatening third to Authentic in the Grade 1 Haskell, had no answer in the stretch and was a disappointing fourth. Liveyourbeastlife was a fast-closing second, with Jesus' Team



Tod Marks

Mystic Guide heads back to the barn with his first stakes win.

settling for third.

As the weekend results would indicate, Stidham is grateful to be part Team Godolphin.

"It's been a wonderful four years," he said of his experience training for the U.S. division of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's global operation. "The 2-year-olds come in and we get pumped up. They're so royally bred. It's really amazing."

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Tod Marks

Mystic Guide stretches for the finish in the Jim Dandy.



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Fresh Approach

Civil Union overcomes slow pace to win Gr. 2

BY TERRY HILL

Jockey Joel Rosario summed up his waiting game in Saturday's Grade 2 Glens Falls Stakes after winning the 11-furlong turf test.

"I knew we were going slow, but I was close enough," he said of his approach aboard Joe Allen's Civil Union.

The opening half-mile of the \$200,000 stakes on the inner turf had been walked in :53:22 but Civil Union was third on the rail just off the pace of Beau Belle and Lovely Lucky. Hitting the stretch, Rosario

Continued On Page 31



Tod Marks

Civil Union (1) sweeps past in the stretch to win the Glens Falls.

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Glens Falls —

■ Continued from page 30

ducked his mare outside the two leaders and opened her up. She got the lead just past the sixteenth pole and pulled away to a 1-length win over favorite My Sister Nat.

The slow pace didn't overly worry trainer Shug McGaughey even though this was Rosario's first ride on the mare.

"I've got a lot of confidence in Joel," the trainer said.

Rosario's ride made him a repeat winner in the Glens Falls, having won the race last year on Mrs. Sippy.

For Civil Union, it was a third consecutive win and the second stakes. The 5-year-old War Front mare won the 1 ½-mile River Memories Stakes July 12 at Belmont Park after which McGaughey pointed for the Glens Falls almost two months in the future.

"A few years ago I had a filly named Apple Betty that won the River Memories," McGaughey said. "A month later I ran her back in the Waya Stakes and she finished fourth. I said, 'I'm not going to do that with this mare.' So we decided to skip the Waya, give her some time off and wait for this one. Obviously she appreciated the rest."

Civil Union is lightly raced with more than half of her seven starts coming in her 5-year-old year.



Civil Union exits the winner's circle with a smile.

Tod Marks

McGaughey took over the mare's training at the end of last year and said when former trainer Chad Brown turned her over he told him to watch her because she tends to get sick.

"I suspect that's the reason she's had so much down time," said McGaughey, who ran her at 1 3/16, 1 1/4, 1 1/2 and now 1 3/8 miles in her four starts for the barn. "The longer she goes, the more

she likes it. She can run all day. After this one, we'll probably send her down to Keeneland, but the Flower Bowl Invitational (at Belmont, Oct. 10) is a possibility."

Civil Union's usual jockey, Jose Ortiz, was on the favorite My Sister Nat, who won the Waya Aug. 8. She ran last throughout much of the race.

"She had no speed. I couldn't do anything with her," said Ortiz.

My Sister Nat came with a run in the stretch and, while not managing to catch Civil Union, was good for second in a photo at the wire beating pacesetter Beau Belle by a nose. Civil Union won in 2:19.80, more than 8 seconds off the course record.

Allen bred Civil Union, and much of her female family starting with great-granddam Andover Way. The daughter of His Majesty won nine races including the 1982 Grade 1 Top Flight Handicap for Allen and trainer Howie Teshner. Bred by Mr. and Mrs. James Phillips, Andover Way became the dam of, among others, leading sire Dynaformer. His half-sister Black Speck won a single race in France for Allen, but produced War Flag (who won the Grade 1 Flower Bowl for Allen and McGaughey) and Civil Union's dam Photograph. The daughter of Unbridled's Song has produced seven foals of racing age, all by War Front, led by the much-traveled War Dispatch – a nine-time winner still racing in Hong Kong at age 8.



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Maiden No More

Speedy Parx filly rolls
for Reid, new partners

BY PAUL HALLORAN

You never know where you're going to find a future Grade 1 winner, but you probably wouldn't think it would be at Parx Racing on a Wednesday afternoon in July.

Hats off to Gary Barber and Adam Wachtel for doing their homework.

After Vequist earned a strong speed figure when finishing second by a nose in a \$40,000 maiden special weight, owner/breeder Tom McGrath's phone rang. Barber and Wachtel were interested in buying

Continued On Page 33

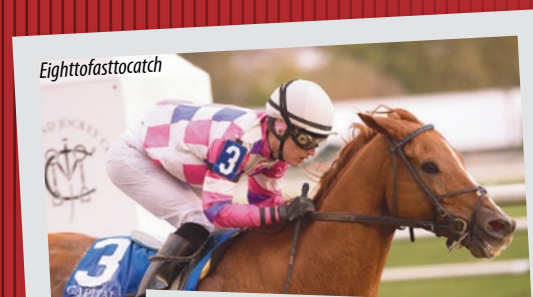


Vequist powers away with a Grade 1 win in Sunday's Spinaway for 2-year-old fillies.

Tod Marks

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— TIM KEEFE



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Jim McCue Photos

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Spinaway —

■ Continued from page 32

into the McGrath's homebred daughter of Nyquist out of the Mineshaft mare Vero Amore.

"I had not been thinking about selling, but it's been a strange year and Covid has had a negative impact on our operation," said McGrath, who owns a construction business and is president of a company that manufactures foamed glass that is used as lightweight fill for highway projects. "They sent a really fair offer. I liked the way they approached it and they wanted me to stay involved and to keep the horse with (trainer) Butch (Reid). It made sense."

McGrath sold 75 percent of the filly, who was a \$120,000 RNA at last year's Keeneland September yearling sale, to Barber and Wachtel. Had he declined their offer, it's unlikely she would have been running in a Grade 1 in her second career start, let alone winning last Sunday's Spinaway Stakes at Saratoga Race Course.

"Had we held onto the horse, it's very much in doubt that we would have taken her to Saratoga to run in the Spinaway," said McGrath, who won the A.G. Vanderbilt Stakes in 2012 with Poseidon's Warrior. "It's a thrill."

Reid also trained Poseidon's Warrior, his only other Grade 1 winner, and admitted he would likely have targeted a less ambitious spot.

"It was Adam Wachtel's idea," the Pennsylvania-based trainer said. "I probably would have run her in a maiden race if it was totally my call. Adam wanted to go in this race and I'm glad he did."

Reid did like the idea of stretching her out to 7 furlongs.

"I ran her 4 1/2 furlongs to get a race under her belt, but she was going to be looking for longer things down the road," Reid said. "You don't expect to win a Grade 1 with a maiden by that far."

The Spinaway margin was 9 1/2 lengths. Vequist broke last but settled into joint second down the backstretch, running alongside even-money favorite Beautiful Memories and behind pace-setting Ohio-bred Esplanade, who carved out fractions of :22.41 and :44.87. Luis Saez made his move aboard Vequist on the turn



Tod Marks

Battle Station and Kendrick Carmouche look for the camera while winning the Lucky Coin.

and was in the lead at the top of the stretch. Saez glanced under his right arm at the sixteenth pole but there was no danger in sight.

Esplanade held second and Lady Lilly was third, while Beautiful Memories was eased, as she was in the Schuylerville on Opening Day. Vequist's won in 1:22.29.

"We knew she had speed and we knew she wanted to go long," said McGrath, who was introduced to horse ownership by his Pennsylvania neighbor Joe Lerro, an original partner in Chuck Zacney's Cash Is King Stable. "You always go into a race wanting to see them romp, but so often it doesn't happen, especially in a graded stakes."

Vero Amore, a daughter of Mineshaft, won two of 16 races, ran in five graded stakes and earned \$252,255 for McGrath, who races under Swilcan Stable. He bred her to Super Saver and More than Ready before sending her to 2015 champion 2-year-old male and 2016 Kentucky Derby winner Nyquist in his first season at stud in 2017. Reid admitted he wasn't completely sold on the idea.

