

Year 23 • No. 14

Saturday, August 12, 2023

The *Saratoga*

# Special

Saratoga's Racing Newspaper since 2001



**Phil Bauer Stable Tour**  
**Saturday Stakes Previews**  
**NY-Bred Sale preview**  
**Entries & Handicapping**

## Greenskeeper

**Carl Spackler runs away with Hall of Fame Stakes**



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**Doubler.** Into Happiness (left) rallies late to win Wednesday's eighth race, her second win of the meet.



Tod Marks

## Here & There...in Saratoga

### License Plate of the Day

CONNECT, New York. The Lane's End Farm stallion had a stakes winner Friday.

### By The Numbers

**1:** Bicycle stolen (OK, maybe just taken) from The Special's office last Saturday night. Older Trek, weird frame and suspension, red-ish color, Henry Street Taproom and Saratoga Special stickers on the frame. We'd love to have it back. No questions asked. Reward. Thank you.

**1:** Woman fixing her hat in the mirror of Joe Clancy's Acura before the sales Tuesday night.

**24:** Horse vans/trailers leaving the Fasig-Tipton parking lot after dropping off New York-bred yearlings between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

**102:** Bottles of Casamigos tequila signed by jockeys to benefit the Permanently Disabled Jockeys Fund and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation.

**17:** Votes for french fries in the North Street neighborhood poll on favorite potato preparations. Fries edged mashed (16 votes) in a photo finish, followed by baked (14), hash browns and tots (in a dead heat at 10 each), gnocchi (9), au gratin (8), home fries (7), poutine (5), I don't like potatoes (4), skins (2). Knish received zero votes.

**16:** Clipboards hanging on the walls of Phil Serpe's tack room.

**10:** Sets of blinkers hanging on the wall of Serpe's tack room.

**2 (at least):** Crucial pieces of a Thoroughbred race that need electricity – the photo finish camera and video cameras – which should be enough to satisfy your curiosity about why a power outage forced the cancellation of Wednesday's fifth race.

### Names of the Day

#### Run Jalen Run, second race.

Owned by Philadelphian Joe Besecker, the 2-year-old colt is an Eagles fan. Go Birds.

#### One Giant Leap, fourth race.

Three Chimneys Farm's homebred 3-year-old gelding is out of Touch The Moon.

**Neigh Jude, sixth race.** The 3-year-old filly, a Mr. Amore Stable homebred, is out of Ju Ju Eyeballs. If she wins by a pole, Frank Mirahmadi can sing her home, "Na na na nananana, nannana . . ."

**Spinning Colors, 11th race.** Owned and bred by David Howe and Bill Parsons, the 3-year-old filly is by Hard Spun out of Kaleidoscope.



## The Saratoga Special

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### Editors/Publishers/Owners:

**Sean Clancy:** (302) 545-7713. [sean@thisishorseracing.com](mailto:sean@thisishorseracing.com) ♦ **Joe Clancy:** (302) 545-4424. [joe@thisishorseracing.com](mailto:joe@thisishorseracing.com)

**Managing Editor:** Tom Law: (859) 396-9407. [tom@thisishorseracing.com](mailto:tom@thisishorseracing.com)

**Writers:** Paul Halloran, Terry Hill, Mary Rufo, Alec DiConza, Nolan Clancy. **Photographers:** Tod Marks, Dave Harmon, Susie Raisher. **Designer:** Ruthie Bowen.

**Distribution, etc.:** Rob Whitlock, Craig Healy. **Marketing:** Samantha Loud. **Social Media:** Melissa Bauer-Herzog.

**Handicappers:** Charles Bedard, Jessica Paquette, John Shapazian, Rob Whitlock.

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# Here&There...in Saratoga

## Racetrack Shirts of the Day (Pennsylvania Edition)

Garnet Valley Wrestling.

A Zach Wheeler Phillies jersey (in the paddock of all things).

## Worth Repeating

"It's not 60 degrees in the morning when you wake in many places in the United States like it is here. Believe me, the horses appreciate it and they thrive in the environment as well."

**Fasig-Tipton President and CEO Boyd Browning Jr.**

"Perfect place to sell the right horse. It's got to be the right horse. There's no Saratoga magic for horses that doesn't belong here. We don't turn frogs into princesses. But we can sell the hell out of princes and princesses."

**Browning on the selectivity of this week's record-breaking Saratoga Sale**

"A few years ago I lost two mopeds and one bike during racing seasons . . . all three times the local police just shrugged their shoulders and said, 'Those horse vans don't go back to Belmont empty. . . .' Hope you find your bike."

**Reader Victoria, via email, with some encouraging words**

"I grew up in the Hartford, Connecticut, area so I'm very familiar with Saratoga and have been up here a bunch of times. If you want to be in racing on a national level, you've got to be here in the summer."

**Owner Bill Simon after winning the Adirondack**

"Home of Legends."

**Message on the back of Waldorf Farm's horse van outside the sales Thursday morning**

"Unbelievable. It's a different world out here."

**Former jockey Mark Enright, here from Ireland with Belmont Oaks winner Aspen Grove, on his first trip to Saratoga**

"The last few months I just enjoyed it. I knew it was coming to an end so I just enjoyed it. Put my head down, worked away and enjoyed it. The fact that there was a finishing point and I was working towards that, I suppose it took the weight off my shoulders. I was riding better than ever. Carefree. Just carefree."

**Enright about retiring in May**

"Losing weight was just torture. You lose three pounds to ride today, you have something to eat and you have to lose four pounds tomorrow to get to that weight again."

**Enright about the reasons to retire**

"I don't want to know."

**Enright when asked how much he weighed now**



Tod Marks

**Rematch.** After finished 1-2 in the Kelso July 15, Casa Creed (left) and Annapolis clash again in today's Fourstardave on the Saratoga turf.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"What is going on here?"

**Domino's Pizza driver looking for The Special's East Avenue office on the second night of the sales**



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# HIT THE SWEET SPOT

Not wishing to sugar-coat it, but **Frosted** is enjoying a lip-smacking 2023: rapid Japanese sprinter Jasper Krone (6f in a tasty 1:07-and-change) leads seven Graded Stakes horses, also including Ice Dancing and Frost Point, while **at the sales he's had juveniles reach \$900k and \$475k.** Latest yearlings selling now: just imagine...

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# Here&There...in Saratoga

## Worth Repeating

"That was a weird race."  
*Racing fan Seamus Molloy after Thursday's seventh, which wound up a match race after 10 scratches*

"That's why we have an auction."  
*Fasig-Tipton auctioneer Tom Biederman as the bids flew for Hip 228, a colt who sold for \$3.2 million Tuesday night*

"Jody, she's sticking her tongue out at you. That's what she thinks of you."

*Auctioneer Joe Mast when Hip 15, a filly by Tom's d'Etat came in the ring Monday night*

"I don't give out hollow compliments, so when I say it's great I mean it. And if you came over to my house you'd see I have every copy saved."

*Saratoga announcer Frank Mirahmadi, fan of The Special*

"I guess I'll just have to wear a blue shirt tomorrow because I'll be blue if it rains."

*The Special's Dave Harmon (fashion-plate photographer)*

The Carousel. New York-bred yearlings take their turns Friday.



Fasig-Tipton

## The Chief

The Special enjoyed a long, fun, fruitful relationship with Hall of Fame trainer Allen "The Chief" Jerkens. He filled notebooks, recorders and brains with wisdom, advice, quips, opinions, history, perspective and more for 15 seasons of this newspaper even if he wasn't sure what to make of us at the beginning. For years, we ran a daily quote. We'll try to bring one back as often as we can.

"The big outfits, if they had a good work horse in the morning but didn't run that good in the afternoon, they would keep him and work with the good horse. Some of them would use two of them to work with a good horse. If they worked a mile and an eighth, they'd have one pick em up at the half-mile pole. I saw Assault do that, he came over to Aqueduct on Thursday morning and worked a mile and an eighth with two different horses. He carried 135 pounds on Saturday."

— Trainer Allen Jerkens,  
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# STABLE TOUR

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## With Phil Bauer

Phil Bauer is a proud graduate of the Little Guys Stable Tour. The Kentucky-based trainer appeared for the first time with Fireball Shot in 2018, sharing a page with the likes of Abby Adsit, Bill Allyn, Fran Raia and Erin Wilkinson.

Let's just say he moved on from there.

Bauer returned to Saratoga this summer with another fleet of Rigney Racing's high-powered horses, bedded down in the triangle enclave near the maintenance shed inside Horse Haven. With 14 horses at Saratoga and another 12 at Churchill Downs, Bauer has produced two wins, three seconds and two thirds from 13 starts here. For the year, he's won 13 races from 67 starts. Bauer has increased his yearly earnings every year since 2016, climbing from \$303,724 to \$2,508,774 last season. This year, his runners have earned \$1,797,122.

"The key in life is opportunity and what you do with it," Bauer said. "It's been a lot of fun and I'm very, very blessed and fortunate. I realize how lucky I am. I see other people out there. It boils down to the horse, but I'm fortunate enough to get 20 horses that are well intended. I think that's a lot more than a lot of people can say. From our standpoint, being a small outfit, it's extremely gratifying that you can butt heads with the big dogs. It's no easy task and, boy, you get knocked down quite often but when you do show up and outrun them, it's very satisfying."

Bauer walked his triangle with The Special's Sean Clancy Friday morning.

"Stall to stall...?" he asked.

"Yeah, stall by stall."

**Anna's Arabesque:** The daughter of Munnings sports a win, three seconds and a third in five starts thus far. She's 12-1 in today's Galway. As for Friday morning, she was racked out as Bauer began the tour. "Second in the off-the-turf Coronation Cup opening weekend. Entered in the Galway. She's been a very honest horse for us since she came in. She was a 2-year-old that had to be left behind, just took a while for her to come together. Once she shipped in, she's been straightforward and picking up some black type in these 3-year-old heats. She's a pretty nice little filly in her own right. One that always seems to bring her race, you just hope she's good enough. She's stakes placed on both turf and dirt."

**Little Prankster:** The aptly-named daughter of Practical Joke hasn't finished worse than second in four starts. "She ran a big



race breaking her maiden on the 30th of July. She was one we were really high on all along and just took us a few starts to get her maiden broke. It was more my error than hers. We'll probably go the 1X route next, but we'll eyeball some 3-year-old stakes. Her number was pretty good, and we know she's got ability. It's just a matter of making sure she accomplishes what we think she's able to. I stretched her out after her second start, it was probably the wrong thing to do and maybe put us a race behind. In hindsight, which is the easiest sight in horse racing, sometimes you have to eat your words. I thought her second start at Churchill, the way she ran that day, it looked like she could settle and finish going two turns. Just a tad too far for her. We cut her back and she ran super. Hopefully she continues to march forward."

**Skratch Kat:** Two-time winner earned \$48,000 beating two horses in seven days here earlier in the meet. The daughter of Arrogate finished second in an off-the-turf allowance and came right back to finish third in the Grade 2 Shuvee. "It's our second year up here with her. We took full advantage of a short field the other day and was able to get her some graded black type. She's a nice little filly in her own right, been able to get to her two other than condition so that's what we'll try to knock that out next. Whether that's here or back at Churchill, just depends on the entry book. The races here have been put into a tailspin. We like the MTO angle up here because you can get those mile and an eighth races that sometimes don't fill. That will maybe be our goal with her, if we can get her one more start up here, but she ran twice in seven days so we're just trying to freshen her up again and she's responded well to it. Happy horse. Really loves it up here."

**Xigera:** Daughter of Nyquist broke her maiden here last summer, finished third in the Grade 1 Darley Alcibiades and 14th in the Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf to close her juvenile season.

