

Year 23 • No. 16

Saturday, August 19, 2023

The *Saratoga*

Special

Saratoga's Racing Newspaper since 2001



Do Not Touch

Wet Paint eyes second Grade 1 of meet in Alabama

Phil Serpe Stable Tour
Lake Placid Lineup
Prat tries harness race
Entries & Handicapping

Alex Evers/Eclipse Sportswire



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2022 Alydar



2021 Alydar

Masterpiece. Art Collector, a Grade 1 winner and earner of \$4,231,290 for owner/breeder Bruce Lunsford and trainers Bill Mott and Tommy Drury, died Thursday after developing laminitis. Twice a winner of Saratoga's Alydar Stakes, the 6-year-old won at least one race in each of his five seasons on the track and competed at a dozen racetracks.

For more, see Cup of Coffee on page 46.



July 27 at the barn

Here & There...in Saratoga

License Plate of the Day

ZBISCUIT, New York (thanks Tom Yadanza).
KEEN ICE, New York (thanks Pat McKenna).

By The Numbers

1,000: Dollars and the goal for the Saratoga Stryders to support the Graphite Range Community Forest.

1: Feed scoop in The Special's golf cart.

21: Horses entered on Sunday's King's Plate Day card at Woodbine for Hall of Fame trainer Mark Casse, including major players Elysian Field and Paramount Prince in the headliner. He also has 10 entries Saturday at Woodbine.

47: Races taken off the grass so far this season, compared to just five at this same point last year.

Worth Repeating

"I'm only as good as what you give me."

Owner Dean Reeves to Ron Bowden, breeder of Rick Violette winner Ramblin' Wreck

"He and I are already talking about the next two. He's quite the negotiator."

Bowden on Reeves, already eyeing foals out of Dakota Kid, the dam of Ramblin' Wreck and Dakota Gold

"I look at it like the mayor's office where everyone goes when they need help."

Trainer Todd Pletcher, about the New York Racetrack Chaplaincy

"I didn't bring mine out here."

Miles Clancy, as his dad Sean checked his phone while playing catch Thursday afternoon

Names of the Day

Remember The Name, first race. Seems like a natural for Name of the Day.

Hunt Ball, first race. The Godolphin homebred is by Into Mischief out of Dance Card.

Tom Collins, second race. The Stuart Janney III and Phipps Stable homebred is by Frosted out of Party Now.

Walley World, second race. The 2-year-old colt is out of Forced Family Fun.

Nostalgic, eighth race. Another good one by Godolphin, this filly is out of Been Here Before.

Taxed, ninth race. The 3-year-old filly is by Collected.



The Saratoga Special

thisishorseracing.com

259 East Avenue, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866.

ST Publishing, 364 Fair Hill Drive, Ste. F, Elkton, Md. 21921. (410) 392-5867.

2023 publication dates: Wednesdays and Saturdays July 13-Sept 4.
Plus Opening Day July 13 & Sales Week Daily Aug. 4-9.

All editions in print and online. See thisishorseracing.com for more.

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Here&There...in Saratoga

Worth Repeating

"That's four Grade 1s for him. And unfortunately, there won't be a farm in Kentucky wanting to stand him. But he'll find a home somewhere."

Bill Mott about Fourstardave winner Casa Creed

"Somebody said, 'I'm sure he'll be a stallion next year.' We might come try and win it again next year. I'm fortunate, I've got a pretty good day job. I'm not worried about that."

Co-owner Lee Einsidler about future plans for Casa Creed

"That sounds like something you say to make me stop thinking about having the hiccups."

**The Special's Nolan Clancy,
as his father Joe pointed out another backstretch oddity**

"He's a Cadillac."

**Standardbred trainer Cheryl McGivern, as The Special's Nolan and Joe Clancy
got ready to take Powerscourt out on the jog track Thursday morning**

"Saratoga, Ocala, Baltimore, Kentucky."

Eaton Sales' Reiley McDonald, on his post-sale travel itinerary

"You see a lady in a white shirt waving a beer?"

Friday racegoer, signaling a friend and prepping her laundry

"First time on him and first-time win."

Jockey Manny Franco after riding Ship Cadet to victory in Friday's Skidmore

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.