"I was a little bit against him (Nyquist) in the beginning," Reid said. "He was in my barn when he ran in the (2016) Pennsylvania Derby. He was a wiry horse who got a little nervous in the barn. That's why I stick to the training and let them handle the breeding."

While in foal to Nyquist, Vero Amore was offered at the 2017

Keeneland November breeding stock sale, but the \$135,000 reserve was not met.

Vequist's connections are considering the Grade 1 Darley Alcibiades at Keeneland Oct. 2 and the Grade 1 Frizette at Belmont Oct. 10 for Vequist's next start, with an eye on

the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies at Keeneland Nov. 6. No word on when Niente runs again.

That's the winner of the seventh race at Parx July 29, who may just become the answer to a trivia question come November.

- RB Racing's Battle Station returned off nine days' rest to finish off Sunday's stakes action with a win in the restricted \$85,000 Lucky Coin Stakes. Dismissed at 20-1 – the longest price in the field of seven runners eligible for the 5 1/2-furlong turf stakes as non-winners of a sweepstakes in 2020 – Battle Station and Kendrick Carmouche tracked leaders Readyforprime and Pulsate before taking over inside the sixteenth pole to win in 1:01.79. Pulsate held second by a nose over Readyforprime with favored Shekky Shebaz last of seven.

"I know this horse well and I've won on him twice before," Carmouche said. "We reunited with Rob Atras and I know this horse like the back of my hand. He broke so sharp. I dropped my hands and from there I just had to work my way out to win the race. He doesn't forget the hands. He knows the voice."



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Last Waltz

Stable star Come Dancing adds another for Martin, Blue Devil

BY SEAN CLANCY

Carlos Martin walked. Wandered. Milled around. Out of his routine. Funny how you can be lost by yourself.

Then he found a spot behind the Saratoga grandstand, in the picnic area without picnics, in front of a big TV without viewers, by himself to watch his best horse, 6-year-old mare Come Dancing in the Grade 2 Honorable Miss Sunday, Sept. 6.

"That long corridor from the barn to the paddock, when you make that long walk for the big races, where all the fans line up along the white fencing," Martin explained. "They had that big jumbo TV screen, nobody is around there. After I saddled her, I said 'I'm going to watch the race by myself, right in the picnic area.' "

HONORABLE MISS STAKES RECAP

Martin watched his millionaire take on six rivals in her 18th start, her fifth and final at Saratoga while trying to snap a four-race losing streak that included a second in the Grade 3 Vagrancy and a fourth in the Grade 1 Ballerina. Under Irad Ortiz Jr., replacing Javier Castellano who went to Churchill Downs, Come Dancing broke from the rail, split the field well off a big lead by Lady's Island through a quarter-mile in :21.64 and a half in a demanding :43.81. Turning for home, Lady's Island drifted out while second choice Blamed rallied along the rail. Without a choice, Ortiz aimed the fa-

Continued On Page 35



Tod Marks

Come Dancing grinds out another graded stakes win in the Honorable Miss Sunday.

One Horse

Buyers and sellers remember some names from Keeneland September sales of years past.



W E



SEPTEMBER

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LOOKING AHEAD

David Hayden, Dark Hollow Farm

"We sell regionally, but we also take horses to Keeneland September most years. It works for us when it's the right horse. The world is there. Maybe not this year, but the world is there and even this year you know it's going to have the right mix of buyers. It gives you an opportunity to expose your horses to the most sophisticated buyers in the world. We've been fortunate to do very well there. We've sold a bunch there in the \$200,000 range and that's a strong sale for us. It really depends on the horse, where you take them. We're taking three this year, including a Malibu Moon colt out of Cat Charmer, a Storm Cat mare we bought a few years ago. For us it's a real strong pedigree and we're excited."

The 2020 Keeneland September sale starts Sunday, runs through Friday, September 25, and features a catalogue of more than 4,000 yearlings.

Honorable Miss —

■ Continued from page 34

vorite between those two, forcing a lead change and maneuvered the barge-like Come Dancing to equal terms as the trio passed the sixteenth pole.

“It was a little dicey, I had gotten a little bit of a question about going in between horses, she’s so big, when she starts her rally, I want her in the clear,” Martin said. “Javier did it in the Vagrancy and kind of did it again in the Ballerina, when Irad did it, I was like, ‘Oh my God...’ He rode a beautiful race and then he splits horses, I was a little bit hesitant that she was going to keep finding more but she did.”

From there, the 6-year-old daughter of Malibu Moon, bred and owned by Blue Devil Racing, had it under control, grinding to win by three-quarters of a length over Lady’s Island and a fading Blamed. Come Dancing finished 6 furlongs in 1:08.74.

Come Dancing won four of six starts last season, garnering the Grade 3 Distaff at Aqueduct, the Grade 2 Ruffian at Belmont, the Grade 1 Ballerina at Saratoga and the Grade 2 Gallant Bloom. In between, she notched a second to Midnight Bisou going 1 1/16 miles in the Grade 1 Ogden Phipps at Belmont. At the end, she failed to land a blow in the Grade 1 Breeders’ Cup Filly and Mare Sprint to end her season. Martin thought it was the end of her career, as she headed to Lane’s End Farm in Lexington. Owner Marc Holliday changed his mind and decided to bring her back for her 6-year-old season. Sent to D. Wayne Lukas, Come Dancing finished 12th of 14 in the Grade 1 Apple Blossom at Oaklawn Park. With that arduous assignment behind her, she returned to Martin’s New York barn this spring.

“I had mixed emotions. I thought she had done enough to get a good home and retire but I’m obviously thrilled and delighted to have her in the barn and to get to spend



Trainer Carlos Martin.

Tod Marks

more time with her,” Martin said. “It’s been a rock and roll year, with the pandemic, with everything everybody’s had to go through, with getting her started, everything. She’s always been classy, does everything right, but you know how it is, you get a little bit older, it takes a little more time to get the ring rust off.”

Brushing off the Apple Blossom drubbing, Come Dancing ranged into contention in the Vagrancy but failed to run down longshot Victim Of Love June 27.

Come Dancing returned to defend her crown in the Ballerina and ran hard to finish fourth, just 3 lengths behind Kentucky Oaks winner Serengeti Empress, three-time Grade 1 winner Bellafina and Victim Of Love.

“About three weeks before the Honorable Miss, she started to turn, the weather got a little bit cooler, she was thriving, I was excited about running her,” Martin said. “It was special to win another stakes with her at Saratoga, for Blue Devil, it’s a real team effort. Marc and his family were there, my mom and my sister drove down, my wife. The Honorable Miss is not a Grade 1 but for us, that was our Grade 1 at Saratoga. It was a relief, it would have been sad not to at least get her back to win a race as a 6-year-old. It would have been a disservice to her.”

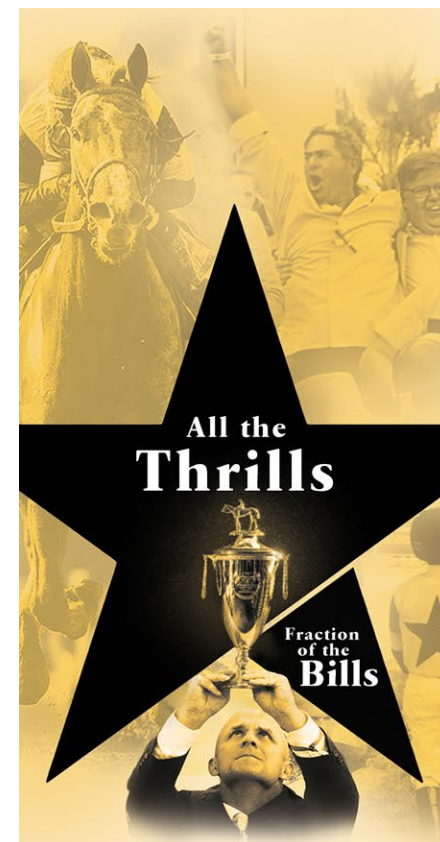
With nine wins (five in graded stakes) and \$1,186,783 in the bank, Come Dancing will take one final swipe at the Breeders’ Cup at Keeneland in November when the ride of a lifetime will definitely come to a stop. Martin plans to take his stable star early, get used to the track, acclimate and hope for the best.