This year, she tacked on an allowance at Churchill and the Tepin Stakes at Ellis. She finished sixth in the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga Oaks on soft turf, the last race run before racing was canceled Aug. 4. "She's getting a bath out there. We were one race too early on the card. I think we ran the race to appeal to the Europeans. Another one in hindsight, you wish you didn't do it. I thought she would be able to handle it but once the race was run, you knew very early on that she wasn't taking to it. She was in really, really good form and in a good cycle, we were excited to try it and it just imploded on us. We'll hit the reset button. She's a really nice filly. Graded stakes placed at 2 and a stakes winner at 3. Hopefully we can get some graded black type this season. Pretty bummed out after the race, you're so high on her, she's doing so well, just to throw it all away was frustrating. Horse racing, I guess."

**Mariah's Appeal:** Bay daughter of Distorted Humor has a win and a second in two starts. "Another one we were really high on. Broke her maiden in her first start back in January at Fair Grounds, in a situation where we didn't think three quarters was her best distance and we didn't think she was fully cranked, and she still did it. We were blown away; her ability got her there. She actually blew a shoe and ran the whole race on three shoes. We had to give her a little break. Came back and was maybe a little stronger. The other day, looked like a winner turning for home, got a little lost, being her second start, hit the front and looked around. The winner was a 4-year-old winning her fifth race. That might have been more to do with seasoning. Really, really nice filly. We're excited to run her back except there's nothing in the book."

**Played Hard:** The star of a deep barn, the 5-year-old daughter of Into Mischief won allowance races here in 2021 and 2022. She

**Continued On Page 10**



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## Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 8

started the year with a bang, winning the Grade 1 La Troienne Stakes at Churchill before finishing third in the Grade 1 Ogden Phipps at Belmont Park. She breezed 5 furlongs on the main track in 1:00.05 Thursday. “We had a real deep work trying to get ready for the Personal Ensign. We missed about two weeks with her, she got sick right before the Shuvee. With that, we needed to make sure we got a read on where we were at, fitness level and we did that yesterday. She seemed to bounce out of it well. We’ll see how she trains going forward. Our goal was to win a Grade 1 with her, and she knocked that out. That was the highlight of our career so far. You hope these horses who come in at 2 end up like her. She’s been so consistent and so fun to have in the barn. It was very, very satisfying to see her get the Grade 1, so many horses never get it and probably have the ability to do it. To say she’s a Grade 1 winner is pretty special. Powerful thing. She’s got pedigree behind her, that’s even more exciting. I guess you could say we’re in the early stages of the broodmare band, we’ve pretty much sent everything that showed some ability down there. Now you’re getting horses with pages. We’re going to get to a point where we’ll start culling but we’re probably still two or three years away from that.”

**Buchu:** Two-year-old filly nibbled on a reporter’s notebook Friday morning. She’s earned two thirds in two starts thus far. “Here’s a little homebred. She RNA’d at the September sale last year so we hung onto her. At the sale, she was a small individual, but she went to Ocala and grew a lot of leg. She’s one I was excited to bring up here and maybe take the same path as Xigera, run on the grass, but we got rained off and still ran a credible third. Our goal is to get her on the grass. Being a Justify out of a Galileo mare, we think she’ll really appreciate it. The only factor now is getting in, there are a couple the last couple of weeks here. We’ll see if can get a little entry luck and see if we like the grass. She’s real sweet. When my kids are up here, they just love her.”

**The Prince’s Spur:** Bauer and Rigney claimed the son of Cairo Prince out of a winning race here last summer. “He’s been a bit of a bridesmaid for us. Runs well, just hasn’t been able to get the win. We’ll keep knocking at the door. He’s a very consistent horse, just have to find him the right spot. The a-other-than condition the other day, you never know when the jurisdictions collide with Kentucky and New York, the New York horses won that heat. We were just a little bit of a cut below them. Still a decent horse in his own right, we should win a few races with him.”

**Lead Pony:** The big chestnut was finished for the day. “This is Tony the Pony. We’re leasing him from the Dutrows for the meet. He’s been a great asset for us up here. Our pony at Churchill needed a break so it worked out well. He’s a really

good pony, well behaved. Carries his weight well. We threw our kids up on him and Ashley, my wife, was like, ‘I think he’s over 17 hands.’ He’s big. But he’s light.”

**Ludwig:** A graduate of the Fasig-Tipton selected yearling showcase in 2020, the son of Mastery won here Aug. 4. “It was Mastery’s first crop. Paid \$450,000 for him. Another one, we were able to get his maiden broke up here. Change of equipment, we gelded him before we came up and added the blinkers. He ran great. He’s one of the prettier horses in the barn. One you always told yourself, ‘This horse has got to be good.’ He’s a happy horse right now. Maybe get one more into him before we head home but it all depends on the condition book. With Churchill not starting until mid-September, it kind of puts you in limbo.”

**Warrior Johnny:** Four-year-old son of Cairo Prince won an allowance race at Churchill in June before finishing third in the Hanshin Stakes at Ellis July 2. He’s breezed three times here this summer. “He’s had bad entry luck up here. He’s ready to rock and roll. He worked with Played Hard yesterday. The three-other-than dirt race won’t fill. We MTO’d him one time and they stayed on. We’re flirting with some ideas. Once he turned 4 and matured, he’s come into his own. He’s had a good year so far. To me, I told Mr. Rigney, that race was visually impressive based on the conditions and the way the track was playing.’ Hopefully we’ll get a race for him sooner than later. If he runs to his training, he should be competitive.”

**Arro Smash:** The son of Arrogate is 0-for-2 so far. “We shipped him up from Kentucky and ran off the van. He was training really well down there, but he didn’t run a jump that day. Maybe he didn’t take to running off the van, so we’ve let him settle in and maybe give him another start before we head home. He acts like he’s got some ability but he’s a horse that never really grew. Got a pretty way of moving. He’s like a big kid.”

**Kigali:** Chestnut son of Hard Spun broke his maiden at Ellis in June. “He ran in an off-the-turf stake opening weekend. It was off a maiden win, he’s another, with hindsight, maybe we swung too hard but sometimes it works out when you try. He’s got a lot of ability; one we’ve always been high on him, but he just struggles a little bit mentally to absorb things. Very talented horse. We’re pointing for a 1X. It seems like the older he gets, a little bit better he gets.”

**Such Sounds:** The daughter of Cairo Prince finished ninth here July 26. “We’ve tried her in a couple of marathon turf heats. She broke her maiden at Keeneland, and you thought, ‘All right here we go, we’ve finally figured out her spot.’ But she’s been a little disappointing in her last two. She had an excuse at Churchill with a bad trip, but the run up here was a no-excuse effort. We’ll figure out a spot for her. Being 4, we’ve given her a lot of opportunities to come around but sometimes they don’t turn out the way you want them to.”



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# Slight Tweak

Rhyme Schemes eyes Grade 2 as part of busy Saturday lineup

BY TOM LAW

Norm Casse took a different approach with his young horses he hoped could make it to Saratoga this summer, along with a pivot in training plans for those and others that did make the journey.

Casse hopes both tweaks yield more success for the small string he brought for the 2023 meet when he sends out odds-on favorite Rhyme Schemes in today's Grade 2, \$200,000 Saratoga Special Stakes. Owned by Pura Vida Investments, Rhyme Schemes comes off a 9 1/2-length victory in a 5 1/2-furlong maiden race June 15 at Ellis Park. The 2-year-old son of Ghostzapper won that day in 1:02.82, not far off the track record of 1:02.31 set two years ago.

## SARATOGA SPECIAL PREVIEW

"He was fortunate enough to run at Ellis Park where it was a little speed biased that weekend but he beat a really good field of horses," Casse said. "They weren't going to beat him regardless of how the track was playing. Now it's just a matter of seeing if he can do it here at Saratoga. If he runs that race, he's going to be very tough to beat."

Rhyme Schemes drew post six of six in the 6 1/2-furlong Special. Ricardo Santana Jr., aboard for each of the colt's two starts, rides again at 4-5 on the morning line.

A \$210,000 purchase at last year's

Continued On Page 14



Coady Photo

Rhyme Schemes rolls into Saratoga off a lopsided win at Ellis Park.



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 SPENDTHRIFT

# Preview —

■ Continued from page 12

Keeneland September sale, Rhyme Schemes breezed six times before making his debut in mid-May at Churchill Downs. He finished sixth of nine in that 5-furlong event, beaten 9 lengths by Wilson Q in what's turned out to be a key race. Wilson Q came back to finish second in the Bashford Manor, runner-up Gold Sweep won the Tremont Stakes at Belmont and finished second here opening weekend in the Grade 3 Sanford and third-place finisher Pass The Hat came back in a month to break his maiden at Ellis.

Casse added blinkers to Rhyme Scheme last time out, which he said helped eliminate some of the colt's inconsistencies in his debut. Not that he fully expected a victory in that debut.

"Basically, we decided that when the first round of babies came, we decided as a team, not to fully crank them up and race them into fitness," Casse said. "Just give them experience in their first start. That was just a trial run for him, the first start. What we learned was he was really spotty, on and off the bridle and that's why we put the blinkers on him."

The way Rhyme Schemes won his last got Casse thinking about Saratoga, and specifically today's



Haul exits a Belmont maiden win for trainer Todd Pletcher.

Tod Marks

co-feature that shares the card with the Grade 1 Fourstardave Handicap and Galway Stakes.

"This is a race we penciled in as soon as he broke his maiden, we figured we give a shot to the Saratoga Special," Casse said. "He's trained really well all spring and summer and we're excited to see him run."

Casse breezed Rhyme Schemes twice between his first two starts and five times between June 15 and the Saratoga Special. Rhyme Schemes made a short walk across Union Avenue from Casse's string

in Horse Haven on the Oklahoma side to breeze a half-mile in :49.33 last week on the morning of Whitney Day.

And again, the work on the fast main track was by design.

"We changed things up this year, brought them up and started working them on the main track instead of the training track," Casse said. "The last two or three years I haven't had much success only training on Oklahoma so I switched things up and he was really good over the main track."

The change has paid dividends so far. Casse was 3-for-6 heading into today's card. Each of the three winners breezed on the main track before their runs, including the 2-year-old Classic Empire filly Empire Island that won her debut Sunday for Marylou Whitney Stables. He saddled Catalina Crush, who also breezed on the main track before his debut, to a third in Friday's seventh race, a 6-furlong state-bred maiden.

Rhyme Schemes drew to the outside of the Special's other two major players – Haul and Edified, debut winners for Todd Pletcher and Steve Asmussen, respectively.

Haul, a son of Army Mule who cost \$260,000 at the OBS April sale, won by 3 lengths in his debut July 9, closing day of the Belmont Park spring-summer meeting. Pletcher circled the Special after that

Continued On Page 16

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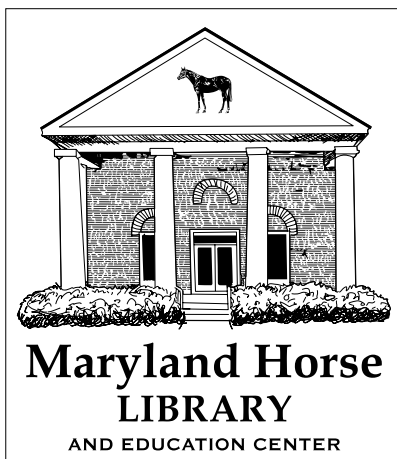
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# Preview —

■ Continued from page 14

victory, looking to add a second victory in the mid-meet juvenile stakes. He won the Special in 2013 with Corfu. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides the 3-1 second choice from post four.

Asmussen bids for his sixth Special victory with Courtlandt Farm's Edified, a son of Tapit who cost \$650,000 at last year's Keeneland September sale. He won his debut by 3 1/2 lengths at almost 10-1 July 1 at Ellis under Joel Rosario, who is back aboard today from post five at 7-2.

Woodcourt, who broke his maiden in his second start at Ellis two days after Rhyme Schemes' victory, makes his first start for trainer Brendan Walsh.

Qatar Racing, Marc Detampel and Fergus Galvin purchased Woodcourt for \$95,000 out of the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July horses of racing age sale. Previously trained by John Ennis, the son of Ransom The Moon won his second start at almost 19-1, after showing some speed before fading in his April 20 debut going 4 1/2 furlongs at Keeneland.