"I'd put Citation, Secretariat, Spectacular Bid in the top five, anyway. There's a lot of other ones too. Of course, I didn't see Man o' War, but if you look at his record, he had to win a lot of them, because nobody showed up to run against him. Nobody was better than Spectacular Bid, you watch him train in Florida as a 3-year-old, you couldn't believe a horse could be that tough, he would gallop 2 miles, 2 ¼ miles, the last three-quarters in 19, 20, then he'd work his eyes out. There's about 25 mares, you can't believe the races they won. They used to run against the colts, they didn't have any qualms about going against the colts, they figured the 5 pounds took care of it. How about Regret, she won the Hopeful and the Derby."

— Trainer Allen Jerkens, 1929-2015



Skip Dickstein

Pletchers Honored. Trainer Todd Pletcher and his wife Tracy (center) received the Marylou Whitney Award from the New York Racetrack Chaplaincy for support of the New York backstretch community at the association's annual fundraiser luncheon at Saratoga National Wednesday, the presentation included (from left) trainer D. Wayne Lukas, NYRTCA chairman Terry Finley, his wife Debbie Finley, the Pletchers, NYRTCA general manager Karen Chavez and NYRTCA program director Nick Caras. Todd Pletcher's former boss Lukas made the presentation and said, "God blessed Todd with extraordinary talent and he has shown class, dignity and integrity throughout his career. In addition to their own family, Todd and Tracy have also adopted the backstretch family and they are most deserving of this honor."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Gut instincts are just stuff you know that are sitting in the back of your brain."

**Trainer Phil Serpe, with advice
for horse trainers (or anyone really)**



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With Phil Serpe

Go to the five-eighths pole gap on the main track, cross the road and a small horse path, cut through the gap in the rail and go back about a hundred years. That's Phil Serpe's barn at Saratoga Race Course.

Dubbed Blue Heaven by its chief resident, the barn is decked out with hanging ferns and flowers, matching footlockers and stools/benches between every stall, flower beds out front to rival Longwood Gardens, the world's cleanest traffic cones and walking rings raked so well you don't want to step on them. Serpe credits Dean's Flowers with much of the beautification work, but he worked summers at a garden center when he was in high school and calls himself a frustrated landscape architect. Of course, seeing the upscaled shedrow of future Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas at Monmouth Park in the 1980s added to the drive.

"When I was just getting started at Monmouth Park and my stable was getting bigger he had this guy come in and he spent two weeks getting the barn ready – painting stuff, putting flowers where you didn't think you could put flowers and big WL signs on everything. I was like, 'Wow, that really looks good,' so I started trying to do the same thing and now I'm 64 and I've been doing that for 41 years.

"But I love it. I just love to come to this barn. Even when the races are over and they're done with the track and the sprinklers might be going, I just sit here. It's great. The horses are quiet, it's just a different feel."

Serpe has the same view of Saratoga – its history, its racing and its horses. He won a stakes here July 20 and was looking to bring back Grade 1 winner Leave No Trace before the end of the meet. A winner of 1,067 races whose horses have earned \$33.8 million sat down out front of Blue Heaven Wednesday morning and went through the string with The Special's Joe Clancy.

Being Betty: Owner/breeder Hilly Fields Stable's 2-year-old New York-bred filly finished fifth in her debut July 26 and is looking to come back next week for another try. The bay goes back a little bit with Serpe, who trained her sire Weekend Hideaway and first three dams Lady Joan, Ladywell Court and Commander's Lady. Lady Joan won six races, a New York Stallion Series stakes and earned \$404,555.

"Most of those horses from that family get to the races as 2-year-olds, but they're much better 3-year-olds. They grow a lot



Nolan Clancy
The Phil Serpe barn, aka Blue Heaven.

and mature a lot. She ran OK, had kind of a troubled trip. We never really laid it on her because those horses are just kind of immature. Her works were her works. I think she's going to run better but it's going to be the same idea with the other horses out of that family. We give them a few starts and then kick them out for a couple months and bring them back and get them ready for next year."

Security Code: WellSpring Stable's 3-year-old New York-bred daughter of Frosted won here on closing weekend last year after finishing second to Maple Leaf Mel in her debut. A winner at Aqueduct in April, she finished second in allowance/optional-claiming company Aug. 3 and has placed in three stakes.

"I always thought she was going to be a nice horse. She seems like she just doesn't quite get there in the stakes, but she ran well here and will get another chance before the end of the meet."