“Hopefully, she’ll end her last dance on a high note,” Martin said. “It looks like Come Dancing is back peaking at the right time, I know the Breeders’ Cup Filly and Mare Sprint will be one of the toughest races, if Gamine goes, Mia Mischief, of course Serengeti Empress, so many great fillies, but might be the kind of year that it sets up for her, she’s versatile. She’s been a wonderful, wonderful mare, she’s given us some great thrills. When she’s on her game, she’s an elite mare.”



Tod Marks

Come Dancing (right) leads Lady’s Island (left) and Blamed in the stretch of the Honorable Miss.



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Doubled Up

Two-year-old phenom Jackie's Warrior wins second stakes of meet

BY TOM LAW

Steve Asmussen and his team knew they were bringing a fast colt when they loaded Jackie's Warrior on a van at Keeneland bound for upstate New York in late June.

The son of Maclean's Music left Kentucky with a win in his debut – a 2 ½-length score in good time going 5 furlongs June 19 at Churchill Downs – and he'll return with two of Saratoga's most important 2-year-old stakes. A month after winning the Grade 2 Saratoga Special, Jackie's Warrior took down the Grade 1 Runhappy Hopeful to close the meet and give his Hall of Fame trainer back-to-back victories in the 7 furlong stakes after Basin led a 1-2-3 sweep in 2019.

Jackie's Warrior wasn't favored in either race – going to the post for the Special at 3-1 behind his stablemate and 8-5 favorite Cazadero and at 9-5 to the even-money choice and eventual runner-up Reinvestment Risk in the Hopeful. The slight snub in the latter likely came after players watched Saratoga Special runner-up Therideofalifetime finish a fading fourth at 4-5 two days before in the Grade 3 Iroquois at Churchill Downs.

None of that concerned Asmussen's team.

"Let's not overthink this, he's the fastest horse in the race," Asmussen's assistant Scott Blasi told jockey Joel Rosario in the paddock.

Rosario obliged and Jackie's Warrior cooperated from the break, leaving the gate quickly per usual



Dom Napolitano/NYRA Photo

Jackie's Warrior shows the way over Reinvestment Risk (left) while coming off the turn in the Hopeful Monday.

for the barn and running 2 lengths clear before the field left the 7-furlong chute onto the main track.

"When they get their lessons from Steve's dad in Laredo, Texas, they know how to leave the gate," Blasi said of Keith Asmussen, whose El Primero Training Center is a frequent starting point for the stable's winners.

Rosario stayed quiet on Jackie's Warrior up the backstretch, through a quarter-mile in :22.56 while Papetu, Nutsie and Reinvestment Risk lined up three across from the inside out to give chase. Nutsie retreated first, leaving just two chasers that were a couple lengths in front of 7-2 third choice Mutasaabeg and longshot Ampersand around the far turn.

Reinvestment Risk, considered one of the meet's most impressive maiden winners, wound up the lone chaser through a half in :44.83 but the effort proved futile with Jackie's Warrior cruising past the quarter pole ahead by more than 3 lengths. Jackie's Warrior came into the lane four or five paths off the rail, Rosario tapped him on the shoulder, shook the reins and cracked him twice right-handed outside the eighth pole and the Hopeful was over.

Jackie's Warrior flew past the furlong marker – and 6 furlongs in 1:08.33 – and cruised past the finish after Rosario gave a look back, first under his right shoulder and then between his legs, to win by a geared-down 2 ¼ lengths in 1:21.29.

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Hopeful —

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“He broke really fast and I was 2 lengths in front right away,” Rosario said. “He’s a fast horse. He was able to carry his speed the whole way around.”

Rosario said he kept Jackie’s Warrior, a \$95,000 purchase by owners Kirk and Judy Robison at last year’s Keeneland September yearling sale, off the rail most of the trip because the bay colt seemed comfortable. He also came away impressed, yet again.

“It’s unbelievable the way he ran the first time and he was probably better today,” said Rosario, who finished third behind the Ortiz brothers in the meet’s jockey standings with 48 wins.

Jackie’s Warrior contributed two of his seven graded stakes and 13 stakes victories overall. He also provided two of the Asmussen barn’s seven stakes wins at the meet, a haul that also included the Grade 1 Alfred G. Vanderbilt with Volatile and Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens with Echo Town.

Asmussen finished seventh in the trainer standings with 14 wins, sixth by purses with \$1,483,812 and only ninth by starts with 68. The barn won

at 21 percent, along with 10 seconds and 11 thirds.

“We’re just extremely fortunate to have such a talent in our barn,” Blasi said of Jackie’s Warrior and the Asmussen’s training center where he received his early lessons. “Excellent meet for us. The horses have performed extremely well and I have a great crew. Considering Covid and everything that’s taken place it’s really been a great meet for us.”

- Bill Mott’s powerful close to the meet – seven wins over the final eight days, including five on Closing Weekend – continued when he sent a trio led by Lure Stakes winner Ballagh Rocks to the winner’s circle Monday. Ballagh Rocks, the longest price of five in the field for the 1 1/16-mile Lure on the turf at 7-1, won by 2 1/4 lengths under Junior Alvarado. Ballagh Rocks, a 7-year-old son of Stormy Atlantic owned by Donegal Racing and Madaket Stables, joined debut 2-year-old filly maiden winner Love-struck and 3-year-old open allowance winner Cucina as Mott’s Closing-Day winners. Mott, who also scored in the Grade 1 Sword Dancer with Channel Maker to start his finishing run, won 15 races from 107 starts to finish in a tie for fifth in the standings with

Linda Rice. He also finished third by purses earned at \$2,161,484, behind only Todd Pletcher and Chad Brown.

- Hudson River Farm’s Iranistan won his second race from as many starts at the meet when he took Monday’s opener, the rescheduled \$50,000 steeplechase handicap, for Hall of Fame trainer Jonathan Sheppard. Ridden by Darren Nagle, the 6-year-old Einstein gelding won by 5 1/4 lengths over New Member as the 2-1 favorite in the field of eight. The handicap, open to horses ranked 130 or lower on the National Steeplechase Association’s official ratings, was originally carded for Sept. 2 but canceled due to rain and soft conditions of the turf course. The NSA redrew the race – adding eventual third-place finisher Go Get The Basil and losing Iranistan’s stablemate Taper Tantrum,

and NYRA put it back for Closing Day to lead off the 14-race card.

- While the nine runners from the finale came back to be unsaddled in the setting sun behind the grandstand, a call of “Tom Bush off the duck” came from one of the golf carts parked on the apron not far from the winner’s circle broke the silence. Bush indeed sent out the final winner of the meet, Rover Racing Stable’s Sir Chubby, in the maiden claimer on the grass but it didn’t get him “off the duck.” Sir Chubby’s victory completed a unique double for Bush – one on Opening Day and one on Closing Day. Bush’s first win came with Pecatonica in the seventh race July 16, the meet’s first day. The barn also had two seconds and six thirds between the bookend winners.

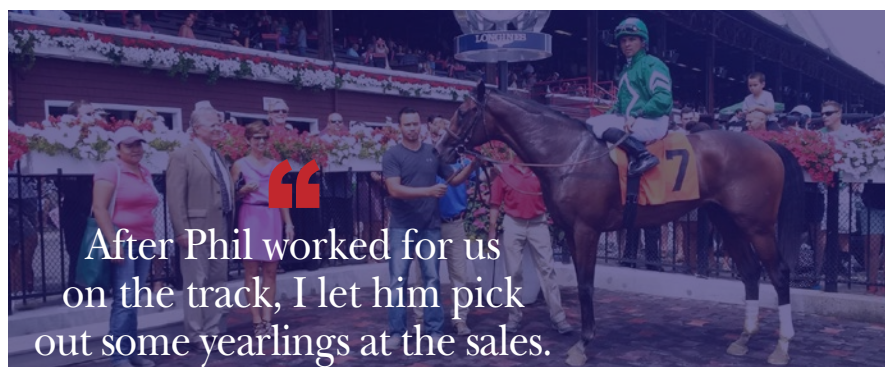


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Ballagh Rocks hits the finish all alone in the Monday’s Lure Stakes, one of five wins on Closing Weekend for trainer Bill Mott.