"He's trained great. He has it in him to be a good horse," Walsh said. "We haven't had him very long, just a couple weeks and enough time to breeze him a few times. He's worked good, trained good, I think he's a nice horse."

Bred by Michelle Lovell, who trained last year's Saratoga Special winner Damon's Mound, Wood-



Tod Marks

**In Saturday's Fourstardave, Annapolis looks to avenge a loss to Casa Creed in the Kelso July 15.**

court originally sold for \$3,000 to Ennis at last year's Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October sale.

"The boys, Fergus and Sheikh Fahad (of Qatar Racing), they don't miss too much and saw him in the sale," Walsh said. "They thought it was worth having a go with him. I can't say I disagree with them. I think he'd be very live realistically; very live to hit the board. We'll give it a go, maybe he'll show up and surprise us."

The Saratoga Special, run as the Herb Moelis Memorial in honor of the longtime head of Thoroughbred Charities of America, attracted two others in Arindel's Lasso and Les Wagner's Market Street. Lasso comes off a 3 1/2-length maiden victory for trainer Juan Alvarado at Gulfstream Park. Ed-

gard Zayas rides the son of Bretheren from post one. Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas, a three-time winner of the Special, sends out Market Street off his sixth in the Grade 3 Sanford the first Saturday of the meet. The son of Street Sense won his debut June 29 at Ellis. Jaime Torres rides from post two.

## Kelso rematch in Fourstardave

The \$500,000 Fourstardave anchors today's card and features the rematch of Casa Creed and Annapolis, 1-2 in the Grade 3 Kelso Stakes the first Saturday of the meet. Casa Creed makes his third start in the Fourstardave, after winning last year and finishing third in 2021. Owned by LRE Racing and JEH Racing Stable, the 7-year-old son of Jimmy Creed has three wins in five starts on the turf at Saratoga for Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott.

Mott goes for his sixth win in the Fourstardave, having also won it with Hap (2000), Silver Tree (2007), Seek Again (2014) and Tourist (2016). Casa Creed, with regular rider Luis Saez, is the 7-5 morning-line favorite for the 1-mile Fourstardave.

Bass Racing's Annapolis, second by a length to Casa Creed in the Kelso, is the 8-5 second choice for Hall of Fame trainer Todd Pletcher. The 4-year-old son of War Front is 2-2-0 in four starts on the turf at Saratoga, including victories in his debut in 2021 and the Grade 3 Saranac last year. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides from post four. Pletcher also sends out Em-

Continued On Page 18

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ONE MILE		
7	SEVENTH RACE	ALLOWANCE OPTIONAL CLAIMING
<small>Purse \$100,000. For Fillies And Mares Three Years Old and Upward foaled in New York State and approved by the New York State-Bred Registry Which Have Never Won \$18,000 Twice Other Than Maiden, Claiming, Or Starter or Which Have Never Won Three Races or Optional Claiming Price Of \$18,000.</small>		
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### **SAFEEN**

won the Pucker Up  
Stakes (G3) 8/6 at Ellis

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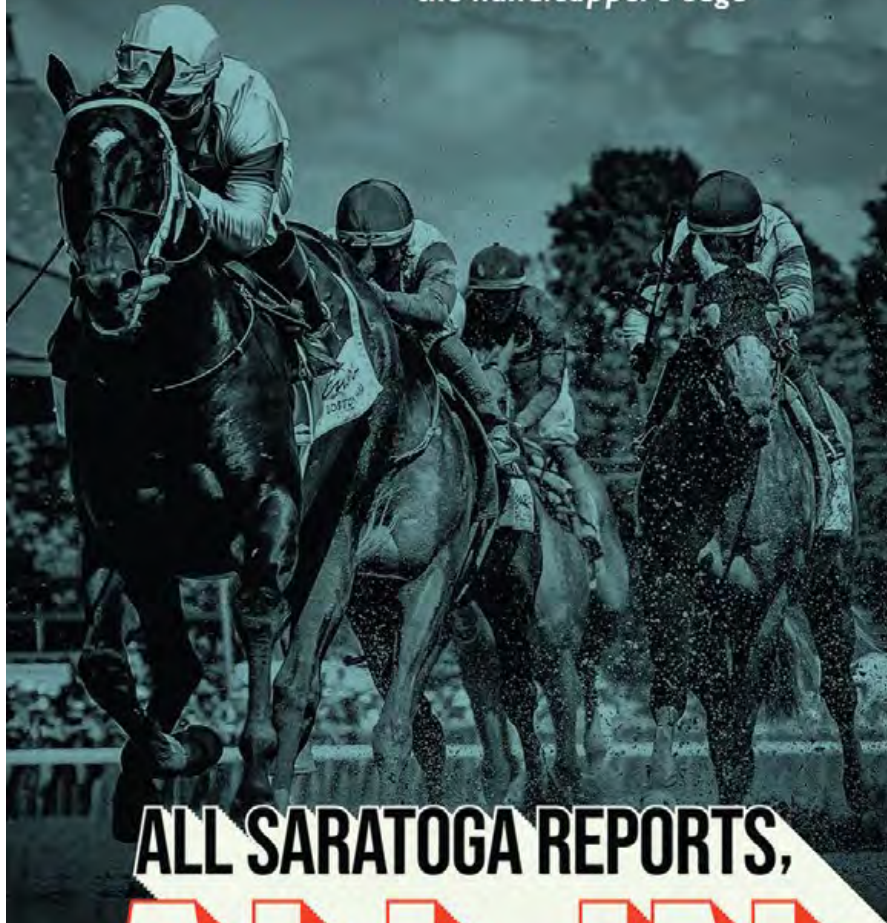
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## Preview —

■ Continued from page 16

manuel, winner of the Grade 3 Poker June 10 at Belmont. He's the 3-1 third choice from post one under Jose Ortiz.

Hall of Famer Mark Casse sends out the trio of Full Screen, My Sea Cottage, Ice Chocolat. Gary Barber owns an interest in each of the three geldings. Ice Chocolat, a Brazilian-bred son of Goldikovic, finished fourth in the Kelso and sixth in the Grade 1 Jaipur in his last two starts. So High, seventh after opening up a big lead early in the Grade 1 United Nations last time out at Monmouth Park, completes the field.

### Fillies clash in Galway

The \$150,000 Galway for 3-year-old fillies going 5 1/2 furlongs on the turf leads off the stakes three-pack, as the seventh race at 4:30 p.m.

Phil Bauer, who enjoyed a meet to remember in 2022 and is off to a strong start again this year, sends out Rigney Racing's Anna's Arabesque with hopes of upsetting the likes of Love Reigns, Stone Silent, My Sweet Affair and Love Appeals.

Anna's Arabesque started her career on turf, including a third as a maiden in the Manzelle Stakes in May at Churchill Downs, and raced in a pair of off-the-turf events in her last two starts. The daughter of Munnings finished second in the Coronation Cup Stakes last time out behind

Unified Alliance, who is entered back today as main track only for trainer Tom Morley.

Anna's Arabesque wasn't part of Bauer's strong run at Saratoga last summer, when he went 6-for-13. She didn't make her debut until early March at Fair Grounds, finishing second in a 5 1/2-furlong turf maiden.

"She's been a very honest horse for us since she came in," Bauer said. "She was a 2-year-old that had to be left behind, just took a while for her to come together. Once she shipped in, she's been straightforward and picking up some black type in these 3-year-old heats.

"She's a pretty nice little filly in her own right. One that always seems to bring her race, you just hope she's good enough. She's stakes placed on both turf and dirt."

Stonestreet Stable's Love Reigns is the 5-2 morning-line favorite for the Galway. The daughter of U S Navy Flag hasn't raced since winning the Limestone Stakes April 14 at Keeneland in her lone start of 2023. Trained by Wesley Ward, Love Reigns won last year's Bolton Landing Stakes at Saratoga after a close fourth in the Group 2 Queen Mary Stakes at Royal Ascot.

The Galway drew a field of 10 for the body of the race, with two also eligible and three main-track-only runners. The field also includes Dream Concert, Beauty Of The Sea, Isabel Alexandra, Redefined and L J's Emma. Reflexivity and Weekend Rags are also eligible. Unified Alliance, Obrigada and Cuz Ur Pretty are entered for the main track.



Dave Harmon

Love Reigns won the Bolton Landing last summer at Saratoga.

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# SARATOGA ENTRIES

Saturday, August 12.

## 1ST (1:10PM). \$88,000, MSW, 2 YO, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double

1	1	Stormy's Dreaming	D. Davis	C. Baker	12-1
2	2	Solo in Paris	A. Castillo	R. Persaud	30-1
3	3	Apollo Code	R. Santana, Jr.	J. Delgado	4-1
4	4	Strawberry Kwik	R. Gutierrez	S. Torelli	20-1
5	5	Tall Paul	J. Rosario	B. Baffert	8-5
6	6	Mama's Middie	J. Ortiz	M. Maker	7-2
7	7	Gucci Man	J. Alvarado	L. Rivelli	8-1
8	8	Quiet Wisdom	L. Saez	T. Pletcher	4-1

## 2ND (1:42PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double

1	4	All About Tonight	M. Franco	M. Maker	5-1
1a	7	Better Luck	D. Davis	J. Sharp	5-1
2	1	Revelatory	I. Ortiz, Jr.	T. Pletcher	9-2
3	2	Reverend Moon	J. Rosario	C. Clement	8-1
4	3	Good Lord Lorrie	J. Ortiz	G. Weaver	6-1
5	5	Fast Stride	L. Saez	J. D'Angelo	15-1
6	6	Smokey Smokey	R. Silvera	M. Maker	20-1
7	8	Ocean Mermaid (GB)	W. Rodriguez	W. Ward	8-5
8	9	Glacial Power	T. McCarthy	J. Camejo	10-1
9	10	King Julien	J. Lejaroux	B. Lynch	10-1
10	AE-MTO	Gypsy Mischief	M. Franco	H. Motion	6-1
11	AE-MTO	Run Jalen Run	Rider TBA	J. Sharp	12-1
12	AE-MTO	World Fair	J. Lejaroux	R. Moquett	8-1

## 3RD (2:17PM). \$70,000, STR \$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	1	Jolly Miss Jill	J. Torres	M. Giangulio	6-1
2	2	Sa Foradada	L. Saez	R. Dutrow, Jr.	3-1
3	3	Freudian	R. Santana, Jr.	R. Falcone, Jr.	5-2
4	4	Icy Reply	I. Ortiz, Jr.	J. Ferraro	5-1
5	5	April Antics	J. Ortiz	M. Kantarmaci	6-1
6	6	Mursal	M. Franco	R. Dutrow, Jr.	4-1
7	7	Yogi	D. Davis	A. Chichakly	12-1

## 4TH (2:48PM). \$64,000, CLM \$32,000, 3 YO, 6 1/2F

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double

1	1	Dangerous Ride	J. Torres	C. David	6-1
2	2	Thunderian	J. Ortiz	D. Jacobson	5-1
3	3	Commerce Comet	I. Ortiz, Jr.	S. Asmussen	3-1
4	4	Gabe	M. Franco	A. Arriaga	12-1
5	5	Kupp	L. Saez	R. Moquett	4-1
6	6	One Giant Leap	W. Rodriguez	W. Ward	2-1
7	7	Ten Cent Town	D. Davis	W. Morey	8-1

## 5TH (3:20PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double

1	1	Eliminate	I. Ortiz, Jr.	T. Pletcher	9-5
2	2	Chaperone	J. Ortiz	R. Moquett	8-1
3	3	Reynolds Channel	L. Saez	W. Mott	7-2
4	4	Hurricane Nelson	E. Zayas	G. Delgado	15-1
5	5	Deterministic	J. Rosario	C. Clement	5-1
6	6	Ridgewood Runner	D. Davis	C. Martin	6-1
7	7	Nullify	J. Torres	D. Lukas	15-1
8	8	Informed Patriot	R. Santana, Jr.	S. Asmussen	6-1