Leave No Trace: Highlight of Serpe's 2022 season, the \$40,000 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic yearling purchase won her debut here in July and closed the year with a Grade 1 score in the Spinaway Sept. 4. She backed up that form with a third in the Grade 1 Frizette in October and then a second (at 26-1) to the Mark Casse-trained Wonder Wheel in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies. It's been stop and go since as WellSpring's daughter of Outwork finished last and was eased in the Davona Dale at Gulfstream Park in March. After a lengthy break at WellSpring's New Jersey farm, she's been breezing steadily since early July and is looking for a return spot. Serpe entered her as a main-track-only runner twice this week, including in today's Grade 1 Lake Placid.

"She's pretty much ready to go. We're going to see what the weather does and if she doesn't run there are a couple options the last week of the meet that we can run her in. Things were not going

right for her down at Gulfstream. She had some bone bruising. She trains hard and that got to her a little bit. The people at WellSpring Stable own a beautiful farm in Colts Neck. She had a little chip in her ankle which we really didn't think had anything to do with her performances. It was more the bone bruising. She's such a tough filly that she'd go out there in the morning and you couldn't really sense that there was anything wrong with her but there was. It was little things – bruised foot, abscess in a hind foot, ankle started to get puffy, it was all that stuff. You have to remember, she had an intense go-round as a 2-year-old. After we left here, we ran at Aqueduct in the slop, inside slot, got banged leaving the gate, went to the Breeders' Cup, ran great. She did a lot and young horses sooner or later are going to need a little time.

How thrilling was last year?

"The race here was a thrill. I look at those 2-year-old races and think that most of those horses have run once or twice and you don't know. She was in a maiden auction race, but she was impressive. We really liked her. She was touting herself at Belmont before she ever got here, and you could tell she had talent. When I look back, the race back at Aqueduct (the Frizette) it probably came around too soon. It was 30 days later, and today's horse seems to need a little more time. She had pulled a little weight from the race here. She was still training well and everything but looking back maybe it would have been a better idea to just go to the Breeders' Cup. But we did what we did, she finished third there. After that race, I was concerned about how she was going to be and she just moved forward and moved forward and moved forward. We were really confident that she was going to run big, real big at the Breeders' Cup. When we turned for home and we were in front, I thought

Continued On Page 8

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 6

we were going to win that race and man Wonder Wheel came running. Mark did a great job with her. It's a shame that she had to get retired, but what are you going to do."

So, run here — hopefully — as a comeback. Then what?

"Her works have been good so we'll see when she gets to run. There's a two other than late. I have that Barclay Tagg disease — I have to run everything on the turf — and she really is bred and looks like a grass horse. She does. The back, the pastern, the foot, the whole deal, but people would think I was a raving lunatic if I took a horse that was second in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile on the dirt and ran her on the turf when she's working in :47 at a gallop so we'll stay on the dirt right now. I'd love to think about the turf and I believe somewhere along the line you're going to see her be a turf horse. I just have that feeling. Maybe I'm wrong."

Bank On Anna: WellSpring's New York-bred 4-year-old filly, a Fasig-Tipton Kentucky select sale graduate, won four of eight including the Union Avenue Stakes here while piling up \$238,850 last year. Returned off a five-month layoff in May and has run three times — a fourth in allowance company, a seventh in the Dancin Renee and a third in the Union Avenue Aug. 11.

"She ran hard last year, and she just needed a little break. The one thing I've learned about fillies, if you give them a little time and they run a little bit backward their first couple of starts you've just got to keep going and find the right spot. Once they get back into that winning mode, they're good again. She's a winner and she'll get another try."

Safe Conduct: WellSpring's Canadian-bred 5-year-old son of Bodemeister won the Queen's Plate in 2021 and has won once and placed in four stakes since while pushing his lifetime earnings to \$770,694. Sixth in the Oceanport at Monmouth Park Aug. 13, he might be at something of a crossroads.