Coglianesse/NYRA Photo



“After Phil worked for us on the track, I let him pick out some yearlings at the sales. We have trusted his opinion ever since. He has a good eye for a horse, knows pedigrees, and his integrity is beyond reproach.”

– BILL MOTT, TRAINER

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Picking Winners

Ace handicapper Shapazian leads way for Saratoga, Special

BY JOE CLANCY

It was 2008. Early September, maybe late August, and I was about to go on NYRA television to talk about a jump race when a stranger hopped in front of me and started talking. Small, light, fast, he came at me with all the pop of a retired flyweight boxer.

"Joe, I'm John. I'm a handicapper. I read The Special and I do as well as your guys in the paper, maybe better, and I think you should hire me for next year."

He fired those jabs in about three seconds. He handed me some paper with his statistics and some contact information. I might have given him a business card, I'm not sure, and the next year John Shapazian's picks were in The Special.

He's been picking winners ever since, and turned in a 2020 report card for the ages – 135 winners picked on top from 409 races. He led The Special's squad of four, but also topped the list of public handicappers at Saratoga this season, as far as we can tell. Shapazian, a retired college professor who splits time between upstate New York and Cocoa Beach, Fla., and our managing editor Tom Law (123 wins) occupied the top two spots and were followed by Capital OTB's Seth Merrow (121) and The Saratogian's Pink Sheet handicappers

Andrew Champagne (120) and Wise Owl (116).

The Special can thank The Pink Sheet for its connection to Shapazian.

"Somebody from The Saratogian contacted me and asked me to be in the Pink Sheet the summer of 2008 and something happened with their management or whatever and I didn't get the spot," he said this week. "I was mad and said, 'These guys in The Special have a grid. I'll ask them.' I always kept track of my percentages and I was competitive. I knew I could find you right before a jump race so I said, 'Let me see if I can chew on this guy.'"

He chewed. I guess I listened. And now Shapazian is as much a part of the paper as inky fingers (well, this year it's clicky fingers).

Shapazian grew up going to the races with his uncles at Narragansett Park and Lincoln Downs in Rhode Island and Rockingham Park in New Hampshire.

"Uncle Charles, great guy, bless his soul," said Shapazian. "He was a great handicapper, but he also believed in astrology."

At Narragansett one day, Uncle Charles was in the midst of a day handicappers only dream of. He couldn't lose. John asked who he liked in the fifth race.

"I'm done betting for the day," Un-



Tod Marks

John Shapazian (right) and Tom Law went 1-2 in the Saratoga handicappers' scorebook.

cle Charles said.

"What, are you crazy?" John replied. "You're way ahead. You're doing great. This is the best day you've ever had."

"It's a quarter past three in the afternoon and the moon is now in line with Jupiter (or Mars, Shapazian isn't sure) and that's not good, so I'm done."

They were at the track together on Dec. 29, "1960 something or other" and Uncle Charles' horoscope said he should listen to a Capricorn. John, a Capricorn, said they should play the 2-9 double because of the date. It paid almost \$300.

Another uncle, Bill, sold tip sheets

and newspapers at a corner stand and was always flush with cash.

"How much money could you make selling tip sheets and newspapers?" Shapazian always wondered. "Uncle Bill, he always had more money than you could imagine."

When Shapazian's grandmother died, the funeral crowd went out the door and around the block. Judges, commissioners, the lieutenant governor of Rhode Island was there. "Everybody knew Uncle Bill," Shapazian said.

Shapazian's family moved to Connecticut. He went to college, learned to excel at numbers – accounting, fi-

Continued On Page 39

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Shapazian —

■ Continued from page 38

nance, whatever – and went on to a career at the State University of New York's Canton campus.

"My artistic skills are awful," he said. "I wish I could write, I wish I could paint, I wish I could sing, I wish I could play an instrument. But I can't do any of that. When it comes to managing numbers, I can do that. My hobby has always been horse racing."

So he handicaps.

And if you want to emulate him, be careful. Shapazian spends hours at it. For The Special, he handicaps each card three times and he's typically a day or two ahead of real life. He'll handicap at 1 a.m. for a while, watch replays, then go over whatever card he's working on again after the races and finally look through it once more before he sends it in – via email to Law. Then it all goes in the paper. He's been in the first column (signifying the top spot the year before) of The Special's handicapping grid for the last six years and 10 of the last 12. He'll be there again next year. The only times he didn't win the race, Gaile Fitzgerald dethroned him in 2012 and 2013. Their battles – all in good fun – came to an end when Fitzgerald died in April 2018. She's missed, and we think of her every summer.

Shapazian keeps it simple, and typically sticks to handicapping the NYRA tracks. He called himself "a horizontal bettor," meaning he bets to win, doubles, pick threes, pick fours. He doesn't spread much, though he's also not silly enough to single every race. "If I'm right, I'm right," he said. "And I want to get paid. I don't want to spread myself too thin."

Despite his penchant for numbers, Shapazian knows there's an art to racing too. He loves watching horses, appreciates what they do and doesn't have to bet to enjoy it.

"On the Kentucky Derby, I know some of the guys that own Tiz The Law and I was just rooting for him," he said. "A big race doesn't mean you have to make a big bet. Watch the race, enjoy it. You might find out something that helps you later too. I read all the news. I really care about the horses. I want to see how the horses are."

Shapazian's Advice for Handicappers

"It's tough sometimes. You kick yourself in the butt afterward. One day this year, the weather forecast really let me down. There was zero chance of rain and it rained and everything came off the turf and I don't think I had one winner. I didn't plan on the weather."

"Sometimes you get a case of the dumbs . . . You ask yourself, 'How could I go with that horse?' It happens."

"I had a good meet but I won one-third of the time. You've got to remember you're going to lose sometimes. A lot of the times."

"You have to try to pick up a trend, early enough, before anybody else does. It could be a track trend, a trainer who is going well, anything really."

"A lot of people play exactas. I almost never play an exacta. It's tough enough coming up with a winner."

"I look for the horse who has the most upside. Who is the horse, that looks like a possible contender, that can run better?"

Shapazian's Best Picks

He picks plenty of favorites, but had Arrogate (\$25.40) on top in the 2016 Travers.

He called 2002 Belmont Stakes winner Sarava the best pick he's ever made. The horse paid \$142.50 to win, as the Triple Crown-trying

When he's not handicapping at home, the 75-year-old can be found at an OTB or simulcast center (look for him at the Saratoga harness track) in New York or Florida, or spending time with his girlfriend Anni Rochon. The Special routinely gets emails from people who know him in Florida, New York, wherever. They'll regale us with Shapazian tales of "Money Back Special" picks and "One for the good guys," when somebody cashes a ticket.

Other than his picks, our communication with Shapazian can typically be counted in single digits – an email saying he's headed north from Florida in April or south from New York in October, another around a holiday, something quick about keeping Law out of the "night clubs and gin mills" until we get to town.

Thanks John, see you next summer.



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War Emblem finished eighth. Of course, Shapazian also remembers telling his neighbor to use Sarava and three horses in an exacta. He left out Medaglia d'Oro, who was second at 16-1 and completed a \$2,454 exacta.

"Some of my best have been in the Belmont Stakes for whatever reason," he said. "I had Birdstone over Smarty Jones, Rags To Riches the year she won. That's a good race for me."

Handicapper Scorecard

Handicapper (outlet)	Wins
John Shapazian (The Saratoga Special)	135
Tom Law (The Saratoga Special)	123
Seth Merrow (Capital OTB)	121
Andrew Champagne (The Pink Sheet)	120
Wise Owl (The Pink Sheet)	116
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The Special's handicappers – and plenty of Saratoga shippers – look at Kentucky Downs.

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Duel at the Downs

BANKROLL CHALLENGE

Our crew couldn't get enough, or they're just "chasing money" as they say, after a Kentucky Derby bankroll challenge that depleted the virtual funds.

We gave The Saratoga Special's handicappers a \$100 mythical bankroll to play the Kentucky Derby and only Charles Bedard cashed. He correctly made a \$5 exacta wager with four horses – including Derby winner Authentic – on top of Tiz The Law. The Derby exacta paid \$41 and Charles cashed for \$102.50. Word is he might have bought a virtual coffee with the \$2.50.