## 6TH (3:55PM). \$88,000, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 6, Daily Double

1	3	Dream On Cara	K. Davis	M. Friedman	9-2
1a	11	Foxy Cara	R. Santana, Jr.	M. Friedman	9-2
2	1	Nolita	J. Alvarado	W. Mott	5-1
3	2	Be Best	L. Saez	J. Terranova, II	12-1
4	4	Sweet Liberty	J. Davis	P. Quick	20-1
5	5	Neigh Jude	J. Ortiz	K. Breen	6-1

6	6	Better Humor Me	E. Zayas	C. Baker	15-1
7	7	Irish Crystal	M. Franco	H. De Paz	15-1
8	8	Island Rose	T. McCarthy	C. Baker	10-1
9	9	Mim	D. Davis	M. Casse	8-1
10	10	Souffle	J. Rosario	C. Clement	8-1
11	12	Richies Princess	I. Ortiz, Jr.	L. Rivelli	7-2

## 7TH (4:30PM). \$150,000, STK - THE GALWAY (LISTED), 3 YO, F, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double

1	1	Dream Concert	J. Alvarado	K. O'Connell	30-1
2	2	Beauty of the Sea	E. Zayas	J. Orseno	10-1
3	3	Isabel Alexandra (IRE)	R. Gutierrez	G. Delgado	8-1
4	4	Love Appeals	M. Franco	C. Clement	6-1
5	5	Anna's Arabesque	D. Davis	P. Bauer	12-1
6	6	Redefined	J. Ortiz	M. Lovell	6-1
7	7	L J's Emma	L. Saez	E. Kenneally	12-1
8	8	Love Reigns (IRE)	J. Rosario	W. Ward	5-2
9	9	Stone Silent	R. Santana, Jr.	S. Asmussen	9-2
10	10	My Sweet Affair	I. Ortiz, Jr.	G. Weaver	6-1
11	AE	Reflexivity (IRE)	R. Silvera	M. Maker	15-1
12	AE	Weekend Rags	J. Torres	J. Abreu	30-1
13	AE-MTO	Unified Alliance	Rider TBA	T. Morley	3-1
14	AE-MTO	Obrigada	J. Ortiz	L. Rice	5-1
15	AE-MTO	Cuz Ur Pretty	L. Saez	C. Progno	4-1

## 8TH (5:06PM). \$200,000, STK - THE HERB MOELIS MEMORIAL SARATOGA SPECIAL, 2 YO, 6 1/2F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double

1	1	Lasso	E. Zayas	J. Alvarado	15-1
2	2	Market Street	J. Torres	D. Lukas	10-1
3	3	Woodcourt	J. Ortiz	B. Walsh	10-1
4	4	Haul	I. Ortiz, Jr.	T. Pletcher	3-1
5	5	Edified	J. Rosario	S. Asmussen	7-2
6	6	Rhyme Schemes	R. Santana, Jr.	N. Casse	4-5

## 9TH (5:44PM). \$500,000, STK - THE FOURSTARDAVE, 3 YO'S & UP, 1M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	1	Emmanuel	J. Ortiz	T. Pletcher	3-1
2	2	Full Screen	M. Franco	M. Casse	30-1
3	3	My Sea Cottage (IRE)	D. Davis	M. Casse	30-1
4	4	Annapolis	I. Ortiz, Jr.	T. Pletcher	8-5
5	5	So High (GB)	R. Silvera	N. Chatterpaul	20-1
6	6	Casa Creed	L. Saez	W. Mott	7-5
7	7	Ice Chocolat (BRZ)	J. Rosario	M. Casse	8-1

## 10TH (6:17PM). \$70,000, STR \$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

1	1	Gut Feeling	L. Saez	R. Dutrow, Jr.	5-1
2	2	Forrest City	J. Rosario	W. Mott	6-1
3	3	Order of Magnitude	R. Santana, Jr.	R. Diodoro	8-1
4	4	What's Up Doc	J. Torres	R. Ginter, Jr.	8-1
5	5	Mistical Curliin	J. Alvarado	G. Rodriguez	7-2
6	6	Ciccibello	T. McCarthy	D. Duggan	9-2
7	7	Chileno	M. Franco	L. Rice	12-1
8	8	Skylander	D. Davis	A. Trites	20-1
9	9	Memphis	J. Ortiz	L. Rice	8-1
10	10	Ice Road	I. Ortiz, Jr.	J. D'Angelo	8-1

## 11TH (6:50PM). \$95,000, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

1	1	Spinning Colors	D. Davis	M. Hennig	8-1
2	2	Waterville	J. Rosario	C. Clement	7-2
3	3	Galley Head	K. Davis	R. Lerman	20-1
4	4	Stella Mars	R. Silvera	N. Chatterpaul	5-1
5	5	Lady Jasmine	R. Gutierrez	D. Donk	12-1
6	6	Solib	L. Saez	M. Maker	4-1
7	7	Latest Edition	M. Franco	T. Morley	10-1
8	8	Robyn and Eli	J. Torres	F. Abreu	20-1
9	9	Photon	I. Ortiz, Jr.	K. Breen	5-1
10	10	Rheume	T. McCarthy	C. Clement	6-1
11	AE-MTO	Luna Loca	J. Ortiz	L. Rice	9-2
12	AE-MTO	Charge Nurse	L. Saez	J. Englehart	7-2

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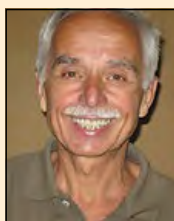
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## The **POWER** Grid



**John Shapazian**



**Tom Law**



**Rob Whitlock**



**Charles Bedard**



**Jessica Paquette**

Race	John Shapazian	Tom Law	Rob Whitlock	Charles Bedard	Jessica Paquette
<b>1</b>	Tall Paul Mama's Middie Apollo Code Ocean Mermaid	Tall Paul Quiet Wisdom Gucci Man Ocean Mermaid	Tall Paul Strawberry Kwik Stormy's Dreaming Ocean Mermaid	Tall Paul Quiet Wisdom Apollo Code King Julien	Gucci Man Apollo Code Tall Paul Good Lord Lorrie
<b>2</b>	Three Diamonds entry World Fair Mursal	Three Diamonds entry Revelatory Sa Foradada	Run Jalen Run Fast Stride Sa Foradada	Ocean Mermaid Revelatory Sa Foradada	Revelatory Ocean Mermaid Jolly Miss Jill
<b>3</b>	Sa Foradada Freudian One Giant Leap	Freudian Jolly Miss Jill Kupp	Mursal April Antics Kupp	Mursal Jolly Miss Jill One Giant Leap	Sa Foradada April Antics Commerce Comet
<b>4</b>	Kupp Commerce Comet Eliminate	Commerce Comet One Giant Leap Eliminate	Commerce Comet One Giant Leap Chaperone	Kupp Commerce Comet Eliminate	Kupp Dangerous Ride Chaperone
<b>5</b>	Ridgewood Runner Informed Patriot Nolita	Chaperone Informed Patriot Richies Princess	Eliminate Hurricane Nelson Irish Crystal	Reynolds Channel Informed Patriot Friedman entry	Eliminate Informed Patriot Souffle
<b>6</b>	Richies Princess Greeley entry Cuz Ur Pretty	Souffle Mim Love Reigns	Neigh Jude Richies Princess L J's Emma	Nolita Richies Princess Cuz Ur Pretty	Richies Princess Mim Redefined
<b>7</b>	Loves Reigns Stone Silent Rhyme Schemes	Beauty Of The Sea Isabel Alexandra Rhyme Schemes	Anna's Arabesque Stone Silent Rhyme Schemes	Redefined Love Reigns Rhyme Schemes	Love Appeals Stone Silent Edified
<b>8</b>	Haul Edified Casa Creed	Edified Haul Casa Creed	Woodcourt Haul Annapolis	Haul Edified Annapolis	Woodcourt Haul Emmanuel
<b>9</b>	Emmanuel Cicciobello Gut Feeling	Emmanuel Cicciobello Memphis	Casa Creed Emmanuel Gut Feeling	Casa Creed Emmanuel Mistical Curlin	Casa Creed My Sea Cottage Forrest City
<b>10</b>	Forrest City Charge Nurse Waterville	Forrest City Charge Nurse Waterville	Cicciobello Memphis Rheume	Cicciobello Forrest City Charge Nurse	Gut Feeling Memphis Latest Edition
<b>11</b>	Stella Mars	Solib	Robyn And Eli Spinning Colors	Waterville Photon	Waterville Spinning Colors
2023 Records	<b>70/224</b>	<b>58/224</b>	<b>58/224</b>	<b>77/224</b>	<b>41/224</b>



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# A Looper

## Carl Spackler aces rescheduled Grade 2 turf stakes for Edwards

BY NOLAN CLANCY

Last Friday, a downpour soaked Carl Spackler and the entire field of the \$500,000 Grade 2 National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame Stakes as they were in the paddock.

If you had asked him, he'd have told you the heavy stuff wasn't going to come down for quite a while. Nevertheless, NYRA made the decision to postpone the 1-mile turf stakes for 3-year-olds.

A week later, Carl Spackler was much the best as the sun shined and the turf dried, making a late run to collect his first stakes win for Chad Brown and e Five Racing.

"It didn't hurt him," Brown said, of the extra week lead up. "And I do

### HALL OF FAME STAKES RECAP

want to credit NYRA for doing the right thing and just rescheduling the race, when you're putting up half a million dollars, you never want to treat it just to get it over with, you want to treat it to put on the best horse race you can."

The chestnut son of Lope De Vega captured his second win in four starts, with two and three-month lay-offs before and after his last start in the Grade 2 American Turf Stakes at Churchill Downs on Kentucky Derby day.



Dave Harmon

Continued On Page 24

Carl Spackler heads for home in Friday's Hall of Fame Stakes.

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Above: Eugene Pechaubes (French, 1890-1967)  
*Maison Laffitte 1930 Prix Du Tibre* (detail)

## Hall of Fame —

■ Continued from page 22

“We took a shot at Churchill, and I don’t think he liked the turf,” said Bob Edwards of e Five Racing. “Jose [Ortiz] said he wasn’t keen on the turf, he was kind of moving around. We were hoping today would be a good day here and everything would dry out and we would get an opportunity.”

Carl Spackler broke cleanly from the two post and relaxed along the hedge of the inner turf course third-from-last as the field, paced by Appraise and Mysterious Night, rounded the clubhouse turn, covering the opening quarter-mile in :24.37.

Mysterious Night took over the running alone and opened a 2-length lead, ticking off the half-mile in :47.45. Gaffalione and the chestnut colt swept up Mischievous Angel, another Brown trainee, without leaving the rail.

Carl Spackler hugged the inside hedge all the way until he angled out midway through the far turn with plenty of energy left for the stretch run. (He had that going for him, which was nice.) Gaffalione rounded the lead group five wide as they moved through three-quarters of a mile in 1:11.88.

He met his stablemate Appraise with a furlong to go, but Klaravich Stables’ colt had no answer for the late charge. Carl Spackler went on to win by 2 ¼ lengths in a final time of 1:36.29.

Appraise held on to finish second under Flavien Prat, beating out More Than Looks and John Velazquez by a



Dave Harmon

Bob Edwards and jockey Tyler Gaffalione.

nose. French import Ocean Vision finished fourth under Trevor McCarthy.

The Irish-bred 3-year-old’s dam Zindaya collected Edwards and e Five Racing’s first win, a victory in the 2016 Intercontinental Stakes at Belmont. The mare by More Than Ready won two races in six starts for Edwards, and now she’s proving to be a productive broodmare.

And there’s even more to the family connection.

“You have a horse that I bred, on my first winning mare, my son-in-law’s the jockey, my daughter [Casi] is taking pictures with Adam. We’re infiltrating,” Edwards said of NYRA photographer Adam Coglianesse.