Kentucky Downs rolls out a star-studded Kentucky Turf Cup Day card featuring five stakes, including the \$1 million headliner, so we figured what's another \$100 for each of our handicappers to play with.

Well, here goes, the first (and hopefully last) Saratoga Special Kentucky Downs bankroll challenge.

John Shapazian

"Let's make a stab at the early Pick 5 for \$1."

Race 1: 4-Keep Your Distance.

Race 2: 1-Briefcase Bully, 3-Glynn County, 4-Summer Palace.

Race 3: 1-Sharecropper, 3-Logical Myth, 6-Hellorhighwater, 7-Bourbon In May.

Race 4: 5-Klayton's Kandy, 6-One Fast Orb, 7-Magic Solution.

Race 5: 4-Proquestor, 5-Marshall Law, 6-Buy Me Candy, 7-Kentucky Ghost, 9-Tide Of The Sea.

Race 8: \$10 Win 9-Into Mystic.

Tom Law

"After being blanked at the Derby it's time to come out swinging with some prices."

Race 6: \$20 Win 2-Incitus.

Race 8: \$5 WPS 2-I'llhandalthe cash. \$5 Exacta 8-Got Stormy/2-I'llhandalthe cash.

Race 10: \$20 WP 2-Red Knight.

Race 11: \$10 WP 9-Imprimis.

Charles Bedard

"Rob will never learn with these betting challenges."

Race 7: \$5 Daily Double 1-Mitchell Road, 3-Tapit Today, 7-Lady Apple with 8-Got Stormy, 11-Kimari.

Race 8: \$4 Exacta 8-Got Stormy, 11 Kimari with 5-Change of Control, 6-Mentality, 8-Got Stormy, 11-Kimari.

Race 9: \$10 Exacta 10-Fauci with 4-County Final, 6-Bodenheimer, 8-Cowan.

Race 11: \$5 Exacta 3-Front Run The Fed with 10-Richiesinthehouse, 11-Archidust, 16-Admiral Lynch.

Rob Whitlock

"I'll let my picks speak for themselves."

Race 2: \$40 Win 1/1a-DeVaux entry.

Race 3: \$2 Trifecta Box 6-Hellorhighwater, 1-Sharecropper, 3-Logical Myth.

Race 8: \$2 Trifecta Box 1-Intuicao, 8-Got Stormy, 10-Jakarta.

Race 10: \$2 Trifecta Box 5-Arklow, 6-Postulation, 10-Zulu Alpha.

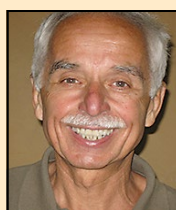
Race 11: \$20 Win 9-Imprimis. \$2 Exacta 9-Imprimis with 2-Stubbins, 4-Totally Boss.

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Kentucky Downs – Saturday, September 12

the
Power
grid



**John
Shapazian**



**Tom
Law**



**Charles
Bedard**



**Rob
Whitlock**

Race #

1	Keep Your Distance Heaven Escape Miss Pinkerton	Trip The Queen Keep Your Distance Heaven Escape	Keep Your Distance French Rose Trickizar	Keep Your Distance Trip The Queen Queen Maxine
2	Summer Palace Devaux entry Glynn County	Glynn County Summer Palace Beachwalker	Devaux entry Beachwalker Casanova Kitten	DeVaux entry Glynn County Capital Call
3	Bourbon In May Sharecropper Logical Myth	Bourbon In May Bayou Prospector Hellorhighwater	Bourbon In May Bayou Prospector Hackberry	Hellorhighwater Bourbon In May Logical Myth
4	One Fast Orb Magic Solution Klayton's Kandy	One Fast Orb Scarabea Golden Voice	One Fast Orb Bold Article Scarabea	Scarabea One Fast Orb Golden Voice
5	Tide Of The Sea Marshall Law Proquestor	Tide Of The Sea Captain Hardship Midnight Jostar	Tide Of The Sea Buy Me Candy Hail To The Chief	Tide Of The Sea Marshall Law Captain Hardship
6	Private Island Wentru Calumet entry	Incitatus Bluegrass Pharoah Catman	Private Island Bluegrass Pharoah Incitatus	Incitatus Calumet entry Wentru
7	Regal Glory Mitchell Road Secret Message	Regal Glory Secret Message Tapit Today	Tapit Today Mitchell Road Lady Apple	Regal Glory Princess Causeway English Affair
8	Into Mystic Got Stormy Cariba	Got Stormy I'llhandaltheCash Kimari	Got Stormy Kimari Change Of Control	Intuicao Got Stormy Jakarta
9	Fauci Outadore County Final	Fauci Outadore County Final	Fauci Cowan County Final	Fauci Outadore County Final
10	Zulu Alpha Arklow Standard Deviation	Red Knight Zulu Alpha He's No Lemon	Zulu Alpha Arklow Red Knight	Arklow He's No Lemon Zulu Alpha
11	Kanthaka Totally Boss Stubbins	Imprimis Kanthaka Totally Boss	Front Run The Fed Richiesinthehouse Archidust	Imprimis Totally Boss Stubbins



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Strong Leadoff

Two yearlings reach seven-figure mark as gross hits \$61.7 million

BY TOM LAW

Two yearlings sold for \$1 million or more and 17 others brought \$500,000 or more during Fasig-Tipton's Select Yearling Showcase that started the delayed summer yearling sale season against the backdrop of uncertainty caused by the ongoing health and economic crisis due to coronavirus pandemic.

Fasig-Tipton, which consolidated its July select, Saratoga select and Saratoga New York-bred yearling sales into the two-day auction at its Kentucky base, reported sales on 348 of the 525 yearlings offered for \$61,765,000. The sale's average price came in at \$177,486 and a median of \$120,000, strong numbers considering the uncertainty that also led to a 33.7 buyback rate.

In post-sale statements, Fasig-Tipton President Boyd Browning Jr. paid credit to buyers who turned out to inspect and purchase yearlings under strict health and safety protocols and sellers for staying loyal to the Lexington auction house and putting a product out in a sale that no one could have imagined at the start of the year.

"I've got to take my hat off to my team," Fasig-Tipton President Boyd Browning Jr. said. "If anybody could have imagined six months ago – no



Fasig-Tipton

Fasig-Tipton's Kentucky sales grounds were busy over the two days of select yearling sales.

Gulfstream (2-year-old) sale, no July yearling sale, no Saratoga sale, no New York-bred sale – and we'd be sitting here tonight and have sold \$60 million worth of horses over the last two days I think most people would have called B.S. on it.

"They stayed in the buggy with us. There were a lot of days when people would say, 'What are we going to do?' I'd say, 'Hell, I don't know.' We're going to continue to try to find answers, we're going to continue to do the right thing every day. When we make a decision we're going to put our heart and soul into it and try to do the very best that we can."

Each session featured a seven-figure yearling, with the topper coming on Day 1.

Robbie Medina, former longtime assistant to Hall of Fame trainer Shug McGaughey and now working on his own and as a trainer for Blackwood

Stable in Lexington, signed a \$1.5 million ticket for Hip 232, a filly by Quality Road from the family of Giant's Causeway, for Joe Allen.

Consigned by Hill 'n' Dale Sales Agency, the filly is out of the 2014 Irish One Thousand Guineas winner Marvellous, a daughter of Galileo and the Storm Cat mare You're so thrilling, a full-sister to Giant's Causeway. The filly was bred by Opren-dale, Chelston and Wynatt, associates and affiliates of Coolmore Stud.

The second day saw Hip 400, a son of American Pharoah bred by Chris and Bayne Welker, sell for \$1.25 million.

Purchased by Marette Farrell on behalf of K. C. Weiner's Speedway Stable, the colt is out of the Victory Gallop mare Swingit and a half-brother to

Continued On Page 43



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– Sean Clancy, Riverdee Stable

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Fasig-Tipton —

■ Continued from page 42

multiple graded-stakes placed and \$1,278,0280-earner Neolithic and a winner who provided a timely update six days before the sale.

Travel Column, a filly by Frost-ed out of Swingit bred by the Welk-ers and Denali Stud and sold for \$850,000 at last year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga select sale, broke her maiden on the Kentucky Oaks Day undercard for owner Larry Best's OXO Equine and trainer Brad Cox. Denali Stud consigned Travel Column at Saratoga and the \$1.25 million colt Thursday.

American buyers dominated the upper levels of the market with many familiar names on the results sheets, including SF Racing, Starlight Stables, Madaket Stables, Robert and Lawana Low, Mike Ryan, Albaugh Family, West Point Thoroughbreds, Stonestreet Stables, Courtlandt Farm, OXO Equine and Ken McPeck among those purchasing yearlings for \$500,000 or more.

The sale opened with a preferred

portion of New York-breds — many that would have gone to the two-day Saratoga New York-bred sale — and Fasig-Tipton reported sales on 73 of those yearlings for \$5,572,000. The New York-bred section was topped by Hip 135, a colt by Tiznow out of the Gilded Time mare Eternal Grace purchased by Sackatoga Stables for \$300,000.

"We were going to do everything we possibly could to create the most viable marketplace under the circumstances that we could," Browning said. "For the most part we did that. We demonstrated there is viability in the marketplace. It's not easy. I'm not going to kid you, you all know it's not easy. Frankly there's nothing in the world that's easy right now. But the demise or the 'death of the marketplace' has been greatly exaggerated. There is activity, there is a viable market. It's selective. It's been selective. You've heard me say 1,000 times for 30 years how selective the market is and it continues to be selective. But there is viability and there is hope."

Fasig-Tipton next goes to Maryland for its Midlantic fall yearling sale Oct. 5 and 6.



Fasig-Tipton

The sales-topper is a Quality Road filly purchased by Joe Allen.

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Big Test

12-day yearling sale begins Sunday with optimism despite Covid

BY MELISSA BAUER-HERZOG

Sunday the eyes of the industry turn to Keeneland with the two-week September yearling sale starting at noon and a half-sister to last weekend's Grade 1 Hopeful Stakes winner Jackie's Warrior the first horse through the ring.

In a year where nothing is normal, the September sale starts just three days after the Fasig-Tipton Selected Yearling Showcase wrapped up. Two seven-figure yearlings topped that sale and Mill Ridge Farm's Price Bell expects the healthy trade to continue into next week.

"I appreciate the effort both Fasig-Tipton and Keeneland have taken to work together on screening protocols and on scheduling, it really has gotten people here," Bell said during Fasig-Tipton's closing session Thursday. "The grounds have been busy, there have been people here to buy horses, there's been good trade and hopefully it sets the tone to go right into Keeneland September. It's been excellent."

Sending five yearlings to Fasig-Tipton, Mill Ridge has another 49 for Keeneland's six-book sale. Bell said Covid-19 made it challenging getting horses ready for the sale.

"Covid had the greatest effect in the work leading up to this time," he said. "As we started yearling prep on the farm, we had the spikes in town that affected some team members with mandatory quarantine. You already have visa restrictions and labor



Tod Marks

Breeders' Cup Classic winner Vino Rosso's full-brother is part of the Keeneland September catalogue.

challenges then you sprinkle in people that got sick – and thankfully they were able to overcome.

"The perspective really is how lucky we are that we're here, and how lucky we are that our friends, co-workers, family members have not been tragically impacted by the disease. But within that, work was impacted because we had mandatory quarantines and people were sick from the farm. You combine that with an already short staff and just to get here has felt like an incredibly tough year in any sort of circumstance."

Despite those challenges, Bell is excited with how the horses have rounded into form.

One favorite is Hip 396, a filly by American

Pharoah out of Smart Shopping. He expects to see plenty of updates to the filly's pedigree in coming years and admits she's a little extra special with her breeders being good friends of the Bell family.

"She's the first foal of a young mare. Her breeder's family was my grandmother's best friend, Tolie Otto, and her daughter Audrey," he said. "This is the second generation of the family that we're raising for the Otto family and she's just the most elegant, beautiful, lovely filly with a lot of active pedigree behind her. She's one that if we look up and she's offered in a November sale in two to three years that the family is going to totally change be-

Continued On Page 45

SPEECH

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Keeneland —

■ Continued from page 44

cause there are so many producing daughters under [Smart Shopping's] first dam."

The one thing buyers can't expect from the Mill Ridge consignment is its normal bowl of peanuts or rum cake, though Bell joked they may have a bit of cake they can bring out on special request.

"We've unfortunately pared back on places for congregation just to try and be respectful," he said. "We may have a little bit of rum cake we're happy to bring out individually sliced but as far as having a congregation point, we don't have that."

John and Tanya Gunther of Glennwood Farm won't be able to travel from Canada for the sale, but they tried to make it easier on potential buyers already in Lexington by hosting more on-farm inspections.

That's something many farms in the area have done more of this year, the idea coming due to the early uncertainty of how sales-ground inspections would work.

"We don't normally do a lot of private inspections but this year we've done a handful," Tanya Gunther said. "That was purely to facilitate being able to show horses amid the uncertainty of how the sales process was going to go. So we elected to do more private showings because of that."

While the Gunthers are disappointed not to be attending, Tanya is happy with the yearlings they will present. Led by last year's Breeders' Cup Classic winner Vino Rosso's full-brother as Hip 305, the 18-strong consignment moves them closer to their goal of a mostly Book 1 and 2 group of yearlings.

"I'm quite pleased with the quality," she said. "We've been trying to get to where [our consignment is] Book 1 or 2 horses only. That's always a hard task when you're breeding. You can do your best mating plans but they don't always come out in a way that leads to a Book 1 horse or even a Book 2 horse. This year we have 12 of 18 in Books 1 and 2, which I think is a step in the right direction."

The consignment includes a variety of horses that will appeal to different buyers, though Gunther says that is a reflection of the types of horses they prefer more than anything.

"We don't try to aim for a portfolio for buyers, it's just that we like turf and we like dirt and we have both types of mares in our broodmare band," she said. "Some of which may be more crossover types where you could think about dirt or turf depending on who you breed them to. While we do have different types for different buyers, it's not that we plan to have a smorgasbord. We just try to breed the best horse we can."

Continuing the overall theme from buyers and consignors alike, Gunther is appreciative that Keeneland has found a way make sure the sale goes on.

"They did what they needed to do, they've created the best protocol policies necessary to make sure that the sale goes ahead," she said. "If they had not done what they've done, it would have put the sale at risk, which would have been a very dismal result for everybody — buyers and sellers — so while they went above and beyond in a way, it was needed in this particularly difficult environment."

Keeneland starts earlier than usual this year with Book 1 Sunday at noon followed by a Monday session starting at the same time. Books 2 through 6 move to a 10 a.m. start Wednesday after a dark day Tuesday. The sale concludes Friday, Sept. 25.



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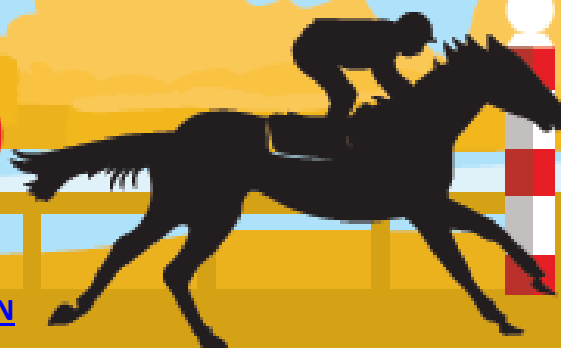
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guestcolumn

BY MICHAEL TROMBETTA JR.

In a usual year, pulling into Saratoga in mid-July would be the beginning of the best part of summer, but this year I didn't know what to expect.

I didn't know what it would be like at the track. I didn't know if it would be any fun. I didn't know what life outside of the track would be like. I decided to make the best of it no matter what.

I woke up almost every morning to go to the track and watch the horses train and help out around the barn. I got to see most of the familiar faces of Saratoga, even though they were all behind masks, and I was with all the horses every day.

We started off the meet fantastic, winning two races in just two days. Sometimes two wins could take us all meet.

After that, and being at the track for a few days, I knew that the summer would still be fun and exciting even with everything that's going on in the world. Little did I know this was just the beginning of the excitement.