Edwards’ breeding operation Fifth Avenue Bloodstock also bred Bat Flip and General Jim, who finished eighth and ninth.

Carl Spackler went unraced at 2, as Edwards and Brown were happy to take their time with him. He broke

Continued On Page 26



Dave Harmon

Carl Spackler (2) leads the crowd home in the Hall of Fame.



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# Hall of Fame —

■ Continued from page 24

his maiden second time out in February at Gulfstream after finishing a strong second to now-Grade 1 winner Far Bridge in January.

“He was a late bloomer . . . He wasn’t going to be a 2-year-old, wasn’t going to be precocious but he looked like a racehorse,” Edwards said. “So we ran in Gulfstream for his first race, he was a little green, you know, looking around, looking at the crowd. But he got a good blow, and then Chad tightened him up, and in the second one he looked like a legit horse.”

Following an eighth in the American Turf, Brown took a step back with his colt.

“After the race at Churchill, I shipped him back home here to Belmont and the horse was just not looking well. He got sick on the trip,” Brown said. “E Five Racing, the Edwards family are always patient with their horses, I said ‘listen, let’s point him to Saratoga, get him right.’ The horse really blossomed, the last couple weeks, his coat was shining, the horse had his energy back, his last two works were excellent, and I felt even though there’s a layoff, and it’s a big race, he was ready to fire a big one.”



Carl Spackler (second from left) circles toward the front in Friday’s Hall of Fame Stakes.

Dom Napolitano/NYRA Photo

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Dave Harmon

Grannys Connection sprints to the wire in Friday's Union Avenue Stakes.

# Grandma Speed

## Grannys Connection blazes to New York-bred stakes score

BY JOE CLANCY

UNION AVENUE STAKES RECAP

It's 2:54 Friday afternoon. At Saratoga Race Course, fans light cigars, balance empanadas on a plate, slurp Modelos, decipher form and ponder whether they can cut through The Porch lunch tables on the way to the clubhouse.

Behind them, in front of an old screen door with a NO ENTRY sign near the Carmen Barrera Horsemen's Lounge, Tom Morley frets through the last few moments before the Union Avenue Stakes. The trainer's filly Grannys Connection is 2-5 in a field of five contesting the \$125,000 stakes for New York-breds and Morley looks stressed.

The gates open. A server shuffles past with a tray of dirty dishes. Mor-

ley leans left, then right, then a little forward, eyes up and on a television hanging from the ceiling. A man in billowy white shirt and navy short stands right in front of him. Morley slides right. A minute and 11 seconds later, he lets out a long, slow breath and smiles.

"I love this filly so much. She just . . . she just . . . auhh . . ." he says as she gallops out past him and the rows of tables full of Saratoga lunch customers. "To win a stake up here with any horse is great, but it's special with her. She has to overcome a lot of physical problems. They're all minor,

Continued On Page 30

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# Union Avenue —

■ Continued from page 28

but when they're this fast it just scares you every time they go out there."

If she heard any of that, Grannys Connection would tell Morley to relax. She had it all the way.

The 4-year-old daughter of Connect won her fifth race, and first stakes, to go with two seconds in seven starts while earning \$68,750 for Orpen Horses, Jack Towell Jr. and Alan Griffin. Bred by Paul Pompa Jr., Grannys Connection set fast fractions and made them stand up while winning by 1 1/2 lengths over Kant Hurry Love with Bank On Anna third after 6 furlongs in 1:11.09.

The Union Avenue win avenged a nose loss to Kant Hurry Love in the Dancin Renee Stakes at Belmont Park June 25. That day, Grannys Connection also set the pace but got caught in the final stride. The loss came after four consecutive daylight wins, by a combined 27 1/4 lengths, as the bay filly ran through her conditions to earn the stakes try.

"The last time I don't think she saw the winner until two strides before the finish," Morley said. "She's never had to run all the way to the line. She's normally winning under wraps and that filly is a very nice filly too. She was getting to us at the line."

Friday was different. From the inside post, Grannys Connection and Javier Castellano broke a quarter-step behind the rest before breezing through



Dave Harmon

**Grannys Connection stays clear of Kant Hurry Love in the Union Avenue.**

along the rail to take the lead. She led Kant Hurry Love by 2 lengths just before the first quarter-mile split of :21.89 and stayed comfortable through a half in :44.81. Kant Hurry Love tried to rally off the turn as Castellano glanced over his right shoulder and Grannys Connection hit the stretch in the

four path. The winner switched leads early in the stretch, responded to Castellano and saw out the victory as the first three didn't change order. Vallejajah made up ground late to grab fourth.

**Continued On Page 31**

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# Union Avenue —

■ Continued from page 30

Aboard for the first time, Castellano said Grannys Connection came with instructions.

“The trainer told me to be very careful because the first jump for her is not too fast, but then she can take off – you ask her, she’s going to be gone,” the jockey said with a smooch sound for emphasis. “I just had to be careful. The first jump, from the one hole, you want to come out of there. You don’t want to be back there and have somebody take your path away. Then you are behind horses and some horses get rank.”

Nobody took her path, and Grannys Kitchen didn’t get rank. She erased a half-length early deficit without working and took control.

“I let her go, I didn’t send her, she just took herself,” Castellano said. “She did it easy in a good way. I didn’t want to struggle with her and I didn’t want to send her either. Just go with the flow with her. The way she did it was very nice.”

Grannys Connection cost \$57,000 as a 2-year-old at the Ocala Breeders’ Sales Company’s March 2-year-old sale in 2021 but didn’t make her debut until December 2022. Second there, she started the four-race winning streak in her next start and continues to improve.

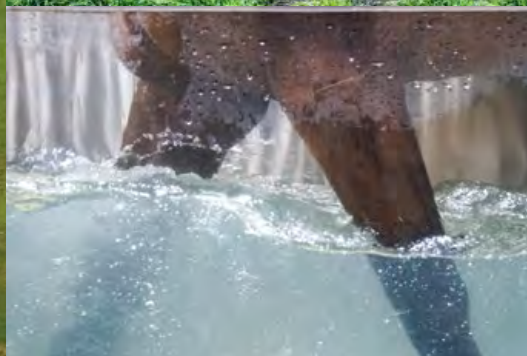
Morley will continue to fret about his filly and her health, however, and credited his staff (especially exercise rider Niko Ordenez Vilchis) with the her development.

“Feet, little niggly things, you’ve just got to watch them with her and you can’t train her hard because she’s so fast,” he said. “Niko rides her every single day and does such a good job on her. He does owe me like \$300 though because every time I tell him I want her to go in :50 (for a half-mile) or it will cost him, she goes faster. She never works in :50.”



Tom Morley.

Dave Harmon



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# Tale of Trip

## Dr Ardito enjoys outside run to end skid in NY-bred stakes

BY TOM LAW

When it comes to Dr Ardito, it's all about the trip and the timing.

The trip because the 5-year-old Liam's Map gelding doesn't like to be inside making his run. The timing because he's been ready to run since late May but couldn't without a race that fit, and other times because he's endured setbacks here and there that have prevented making an appearance at Saratoga Race Course.

None came into play Friday in the \$121,250 Evan Shipman Handicap, as Dr Ardito enjoyed an overland late run and made his Saratoga debut a winning one with an upset in the 1-mile stakes for New York-breds.

"The problem we have is there are so few New York-bred stakes races

### EVAN SHIPMAN STAKES RECAP

like this," said Mike Dubb, who co-owns Dr Ardito with Mike Caruso. "He's been in the barn since May, it's August now. He's a hard-hitter, tries every time, he's honest as can be. We know what he's capable of, he just needs to get a race and the trip. He got the trip today. It all came together."

Dr Ardito, winning for the seventh time in 10 starts, won the Evan Shipman by 1 ¼ lengths over Sheriff Bianco with champion New York-breds Bankit (third) and Americanrevolution (fourth at 2-5 odds) in the beaten

Continued On Page 33



Dave Harmon

Manny Franco looks for competition as Dr. Ardito arrives in time in the Evan Shipman.

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# Evan Shipman —

■ Continued from page 32

field. Manny Franco, aboard for all of Dr Ardito's 10 outs, rode again as the gray gelding won in 1:37.77 over the fast track.

Trainer Chad Brown, who won four races on Friday's card including the Grade 2 Hall of Fame the race before the Shipman, also praised Franco's ride.

"He has taken the time and effort to really understand this horse and any horses he's riding," Brown said. "He's a smart, young jockey and he knows what the best trip is for this horse and an opportunity came up down the backside to get him outside and follow the favorite and put him where he's happy to see if he's good enough. It was really the winning move."

Dr Ardito came into the Shipman off back-to-back defeats in the Grade 3 Westchester in early May and Commentator Stakes on Big Apple Showcase Day in late May, both at Belmont Park. He endured trouble in both starts, which came after he won the restricted Haynesfield Stakes to cap a six-race win streak dating back to April 2021.

Dr. Ardito, named for a close friend and Dubb's physician, went to the post as the 6-1 third choice in the field of five reduced by three scratches.

Franco was content to led Dr Ardito trail the field from the break out of the Wilson Chute as Sheriff Bianco led the way through modest opening fractions of :24.01 and :47.28. Barese, last year's New York Derby winner; and Bankit, a nine-time winner who came in with earnings of \$1,406,405, took up the chase early with Americanrevolution trying to recover from a stumble at the start.

Americanrevolution, off since finishing second in the Grade 1 Jockey Club Gold Cup last September at Saratoga, recovered enough to inch up to second behind Sheriff Bianco through 6 furlongs in 1:11.67. He came under pressure from there, couldn't get past the leader and tired between rivals. Franco guided Dr Ar-

dito four wide around the far turn and toward the leaders in the lane.

"The main thing was to break well and let the race develop and try to get him to the outside," Franco said. "As soon as we broke, I let those three horses go and I went outside and [followed Americanrevolution] that stumbled and was outside of me. I let him go, bided my time and when I was at the three-eighths pole I knew I had to go. I was able to get in the clear."

Franco stayed busy in the stretch as Dr Ardito made up 3 lengths on Sheriff Bianco in the stretch, collared the leader about 75 yards from home and won going away.

"I knew I had to ride him, but I also knew that's what he likes," Franco said. "He likes to be ridden and he'll give it to you every time you ask him. I've ridden this horse since his debut, so he's special to me. He's a lot more mature. He knows where the wire is and he tries every time he runs. I'm just grateful to be on him."

Dr Ardito picked up \$68,750 and boosted his bankroll to \$372,350.

Sheriff Bianco held second, 4 lengths clear of Bankit in third with Americanrevolution another 2 lengths back in fourth. Barese completed the lineup.

A \$95,000 purchase at the 2019 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale, Dr Ardito won his Saratoga debut off only four works in upstate New York in his career. He's trained primarily with Brown's main string at Belmont Park, with a few stints at Fair Hill while recovering from various physical issues.

Brown's four wins helped break a tie with Linda Rice atop the trainer standings and he heads into today's card with 22 victories at the meet. And he moves forward with Dr Ardito, who more than likely will wind up in the Empire Classic on Empire Showcase Day if the timing is right.

"It's wild," Brown said of the fact Dr Ardito hasn't made the races at Saratoga until this year. "It goes to show you how tough it is for certain horses with timing. When they do have issues and when you have to stop on them. This horse constantly missed Saratoga for one reason or another and I'm happy he had his day today in front of everybody."

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## CHURCHILL DOWNS 2023 September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 14 – OCTOBER 1

### IROQUOIS (GIII)

"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 16  
Closes August 30  
\$300,000  
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF  
Two-Year-Olds  
1 Mile

### LOCUST GROVE (GIII)

Runs Saturday, September 16  
Closes August 30  
\$400,000  
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF  
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up  
1 1/16 Miles

### POCAHONTAS (GIII)

"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 16  
Closes August 30  
\$300,000  
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF  
Fillies, Two-Year-Olds  
1 Mile

### LOUISVILLE THOROUGHBRED SOCIETY

Runs Saturday, September 16  
Closes August 30  
\$300,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Three-Year-Olds & Up  
6 Furlongs

### OPEN MIND (Listed)

Runs Saturday, September 16  
Closes August 30  
\$300,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up  
6 Furlongs

### SENECA OVERNIGHT STAKES

Runs Saturday, September 23  
Closes September 6  
\$175,000  
Includes \$65,000 from KTDF  
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds  
1 1/16 Miles

### BOURBON TRAIL

Runs Saturday, September 23  
Closes September 6  
\$300,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Three-Year-Olds  
1 3/16 Miles

### HARRODS CREEK

Runs Saturday, September 23  
Closes September 6  
\$300,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Three-Year-Olds  
7 Furlongs

### DOGWOOD (GIII)

Runs Saturday, September 23  
Closes September 6  
\$300,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds  
7 Furlongs

### ACK ACK (GIII)

"Win and You're In Dirt Mile Division"

Runs Saturday, September 30  
Closes September 13  
\$400,000  
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF  
Three-Year-Olds & Up  
1 Mile

### LUKAS CLASSIC (GII)

Runs Saturday, September 30  
Closes September 13  
\$500,000  
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF  
Three-Year-Olds & Up  
1 1/8 Mile

### JEFFERSON CUP

Runs Saturday, September 30  
Closes September 13  
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# Turf Return

## Three of five turf races go as slated

BY ALEC DICONZA

Turf racing returned to Saratoga Race Course Friday for the first time since Sunday. Three of the five races scheduled for the grass were run – the third, fifth and eighth.

The August 3 program was the last time all of the turf races carded were run. Inclement weather forced the cancellation of races last Friday and continued rainy weather over the weekend and into this week moved races from the turf to the main track.

Runners from Chad Brown's stable enjoyed the return to the turf, as he sent out the 1-2 finishers in two of the three grass contests. In the third, 6-year-old mare Kalifornia Queen won the 9-furlong allowance on the inner turf over favored stablemate Rocky Sky. Carl Spackler led a Brown exacta in the Grade 2 Hall of Fame Stakes,

### FRIDAY RACING RECAP

defeating stablemate Appraise by 2 1/4 lengths. Brown also won the opener with Moore's Law and the Evan Shipman Handicap with Dr Ardito.

The fifth race stayed on the grass but was still run with a four-horse field. Gal In A Rush won the 5 1/2-furlong \$111,600 allowance-optional for West Point Thoroughbreds, Chris Larsen and Titledown Racing Stable and trainer Christophe Clement.

Four turf races, including the Grade 1 Fourstardave Handicap, are scheduled for today's 11-race card.

Mark Hennig continued his strong meet, sending out Timely Conquest to win the second race, a 7-furlong allowance for New York-breds. Hennig

Continued On Page 35



Dave Harmon

Gal In A Rush (3) leads everybody to the finish in Friday's fifth.

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SCAN ME

# Friday —

■ Continued from page 34

has six wins at the meet and is two shy of 1,500 for his career.

Todd Pletcher sent out Trust Fund to a debut victory in the seventh for owners Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and Repole Stable. The 2-year-old son of Practical Joke was purchased by his connections for \$150,000 at last year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale.

• Six weeks ago, Pauline's Pearl won the Grade 2 Fleur de Lis Stakes at Ellis Park for owner/breeder Stonestreet Stables and trainer Steve Asmussen. In Friday's sixth, Marsalis took a \$121,250 allowance-optional claimer by 1 1/2 lengths for the same connections. But there's another link the two horses share — they are half-siblings. Hot Dixie Chick, a Grade 1 winner at Saratoga in her own right, is the dam of both winners.

"She's a fabulous mare and she won up here, won the Spinaway," Stonestreet's Barbara Banke said. "She's terrific and we've got her 2-year-old who's named Mister Lincoln. Steve is training him, and I kept her yearling. She's great."

Marsalis broke alertly and challenged the pace set by Today's Flavor and Provocateur. Making the lead turning for home, Marsalis lasted through fast fractions of :21.69 and :44.52 before opening up to a 1 1/4-length advantage at the wire. The final time was 1:10.33 under jockey Joel Rosario, who won his 13th of the meet. Asmussen won his fourth.

Marsalis returned in July from an over seven-month break, finishing second in the Kelly's Landing Stakes at Ellis. Second off the layoff Friday, he found the winner's circle for the third time in his six-start career.

Asmussen is looking forward with the 4-year-old son of Curlin.

"Obviously giving him plenty of time, and feel that the best is ahead of him," Asmussen said. "His two races this year is a strong second in a stakes race, as well as this nice allowance win, and we expect stakes to be in his near future. With him, this very large horse carries a lot of weight. We need to evaluate how much this race took out of him and map out the next race for him with plenty of time."



Dave Harmon

Marsalis wins the sixth.

• Michael Dubb is always in the conversation when it comes to leading owner at Saratoga. He won three races Friday, including the Evan Shipman with Dr Ardito, to inch closer to current leader Klaravich Stables and insists the competition is friendly.

"I think the world of Seth Klarman, so I don't view it as a competition," Dubb said. "I view it as just two friends having fun. It's nice to win races at Saratoga."

Dubb also won Friday's third with Kalifornia Queen and the nightcap with Sicilian Grandma. He co-owns Kalifornia Queen with Madaket Stables, First Row Partners and Mike Caruso. He owns Sicilian Grandma and Dr Ardito with Caruso.

"I'm in shock and awe," he said after the finale. "It's so hard to win, and to win three, somebody has to pinch me."

Sicilian Grandma broke her maiden last summer on the Saratoga dirt. The 3-year-old daughter of Army Mule won Friday in an off-the-turf claiming race for a \$35,000 tag.

"We kept waiting for races," he said. "The horse hadn't raced for a couple months, so we wanted to get this horse on the turf. Of course, it came off, but the horse won late here last summer on the dirt quite easily. I'm a big believer in horses for courses, so we weren't going to pass up the opportunity to run back on the dirt."

Dubb was not the only connection of Sicilian Grandma to win three on Friday. Tyler Gaffalione, who piloted the filly to her second win in nine starts, scored a triple. He won the Grade 2 Hall of Fame aboard Carl Spackler, the 10th on Magniloquent and the finale.

"The horses showed up for me," Gaffalione said. "I'm very blessed to be here, blessed to be in the position that I'm in and just so thankful for everyone."

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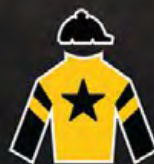
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## WEST POINT

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# At Last

## Final Furlong finds Saratoga stakes win with Venti Valentine

BY NOLAN CLANCY

Final Furlong Racing Stable waited 12 years for its first stakes victory at Saratoga Race Course. That win arrived Wednesday with Venti Valentine in the \$125,000 Johnstone Mile Handicap.

“This horse has been everywhere. We put together Final Furlong in focus solely on New York-breds,” said Vincent Roth, co-founder of the partnership. “She took us to the Kentucky Oaks, just to come back here and win something like this on our home turf . . . we’re just over the moon right now.”

Owned by Final Furlong and Parkland Thoroughbreds, the 4-year-old Firing Line filly collect-

Continued On Page 37



Dave Harmon

Venti Valentine (left) charges down the stretch to win Wednesday's featured Johnstone Mile.

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SCAN TO GIVE

# Johnstone —

## ■ Continued from page 36

ed her fifth win and first in 2023. She also notched trainer Jorge Abreu's second win of the day at Saratoga.

"She is a special horse to me," Abreu said. "Having two wins in a day, it's very special to me."

The partnership, which also bred the filly out of the Medaglia d'Oro mare Glory Gold along with Maspeth Stable, packed the winner's circle to welcome their filly and jockey Manny Franco.

"We had maybe six or seven owners in there today, but we tell everybody to bring the family, bring the crew, bring your friends," Roth said. "I think I might have met a couple people on the way [into the winner's circle] that we pulled in too. It was great."

Sunset Louise set the pace from the Wilson Chute, ticking off the opening quarter-mile in :24.33. Venti Valentine sat a ground-saving fourth through a half-mile in :47.34 before beginning her run midway through the far turn.

The chestnut filly rounded Sunset Louise, Know It All Audrey and Timeless Journey as they hit the stretch, running three-quarters of a mile in 1:12.15. Venti Valentine battled a game Timeless Journey through the final furlong, going on to win by a half-length in 1:38.98. Post-time favorite Betsy Blue rallied to finish third, with Know It All Audrey fourth.

"At the quarter pole when she was picking up her momentum, I was feeling pretty confident then because there was nobody coming from behind," Abreu said. "We had like

2 lengths in front of the six horse [Timeless Journey]."

Venti Valentine started her career with three wins in five starts, including the Maid of the Mist Stakes at Belmont and the Busher Invitational Stakes at Aqueduct. She finished second in the Grade 2 Demoiselle and Grade 3 Gazelle at Aqueduct on the way to the Grade 1 Kentucky Oaks, where she endured a hard trip in the crowded field and finished 14th.

Venti Valentine, champion New York-bred 2-year-old filly in 2021, improved to 5-for-13 with two seconds and two thirds for \$617,600 in earnings

Foaled at Schuylerville Thoroughbred Farm in Schuylerville, Venti Valentine is one of two stakes winners out of the winning Medaglia d'Oro mare Glory Gold, whose produce record includes multiple stakes winner Espresso Shot. That mare was also raced by Venti Valentine's connections and trained by Abreu.

Espresso Shot was sold for \$300,000 at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky November mixed sale four years after Final Furlong purchased Glory Gold carrying Venti Valentine for \$13,000 at the 2018 Keeneland November breeding stock sale. They purchased the mare after being impressed with Espresso Shot, a \$69,000 buy at the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale.

The dam of four winners from five runners overall, Glory Gold is the dam of the New York-bred 2-year-old Omaha Beach filly Landed. Bred by Final Furlong and Maspeth, that filly sold for \$500,000 to Lael Stables at last year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale of selected yearlings. Glory Gold was bred to Munnings in 2022.

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# Down To 2

## In unscheduled match race, Alpha Bella pastes Virtual Reality

Thursday's seventh race at Saratoga Race Course didn't have the same buzz as Seabiscuit/War Admiral, but the battle between Alpha Bella and Virtual Reality still proved interesting considering that match races in the 21st century are about as rare as snowfall in Florida.

Carded as an 11-horse allowance-optional claimer going 1 1/8 miles on the turf, the race was moved to the main track following heavy rain early in the week. The race lost 10 runners, leaving only Alpha Bella and Virtual Reality, the latter drawing in as a main-track-only entrant.

Alpha Bella and Virtual Reality broke evenly. Under Luis Saez, Alpha Bella took the early advantage on the inside going into the clubhouse

### WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY RECAP

turn and held a steady half-length lead through fractions of :23.99 and :47.92. With less than a half to go, Alpha Bella started to separate from her rival and continued to open the gap through the stretch.

"The strategy was to go to the pace," Saez said. "We knew the other horse has a lot of speed, but we didn't want to let her go too easy either. If we were on the lead, we were going to take it. If not, we can track her, but that's not that easy. Everything came out so perfect."

Alpha Bella widened her margin to 22 3/4 lengths at the finish, taking the

Continued On Page 39



Dave Harmon

Alpha Bella (right) and Virtual Reality get started in Thursday's match race.

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# Weds./Thurs. —

■ Continued from page 38

first match race on the NYRA circuit since May 19, where Pharoah's Heart won a similar setup at Belmont Park.

Saez and Prat had experience facing each other under the match-race circumstances. On June 9, 2022, Baby Blythe, ridden by Saez, bested Investmentstrategy, ridden by Prat, by 5 1/4 lengths at Belmont.

Winning trainer Todd Pletcher was pleased with how the race played out.

"Generally, speed does well," he said. "We just wanted her to leave the gate with the intention of establishing a forward position, and if the other filly was faster, to make her work a little bit to clear us. We got to the spot we wanted and got her into a comfortable rhythm and it worked out from there."