The meet continued and I went to the track every morning, went back when we had horses in, hung out with friends and got to do many of the fun things Saratoga had to offer.

We would go out to the lake during dark days and enjoy food at all the different restaurants in Saratoga. We'd sit at home some days and watch Saratoga Live. There turned out to be a lot more things to do up there this year than I thought.

We continued through the meet and got a few seconds, some thirds and some fourths. Then came the end of August when we got a few opportunities at some stakes. We were lucky enough to hit the board quite a few times, and Aug. 29 we took a shot at the Grade 1 Forego with Win Win Win.

The race came up as one of the best races of the meet. Stacked with Grade 1 horses, the Forego definitely lined up to be a wonderful race. We woke up extra early that day to get to the track and did our usual things to get ready for the big race. We also

Amazing Summer



had Premier Star running in the Grade 2 Amsterdam, which made the day even more exciting.

Forecasts called for rain all day, which was unfortunate but not a huge deal. We went back to the track in the afternoon and it actually cleared up and was beautiful.

When we made it to the paddock for Premier Star's race the nerves finally set in. Seeing all the other accomplished horses in the paddock definitely made me excited and anxious. Premier Star ran really well, finishing third behind two very good horses in Basin and Yaupon. It was no surprise as the clouds started to return because well . . . Saratoga weather is unpredictable as any.

The clouds started to roll in about the same time the horses did for the Forego. It was a crazy experience hearing phone alarms going off signaling tornado warnings, the skies becoming significantly darker and hearing the radios saying the horses were going to go straight to the gate.

Looking around to see how this whole field of accomplished horses, you look and see a Grade 1 winner here, a Grade 1 winner there, and the excitement raises.

We made our way back toward the clubhouse as it started to pour. The muddy track instantly makes you wonder how the horses are going to handle it and it instantly made me flashback to the Kentucky Derby last year when it was muddy as can be.

A few minutes felt like a year in between the pad-

dock and the gate. And then they broke from the gate and from there it felt like it happened in two seconds.

It was all a blur, and literally too.

You couldn't see anything at all.

As he faded back into what seemed to be a different universe I lost all hope. I turned to my friend Alex and said, "We came all the way up here for this?"

Hoping nothing went seriously wrong I looked across the track but couldn't see a thing.

Not until the camera panned out into the stretch. I expected to see him jogging along not going anywhere, but it was just the opposite. He was flying. He went so wide that he went out of the screen again and then came back, passing horses one by one and got to the point where there was hope again, and a lot of it.

As he got closer and closer and closer I went into shock.

Realizing what just happened was insane.

And in that moment when he was coming down the lane it felt like everything was back to normal. Being surrounded by a bunch of screaming people rooting him on. It felt like a normal year for once. And then Win Win Win lived up to his name and everyone went crazy.

As we went out to the winner's circle getting absolutely soaked there was a rainbow that crossed over and that evening turned out to be a picture-perfect ending to the Saratoga meet. The uncertain Saratoga meet turned out to be certainly amazing.

Michael Trombetta Jr., 16, is a junior at John Carroll High in Bel Air, Md. He worked for his father, trainer Michael Trombetta this summer and played a role in the barn's record of three wins, a second and three thirds from 20 starts with purses of \$310,997. He also contributed photos to The Saratoga Special.

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Something Special

People often preach “living in the moment,” but I’ve learned that there is something special to be discovered in embracing familiar experiences at a different stage of life.

“Reflect on your experience.”

Where do I begin? Perhaps the end . . .

I’ve never been one to procrastinate, but this time around I managed to pack my whole life into a midsize SUV in just a couple of hours the evening before I left for my last year of college. I guess the fourth time’s a charm.

My last day in Saratoga began at dawn, and I hadn’t set a pre-sunrise alarm since I tragically missed my flight to Morocco in the spring of 2019. You would think that the anticipation of new experiences would wake me from my dreams, but unfortunately that wasn’t the case. Waking up on Aug. 22, 2020, I realized that the anticipation of tradition is what keeps me up at night, and the distinct nostalgia in feeling something familiar at a different stage of life is what opens my eyes.

It was another early morning with chilly orange skies, as I woke to the plan of watching horses exercise. With an empty stomach, I raced the clock chasing my first and last Saratoga sunrise of the season. I was in pursuit of promotional content and a meaningful beginning to the end of my last full-time Saratoga summer.

For 40 minutes, I stood pressed against the rail watching Saratoga’s celebrities prepare for triumph with the backdrop of a colorfully painted sunrise. As the sky faded to clear blue, my phone was full of more than satisfactory content. I had the whole day ahead of me, but I wasn’t ready to say goodbye, and



Susie Raisher

there was plenty of time before I had plans to meet my best friend for our traditional farewell lunch at Iron Roost in Ballston Spa.

At that point, I asked myself “Where do I end?” Perhaps the beginning...

It only felt right to conclude this chapter of my life by sitting in the box seats of an empty racetrack enjoying the bittersweet taste of a distant childhood memory in a bagel sandwich from Uncommon Grounds. So, that’s exactly what I did.

My order evolved from apple juice and a plain bagel toasted with sausage, egg and cheese to iced tea and the same sandwich but on an everything bagel instead. Because a more seasoned soul curates a more seasoned pallet.

Entering the main gate off of Union Ave with a media pass at 20 years old, I felt the same excitement as the wide-eyed toddler running through the clubhouse at dawn, hungry for more than just

breakfast. Hungry for something...you know... special.

Just like each memory I’ve made in Saratoga, every bite was more savory than the last.

With a stomach full of emotions and a heart full of gratitude, I decided to take the scenic route home with the windows down and Dave Matthews Band playing at maximum volume. During this impromptu victory lap around the town that built me, I saw my life flash before my eyes. It wasn’t a near-death experience, but rather a moment of deep reflection in which I was reborn with a new perspective.

Earlier this year, I felt like my growth to adulthood was going to be stunted after I learned I wouldn’t be returning to college beyond spring break, but now I can see the reality of it all.

I was brought home to engage with my memories so that I could write the most transformative chapter in my personal history to date.

And now, as I sit at the desk of my college apartment in Connecticut reflecting on this pivotal season of life, I ponder the same question that inspired the marketing vision for the 20th season of The Saratoga Special.

What makes Saratoga special?

This summer, The Saratoga Special is what made Saratoga special to me.

A senior at Quinnipiac University, Sami Loud was a marketing intern for The Saratoga Special in 2020. Well, she was actually the marketing department, and helped us reach new readers and explore new ideas in a strange, but productive, summer. Thanks Sami, don’t forget us.

Tod Marks photo



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Missing Saratoga

I saw the races, but missed Saratoga.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. I'll take what I can get. After all, Saratoga is the greatest race meet in the world. The best horses, the best jockeys, the best trainers competing in the best races anywhere at the prettiest track in America.

I'm not talking about a few days' event like the Oaks-Derby Weekend they have in Kentucky somewhere. Or the two days of Breeders Cup races somewhere in the fall. Or a single billion-dollar race at Gulfstream. Royal Ascot? I've been there, and seriously, Saratoga beats Ascot like we beat the British in 1777 at . . . Saratoga.

No, I'm talking about a real horse race meet – a few solid weeks of great racing.

Del Mar? It's nice, but to me it always felt more about celebrities and brand-name designers than about horse racing.

So I stand by my statement: the best horses, the best jockeys, the best trainers, the greatest race meet in the world. And all of those elements were here:

We had the Ortiz brothers fighting for the jockey championship; we had Rosario, Saez and Hall of Famers Castellano and John Velazquez all riding. Saratoga had nine of the top 10 jockeys in North America.

Trainers? Again – nine of the current top 10 in the country ran horses at Saratoga. They included Todd Pletcher and Chad Brown, who battled like Ali and Frazier for the championship that eventually went to Todd. (I'm sure there is a more 21st century simile I could use rather than Ali-Frazier, but yes, I guess I live a bit in the past.)

And the horses and races themselves.

Paris Lights nosing Crystal Ball after a stretch duel in the Coaching Club American Oaks. Vexatious beating Midnight Bisou in the Personal Ensign. Serengeti Express winning the Ballerina. Gamine running away with the Test. Swiss Skydiver dominating the Alabama. What a year for the girls.