Alpha Bella had competed on dirt before, finishing fifth, second and fourth to begin her career. Pletcher left the Justify filly in the race based on how she trained of late on the dirt.

"Her dirt form was good enough, she's always trained well enough on the dirt," he said. "I do think she's slightly better on the turf, but certainly has handled the dirt well enough that we were comfortable running. I got a call from the stewards early today and they said 'Hey, this race is really falling apart.' I said, 'Don't worry, I plan to run no matter how many are in.'"

Even though Virtual Reality was essentially eased home, Prat didn't believe the daughter of Cloud Computing had much of an excuse.

"No, it wasn't that different," Prat said when asked if the tactics were different than planned. "I just tried to get my horse in a good position, but when she opened up on us, it was over. We didn't have enough left."

While strategy is a key component of the race, the person with the toughest job during the duel might have been track announcer Frank Mirah-

madi. With only two horses, the task, he said, gets repetitive.

"Sometimes calling a race with less horses, it can actually be more difficult because the announcer ends up saying the name and going through the field many more times," he said. "It creates more opportunity for a stumbling, so to speak."

Throughout the race, viewers may have noticed Mirahmadi's comments about the pedigrees and connections.

"The way to call a match race is if it's an intense battle that people are looking forward to, almost like a heavyweight fight, it's a little different than a race like yesterday which was rained off the turf and only two were willing to participate," Mirahmadi said. "It's important to try and



Alpha Bella glides to victory.

Tod Marks

find some filler during that and at the same time not get carried away with nonsense. With a match-up of two top jockeys, two very well-bred horses and two top connections, I just felt that it was maybe a nice touch to put in some detail."

Mirahmadi called match races before, but the first few were not Thoroughbred races.

"The first one that I can remember was at the Great Barrington Fair in Massachusetts," he said. "There was a broadcaster named Bill Lekas, and we came up with an idea to run man versus horse, which was Lekas running against a horse ridden by Frankie Catrone Jr. We gave the guy a sixteenth of a mile head start, and then the horse had to run an eighth of a mile down the straightaway. It turned out to be one of the most entertaining events and one of the most dramatic photo finishes. The guy actually won."

Continued On Page 40

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## Weds./Thurs. —

■ Continued from page 39

“At Ferndale, there was a big match race with two great mules. One was named Sarah Nelson, one of the all-time greatest mules. The other one was Smoking Joe, who was a boy. It was a girl versus a boy. It was a great showdown.”

— Alec DiConza

• Steve Schuster and his wife El are a great example of what has made the New York breeding program so successful. And not just because they were standing in the winners' enclosure celebrating their 3-year-old filly Phinneys Harbor's victory in Thursday's second. The race was a 6-furlong maiden claiming sprint for New York-breds — in the scheme of things, maybe nothing special.

But Saratoga is not in the scheme of things. Any win here is special, but it's especially so for owners who also bred the winner like Steve and El's Mashnee Stable.

Steve Schuster has been a racing fan all his life. Standing and watching the replay of his win, he spoke fondly



Dave Harmon

Phinneys Harbor heads for home in Thursday's second race.

of going to Narragansett Park in his native Rhode Island where he first got the racing bug.

“I guess I'm dating myself mentioning Narragansett,” he said. Narragansett closed its gates 45 years

ago. But Rhode Island's loss is New York's gain. Steve got into New York racing about 12 years ago.

“In the beginning we got involved in some partnerships,” he said. “And then we bought some horses to breed.

We race some and we sell some. It's just very exciting to win a race with a horse that you've bred.”

The Schusters are in Saratoga from Cape Cod where they live on Mashnee Island with a view of Phinneys Harbor. But their racing endeavors are in New York. In addition to watching the races, they are here for the yearling sales.

The nine days from Aug. 9-17 are a real showcase for the New York breeding program at Saratoga. Not only does it feature six stakes races for New York-breds, but sandwiched in the middle Sunday evening and Monday afternoon is the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale.

“Winning today is a great way to go into the sales. It was a bit of a surprise because we really didn't know what to expect from her this race,” Steve said. “But Katie (Davis) gave her a great ride and here we are.”

Davis understood the 7-1 odds.

“Her record didn't look that promising on paper, but her bad races were on grass or mud,” she said. “Her one good start was on dirt-fast. I'd ridden her in the morning a couple of times and today I got her on dirt-fast. She likes dirt-fast.”

Trainer Mark Hennig agreed.

“She was back on a fast track,” he said. “She had grass and mud in between. And she really didn't like any of that. The drop in class helped, too. We found the right group today, a much easier group than she'd been facing. Plus Katie rode her to the wire, which was what she needed.”

For the Schusters, the excitement starts again Sunday when they'll have a couple of New York-bred yearlings for sale. Hip 346, a bay colt by Solomini, leads off with and Hip 370, a bay filly by Global Campaign, is also cataloged.

— Terry Hill

• Mertkan Kantarmaci continued his big week Thursday. He picked up his first win of the meet in Wednesday's opener with Carbon, and followed that up with Truculent's win in Thursday's fourth.

“Winning in Saratoga, it's always special,” Kantarmaci said after the victory in the 9-furlong \$25,000 claimer. “And winning two in a row, two days back to back, it's really

Continued On Page 41

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Dave Harmon

Truculent powers to victory in Thursday's fourth, the second winner in as many days for trainer Mertkan Kantarmaci.

## Weds./Thurs.—

### ■ Continued from page 40

good. It's perfect to be here. We are running horses and winning races with the biggest trainers in the country. That's a really good place to be."

Truculent was claimed by Kantarmaci in June, and has had immediate success with two wins in two starts since.

"The first time after we claimed him, it was a week between two races," Kantarmaci said. "We put him right back off the claim in seven days. He just ran really good that day and he got it done. This race, we got him ready because it's a tougher meet and a tougher race."

— Alec DiConza

- Antonio Sano already had a winner at the meet coming into Thursday, but was thrilled to add another in the sixth with Le Dom Bro. The 2-year-old colt by Mucho Macho Man broke well and found himself in a duel with Walstib that lasted 6 furlongs. Le Dom Bro edged clear late to produce a neck victory under Tyler Gaffalione, who got his third win of the day.

Gaffalione won the opener aboard Honey Dijon and the third with Talahatchiebridge.

Sano was pleased to see the 2-1 Le Dom Bro put it all together at Saratoga, coming in after runner-up finishes in two races at Gulfstream Park.

"The horse's form is very good," Sano said. "The horse needs more distance. "The longer distance, the better for me and the horse. He had raced second behind another horse who ran in a stake."

Owned by Vicente Stella Stables, Le Dom Bro won in 1:12.56. Sano also saddled Secret Lover to a fourth in the race at 34-1.

Sano was not surprised to see Le Dom Bro show grit to win the \$83,000 event.

"He's a good horse," he said. "The horse [Walstib] gave him a good race. From the start, both horses head-to-head. Very great."

— Alec DiConza

- Wednesday was a different kind of dark day at Saratoga. Just as the horses were heading onto the track for the fifth race, the power went out throughout the facility.

The televisions in the backyard, grandstand and clubhouse went dark, along with self-service betting machines, proving especially frustrating for gamblers with money and vouchers inside as they readied their bets. The machines went kaput and nobody was able to retrieve their money, a headache for pari-mutuel tellers and bettors alike.

Fans on the apron were uncertain about where the horses for the fifth race even were. A few members of Hibiscus Stable, owner of Lady Pros-

Continued On Page 42

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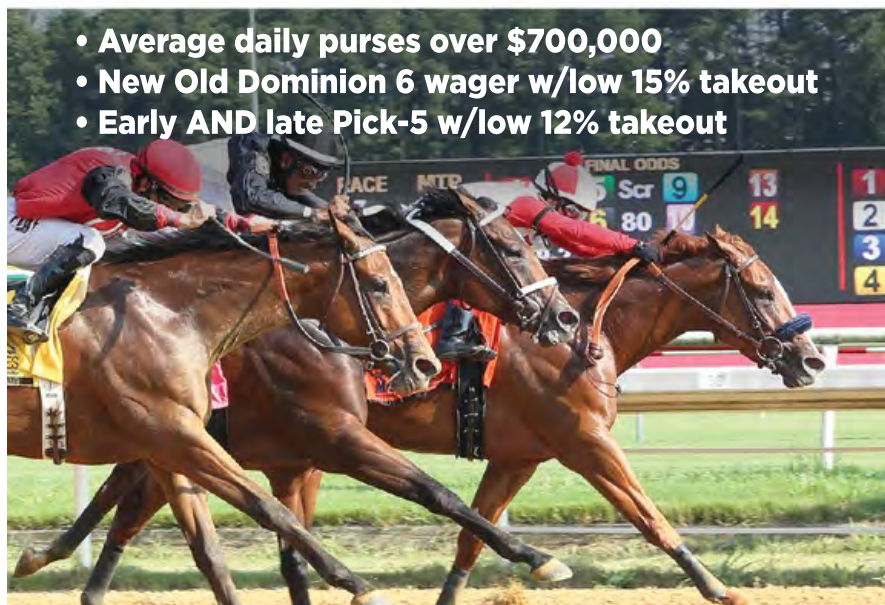


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**Weds./Thurs. —**

■ Continued from page 41

pect, congregated near the winner's circle to see their first-time starter. They didn't know where the horses went either, nor did they really care. They were too excited to worry about a power outage.

The horses were relegated back to the paddock during the early portion of the outage, which lasted more than an hour before power was fully restored.

Lady Prospect's trainer Rudy Rodriguez was a tad frustrated when the fifth race was cancelled but thought it was the best decision considering the uncertainty of why the power went out and when it might come back.

"They did the right thing because the horses went to the gate already and the right thing was to cancel the race and regroup," Rodriguez said. "We take the bad with the good. It was kind of like schooling. I don't think it's going to hurt the horses."

Ten races were carded for Wednesday but the day's steeplechase race, a \$70,000 allowance at 2 3/8 miles, was canceled Tuesday night because of wet conditions.

Rodriguez hoped to make the 6-furlong maiden race with the Runhappy filly, who had a few minor setbacks this spring and summer.

"We waited for this race," Rodriguez said. "We miss a race with a little temperature and now, there's nothing you can do."

The power outage was caused by a fallen tree in nearby Yaddo, and actually caused power losses through the area around the racetrack.

The fifth race was canceled and

racing resumed with the sixth, a 5 1/2-furlong maiden race moved from the turf to the dirt.

— Mary Rufo

In actual racing action Wednesday, Mark Stanely and trainer Jeremiah Englehart teamed up to win a New York-bred maiden special with first-time starter Tricky Temper. The daughter of Into Mischief rallied from third early to win by 4 13/4 lengths as the favorite for jockey John Velazquez.

Whisper Hill Farm and Todd Pletcher won an off-the-turf optional claimer going 1 1/4 miles on the dirt with Classic Catch. The Classic Empire gelding prevailed by a neck over long-time leader Costa Terra for jockey Flavien Prat. Pletcher also won a \$25,000 claimer with Clubhouse (Luis Saez) for Harrell Ventures and Starlight Racing.

After the canceled fifth, trainer Jorge Abreu won a maiden special with 2-year-old filly Jody's Pride (Prat), who drew off to win by 10 1/2 lengths for Parkland Thoroughbreds and Sportsmen Stable.

Windylea Farm's Into Happiness became the meet's second double winner after Ichiban (who scored July 15 and 26), as she rallied from last of seven to win a 1-mile optional claimer for trainer Mark Hennig and Velazquez. The daughter of Into Mischief got up in the final strides to win by a nose over Coppa Girl. Into Happiness also won on Opening Day, July 13.

Parx Racing-based trainer Tyler Servis won Wednesday's finale, an off-the-turf New York-bred maiden, with Morethanafeeling for Vintage Thoroughbreds and Carguys Racing.



Tricky Temper skips away from everyone in Wednesday's third.

Dave Harmon



Fasig-Tipton

The sales grounds get back to life with the New York-bred yearling sale Sunday and Monday.

# Taste of NY

## State breeding program gets chance with at Spa yearling sale

BY NOLAN CLANCY

The Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred Yearling sale kicks off with hips 301-400 Sunday evening at 7, showcasing yearlings by stallions with track records of success and newcomer potential alike.

If Monday and Tuesday night's record-setting Saratoga Select Yearling sale is any indication of the state of the industry, breeders and consignors will be in luck.

"I think the sales average is going to be as strong or better than the previous year, which every year seems to be getting a little better," said John McMahon of McMahon of Saratoga

### NY-BRED YEARLING SALE

ga Thoroughbreds. "The Saratoga sale was such a strong segment of the industry, it's hard not to believe it's going to trickle down into this sale also."

John, the son of farm founders Joe and Anne McMahon, heads up the on-site sales operation in Fasig-Tipton's Barn 7C. Founded in 1971, the birthplace of the late Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner Funny Cide has sent horses to the sale for decades. McMahon of Saratoga stands Central

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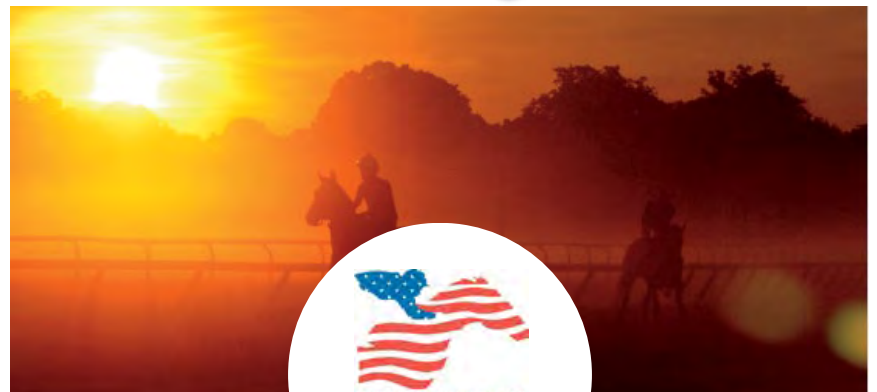


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# Sale —

## ■ Continued from page 43

Banker, the leading New York sire by earnings and total winners in 2021 and 2022.

“I don’t think you’ll find a consignment that has produced more winners from this particular spot over the course of the last few years,” McMahan said. “I mean, you can’t compare yourself against the Taylor Mades or the real giants within the industry, but for a group and a consignment which focuses strictly on this sale, I think the name helps a lot.”

A record 364 yearlings are entered in the sale, which will continue at noon Monday for the better part of the afternoon and evening. For the first time, Fasig-Tipton constructed a temporary “Barn 11” at the corner of George Street and East Avenue to accommodate extra horses.

“The quality of the horses in the New York-bred sale has improved exponentially over the last decade,” said Boyd Browning, president and chief executive officer of Fasig-Tipton. “When we started the New York-bred sale basically it was viewed as a closed shop. There were New York-bred trainers, there were New York-bred breeders and there really wasn’t a wide net. Now it’s a wide net. Every trainer that has stalls at Saratoga not only has New York-breds, they want to have New York-breds.”

Part of this development in New York-bred

## Fasig-Tipton NY-Bred Yearling Sale

Humphrey S. Finney Sales Pavilion  
East Avenue, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.  
Sunday, 7 p.m.: Hips 301-400.  
Monday, noon: Hips 400-664.

prominence is due to the success of a few state-based stallions.

Central Banker, a 13-year-old by Speightstown, is the stalwart of the group. He has produced seven crops of yearlings and numerous standouts on the NYRA circuit and beyond. He’ll be represented by five colts and six fillies across Sunday and Monday.

Bankit, a 7-year-old gelding by Central Banker out of Sister In Arms, has earned \$1,421,405 and finished third in Friday’s Evan Shipman Handicap for Winchell Thoroughbreds and Willis Horton Racing and Steve Asmussen. He’s a graduate of the 2017 Saratoga New York-bred sale where he sold for \$85,000.

In the money in six graded stakes, Solomini also stands at McMahan, and is poised to break out as a New York stallion. He sends his second crop of yearlings to this sale, and his sire Curlin should be enough to turn heads.

“I’m really looking forward to the couple Solominis we’ve got going through, specifically 609 and 571 are very nice horses,” John McMahan said. Hip 609 is out of Flash Act, dam of four winners topped by stakes winner Nine Route. Hip 571 is

out of Dancing Onthemoon, dam of two foals of racing age including stakes winner General Ken.

Outside of New York, a few upstart stallions send early crops to Fasig-Tipton. The 2019 Breeders’ Cup Classic winner Vino Rosso is a relative newcomer to the stallion market, with a first crop making their debuts on the track this year. The Wine Steward, a colt out of Call To Service is 2-for-2, including a win in the Bashford Manor Stakes at Ellis Park in July for Mike Maker. He sold at this sale last year for \$70,000. Vino Rosso sends 13 yearlings to the sale.

The sale also features the first crop of yearlings from 2020 Belmont and Travers Stakes winner Tiz The Law. The New York-bred sends six yearlings to the sales grounds with six consignors, including McMahan.

“I think they should be very well received,” McMahan said.

Honest Mischief stands at Sequel Stallions in New York and leads all stallions by quantity, sending 16 yearlings to the sale. He was New York’s most popular stallion by mares bred in 2021 and 2022.

Another main reason for the growth of the sale is the continued development of NYRA’s state-bred racing program.

“Saratoga is the highlight of the summer racing season and we’re thrilled the Fasig-Tipton New York-bred yearling sale, once again, features a fan-

Continued On Page 45

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# Sale —

■ Continued from page 44

tastic and comprehensive catalogue,” said Najja Thompson, executive director of New York Thoroughbred Breeders, Inc. “We’ve been working to provide enhanced incentives for owners and breeders in the New York-bred program and it’s encouraging to see a record number of 384 New York-breds cataloged this year.”

Browning said the program’s success gets fed by several factors.

“What it shows you is the cooperative spirit between NYRA and the breeders certainly benefits everybody,” Browning said. “The stronger the New York-bred program is, the more it can produce horses that are going to be a significant part of the race card, everybody wins. There are no losers.”

For breeders in New York, the sale marks the culmination of countless days of hard work getting yearlings ready to hit the ring.

Madeline Tillotson bred two yearlings at this year’s sale, Hip 539 (a Volatile colt) consigned by Para-



Fasig-Tipton

Buyers were checking out yearlings Friday.

mount Sales and Hip 655 consigned by Hill ‘n’ Dale. She has four broodmares based at Hickory Hill Farm near Glens Falls.

Hip 655 (a Kitten’s Joy colt) is the first foal out of Joluca, a winner on turf and dirt by Blame for Hall of Fame trainer Jonathan Sheppard. Sheppard also bred the mare and trained much of her female family

including graded stakes winners Ratings and Recording.

“We campaigned her during the pandemic when neither Jonathan nor I could be in a winners circle, or in my case be on a track. Lot of attachment to her,” Tillotson said. “We know people seem to like Kitten’s Joy, but this sale will prove whether that’s true or not.”

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Sometimes you have to ask.

I passed them again Friday morning. Four stalls at the end of Gary Sciacca's traditional Oklahoma spot had come to life. Same stalls. New faces. Finally, there was something to offset the garish blue and orange-painted tree and the conspicuously empty stalls at the Horse Haven standby.

Four stalls bedded deep. White screens. Two folding chairs. White and blue trim. KRS emblazoned on four bandage holders. Two horses looking over webbing. And a couple of guys standing out front.

"Hey, whose horses are these?"

"Ken Spraggins."

"Who?"

"Ken Spraggins."

"Who's Ken Spraggins?"

"That's me."

I did a Starsky and Hutch slide in the golf cart, Spraggins extended his hand, and I introduced the Special. There is nothing like a new face on an old beat.

Spraggins arrived in Saratoga with two horses this week. Five o' Somewhere and King Hazelton. The former, a winner of a Hawthorne 2-year-old maiden, makes his turf debut in the Skidmore Friday. King Hazelton, unraced, aims at the Hopeful, or perhaps a maiden Aug. 19 or 25.

"I brought my best," Spraggins said.

The Chicago-based trainer is impressed with Saratoga so far.

"I've never seen anything like it. Trainer over here took me in the golf cart, showed me here, showed me there. This guy over here said, 'Need anything? Let me know, let me know. Need the feed man's number, need a rider, need a groom?'" Spraggins said. "What? Where am I? Am I in heaven? Is this horse heaven or what? I've never seen anything like it. You hear all this stuff about New York, it's all lies. Super, super nice."

It's a long way from the rodeo.

"I was a bull rider. In the black rodeo in Chicago. It didn't take me long, I ate so much dirt I could have plant a garden," Spraggins said. "My brother got a scholarship in bull riding. He got good. I was tall, man, the bull was small, sometimes my feet would hang right on the ground. My thing was jumping off and running to the fence. I wasn't locked in. You've got to be locked in."

# No Bull



## CUP OF COFFEE

By Sean Clancy

Spraggins locked in at Balmoral Park. A 20-something kid just happy to be off the bull and on a horse.

"My uncle bought racehorses," Spraggins said. "He said, 'Come to the racetrack and gallop these horses, these bulls are killing you anyway.' I went to the track and started galloping and never left."



Ken Spraggins.

Balmoral to Hawthorne to Sportsman's Park to Arlington Park and back to Hawthorne. Spraggins, 61, has notched 83 wins in his training career which began in 1994. He trained 12 winners in 1997, 13 in 1998. His horses earned \$302,734 in 1997, his best year. Those numbers dropped off to one win in 2000, climbed to seven in 2006 and dropped back down to zero last season. This year, he's 1-for-5 but back in the barn, back on track.

"I've been training a long time," Spraggins said. "I took maybe a 10-year break, I was pinhooking, on a small scale, wasn't no big time. They just weren't doing right with the horses. I'd see them run bad, I said, 'Maaaaan, that's my name.' Because I'm pretty good with 2-year-olds, I went to the sales in

September and bought five. I did pretty well. Really, really good-looking horses."

Spraggins put his money up first, then added partners. The partners named Five o' Somewhere, they like happy hour. King Hazelton is named after one of Spraggins' mentors, Richard Hazelton. The Chicago mainstay won 4,745 races, 10th all-time.

"He was a horseman. He should be in the Hall of Fame. It's a travesty. We called him King Hazelton. That was his name on the racetrack. And he earned every bit of that name," Spraggins said. "He would be on his pony, we would talk every day. He taught me a lot. I was in his box, watching the races, I run a horse and he got claimed, I wanted to lose the horse. He said, 'Don't brag. Shut your mouth. Don't say anything. Let them take him and go about your business.'"

This summer, Spraggins brings his business to Saratoga. It's a big step. He knows it. But he's already taken big steps.

"Early on, I had a couple of cheap horses," Spraggins said. "My uncle told me, 'Hey, get rid of all these horses. You got a good eye for horses, go to the sale, and get yourself a horse. Give them away, you're spinning your wheels, go to the sale.' The first horse I bought at the sale was named, Now I know. She won first time. I said, 'This is it.'"

Spraggins purchased Hunk Of Class for \$19,500 in 1995. He won four stakes and \$305,437. Spraggins bred Wiggins, won a race, placed in the Spectacular Bid Stakes in 2002 and sold him to another mentor, Anthony Granitz. The Illinois-bred son of Cartwright banged out \$892,800. Spraggins and partner Marilyn Palazzo bought King Hazelton for \$105,000 and Five o' Somewhere for \$30,000 at Keeneland September. Friday morning, Spraggins stood outside his Saratoga barn and pointed at Five o' Somewhere and then to King Hazelton.

"I wrestled for a long time and coached wrestling," he said. "I look at this as my wrestling team. Here's my 125-pounder and that's my heavyweight."

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