On the male side, there was an Improbable Whitney. And an even more improbable Forego with Win Win Win from 17 lengths back in the rain and then in front of the winner's circle being bowered by a magical rainbow. There was the sprint ace Volatile, and Jackie's Warrior winning the Saratoga Special and the Hopeful as the preeminent 2-year-old.

And then, there was the star of the show, Tiz The Law. I was standing in a group of maybe 20 reporters, trainers and assistants, grooms with plastic pails of water and sponges near the finish line when the hometown hero went under the wire to win the Travers. It was something to see, something to feel. But so were all the races.

Because I had that precious Saratoga Special press pass and had my temperature taken every day, I got to see in person the greatest race meet in the world in a year when almost no one else was allowed to.



For me, this year proved that Saratoga isn't just the races. Because, yes, the races were great.

But Saratoga was missing. I can't tell you what that means exactly; I can't define it, because it wasn't just the mere lack of a crowd.

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Last year, at the age of 75 working for The Special as the world's oldest intern (a record I broke this year when I turned 76) I wanted to do a story on life in the backstretch. I wandered the barns and basically talked to whoever would talk to me.

It was then that I met and interviewed a young exercise rider named Makaia Carpenter. I asked her for 10 minutes and she gave me a half hour. Her enthusiasm was absolutely infectious (if I'm still allowed to use that word this year.)

"There wasn't a lot of money for riding lessons in our family," she told me. "My mother is a teacher, but she got a job cleaning stables on the weekends. Through that she met some people and hooked me up with a trainer and I got a few lessons and that decided me. By the time I was 11 I knew that this is what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to ride horses."

She loved living on the backstretch and told me they all looked out for one another because "this whole backstretch community is about caring for horses, that's what makes it so tight." Makaia did not say "taking care of horses," she said "caring for horses."

This year when I was doing a story about the backstretch under Covid-19, I went to talk to her again. Last year she was riding for trainer Nick Zito and obviously loved it so I was surprised to see that

this year she'd gone freelance and was working for a variety of trainers. I asked why she'd made the move.

"It was hard. I mean I can never thank Nick enough for giving me the chance," she said. "And I loved the horses and people I worked with there, but I really want to get better. Each trainer trains differently and I'm learning new things from each of them. Honestly, I'm a better rider now than I was a year ago, but I'm still green. And I want to be better next year."

I had asked her for 20 minutes this time. We were sitting on the Whitney Viewing Stand overlooking the Oklahoma Training Track and as I was getting near the end of my questions I checked my watch; somehow 45 minutes had passed. I was about to apologize for taking so much of her time when Makaia started to apologize to me, "I'm sorry I know you said 20 minutes, but when I get talking about my horses and riding I guess I just get carried away."

"You know I work seven days a week, but when I first left Nick I wanted to take a couple of weeks off and go to where I grew up near Glens Falls. I wanted to spend some time with my two horses there and my dog and mainly my mom; obviously I owe her a lot."

"I thought it would be a nice break, but I kept waking up at 4 o'clock thinking about, and looking forward to, the horses I'd be riding that day. And there weren't any. I couldn't wait to get back to work. You know how they say, 'If you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life'? Well that's not true with us. Because what we do is hard work. But I do love it."

The last week of the season a friend who has a home that backs to the Oklahoma track invited my wife and me over to watch some morning works. Sitting there with a few people who care about racing and Saratoga, I spotted Makaia on the track riding a horse slowly back on the outside rail. She was 40 or 50 yards off and I was able to spot her because though she only weighs 115 pounds total, I'd estimate at least 20 of those pounds are hair. It stands out. I yelled her name and waved. She turned and looked in my direction not really sure who she was looking at, and I shouted my name.

She waved back enthusiastically. I doubt the enthusiasm was for me, more likely it was just for the natural joy she gets from being on a horse.

Just seeing her there made me think that maybe that's what I was missing this year. That passion. It's still there in Makaia and the people working with the horses. But it was missing this year in the stands. If we're lucky there will be an unrestricted season in 2021 full of that passion.

I hope so, because I do not intend to miss Saratoga next year.

Goodbye 20

This should be easy. The last one. Number 17 this year, instead of 34 last year. The 17th time I've sat down to type out a column that has been running for 20 years. Twenty years. Some of the early ones are shuddering, shocking, to read. If I didn't own half this paper with my brother, many would have never seen the light of day, the print of the page. The last one of the season should be the easiest, just 800 words, half a page to say goodbye. I've done it 19 times before.

This one is different. I feel like we never said hello. In the strangest of years, the strangest of Saratogas, I type from an antique table in the guest room of a farm in Virginia. Instead of the back room in our office on East Avenue. An outsider, instead of an insider. I don't recognize the view.

I've written it many times, over the first 12 summers at Saratoga, when I was a jump jockey and exercise rider, I left dissatisfied, like I had missed an opportunity, squandered a summer. Over the next 19 of The Special, I left exhausted, disheveled, spent, but always satisfied with the effort, the endeavor. This year, it's not dissatisfaction or satisfaction. I wrestle with it. Certainly disappointment. A bit of melancholy. Surrealness, for sure. Sadness, no doubt. Longing, absolutely. Emptiness, definitely. So many feelings, none of them comfortable.

I'm not alone when I write that a year of life has been stolen, certainly a summer at Saratoga has been stolen, ever slamming the notion, the realization that there are finite years in our finite lives.

Like so many, I never made it to Saratoga this summer. I never walked into the paddock and stopped, awed by a horse chiseled by God, by God. I never stopped and stared at the sunrise over Bruce Levine's barn at the Oklahoma. I never ogled over a



line of Shug's horses standing outside his barn like time had stood still with them. I never walked up and down a hero's shedrow, leaning in for an Ivy League education on horse flesh and horsemanship. I never got to walk with Jose, Javier, Johnny, Junior or Joel as fans thrust programs to be signed and they kept talking about a masterpiece on a 9-furlong canvass. I never got to traverse the 5-mile trail at the State Park with Joe and Tom Law, the ecstasy and agony after another late-night deadline. I never got to bounce into the Paddock Bar on the final Monday of the meet, a decompression, a disembarkment from a place, a time, that is so fleeting and yet so permanent.

And I write this with full appreciation that if we get out of 2020 with a summer at Saratoga as the only thing we've lost, we've done well. I type this on September 11. There is no day in any of our lives that slams home that point like September 11. So here I am writing about a stolen summer on the anniversary of a stolen, solemn day.

I remember walking into Nancy Miller's barn in Unionville, Pennsylvania, to ride Succeed. Still reeling from a turbulent summer of The Saratoga Special, our first. Sleep-deprived, deadline hungover, I was going to go for a ride on a horse who I adored, for an escape. Kay Stewart, a local veterinarian, pulled into the drive and told Miller, who I endearingly call Aunt Nancy, and me that the world was under attack. I didn't know what she meant. There was no cell phone with Internet to pepper you with reality. An FM radio was the only mobile communication.

I went for a ride, wondering about the world. It wasn't much of an escape. Hours later, I learned of the devastation, the carnage. Like everyone, I desperately tried to reach my friends – Annie, Wass, Pete, Charlie Moran – living in Manhattan and a few others near the Pentagon. Luckily, I was spared, I didn't lose anyone close to me on that terrible morning.

And here we are, 19 years later, trying to survive a turbulent time again. September 11, 2001 was a strike to the heart, a power blow, an end to the last slivers of innocence that any of us still held dear. It was strange, being removed from it all, watching from afar. It was hard to grasp, hard to digest, hard to understand. This is very different, a long slow burn of a pandemic touching all of us in one way or another, coupled with the most restless time this country has faced politically, spiritually, emotionally, at least in my lifetime. This country has certainly gotten through worse and I certainly had more confidence in its resiliency than I do right now.

Here's to meeting again in Saratoga next summer. The pandemic behind us, the sport healthier and our political divide somehow healed, or at least healing.

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The Big Picture

with Coady Photo

September Derby. Authentic and John Velazquez (right) deny a bid from Belmont Stakes and Travers Stakes winner Tiz The Law in the stretch of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs Saturday.