"It may be even, at his age, time to cut him. I don't think that it's too far into his age I just think with a horse that old it takes more time to get over it. I had a 5-year-old horse who was a pain in the ass. He would hit the board, hit the board, hit the board, and not win. We gelded him and it took a couple of months to make the transition, but he was good afterward. He's a big, strong, solid horse but his mind is never 100 percent on racing. He won the Queen's Plate, man it was great to win that, and he's won three other races but even when he was 2 years old he was a pain in the ass. We worked him on the turf one time, he saw a gray pony, he spooked and dumped the rider, stepped on him, knocked over a traffic cone which scared him and he ended up in a ditch. I had to go in the ditch and get him out. Then he won here. That's the kind of horse he was and still is a little bit. I put blinkers on him, I wish I could have jumped over the rail and taken



them off. He was like, 'I am not going to run with these.' I tried a tongue tie, same thing. That's the kind of horse he is and maybe if we change his attitude a little bit it'll help. There's nothing deep enough there for him to be a stallion."

Assertive Attitude: WellSpring's 3-year-old Violence gelding finished second in his only start last year and was sixth after getting bumped leaving the gate in a \$40,000 maiden-claimer comeback Thursday.

"He was second in a three-horse field so it might not have been as good a race as it appeared, then he was injured. We had him in a maiden 20 and it rained and we were concerned about his injury so we wanted to protect him a little bit. We don't ever want to run horses where they're in jeopardy of getting hurt."

Albedo: WellSpring's 2-year-old New York-bred gelding by Leofric finished sixth in his debut July 16. The experience will help.

"He ran a little green and we expect him to come back and run a better race. We don't press on our 2-year-olds so if they run the first time, get some experience and run OK, that's good enough for us. Now we'll see. He ran OK and will run back at the end of the meet."

Itsallcomintogetha: Hilly Fields Stable's 3-year-old colt won the Cab Calloway division of the New York Stallion Series stakes program here July 20 and returned with a fourth in the Rick Violette against three Calloway rivals Thursday. Another with deep ties to the barn via sire Weekend Hideaway and dam Ladywell Court, the two-time winner didn't get the same trip for jockey Jose Gomez in the Violette — a scenario Serpe sort of predicted a day earlier.

"He ran hard, really hard, to win that race. That can take its toll a little bit, but these are the options we have. He's a tough little horse, from a tough family. They're the same horses but the scenarios changed a little bit. Jose did a great job slowing down the fractions last time so he had horse at the finish and we're going to see how that plays out. It might not play out the same way."

What's it like to train horses from the same family?

"It's horse racing. It happens and it's cool, it is. Being Betty is like her mother. Lady Joan was

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 8

a nice racehorse, but she was nasty and hard to train sometimes. She would go out on the track some days and just decide she wasn't going to back up or go forward or whatever. Sometimes horses do that because they have an injury or something is wrong. Not her. But she was a runner and it helps to know things about them. Being Betty is a young horse, *Itsallcomintogetha* is a nice horse and they've got good futures."

Miscreant: Four-year-old Classic Empire filly won on synthetic at Gulfstream park in March and was eighth in starter allowance company on the dirt here July 13, her first start since May. In something of a trend, she's on the also-eligible list for Sunday's first race.

"She's turf. We keep trying to get her in a race. She was in and a race came off the turf, another race didn't go. Now we're getting to the end of the meet and she hasn't run."

Star Sequence: Unraced New York-bred Leofric colt owned by WellSpring breezed five times at Belmont and once here while learning early lessons.

"He's doing OK, maybe he'll run the last week of the meet or, more likely, opening week at Aqueduct. I like bringing 2-year-olds here. We sent two home because some just get so far and they've had enough. If you force them to go on,

they can get sour, not want to train or just be finished. He's coming along."

Fast Kimmie: Purchased privately by WellSpring, the 3-year-old Oscar Performance filly finished fourth in April and was sixth at Belmont in June. She's in Sunday's first, a \$50,000 non-winners of two claimer on the turf.

"She was in, the race came off the turf and we put her in a race that didn't go. We've got three or four horses like her — we've entered but we haven't been able to get them up there yet. You can't do anything about the weather."

Best Impression: Purchased for \$22,000 via Fasig-Tipton's digital sale last year, the 2-year-old Union Rags filly has been training — and growing — all summer.

"She a big, giant kind of horse but she's progressing. She's more likely to run in September/October, something like that. You can't press on young horses like that. She's going to be 17 hands and whatever. You've just got to take your time with those horses. We've got her down at the end of the barn and we might have to move her because this barn kind of sinks to that end and the rider has to get off her to go in the stall."

Weekend Hideaway: A fixture of the stable tour for years won 13 races — including five wins in 13 starts at Saratoga Race Course — for Serpe and owner Red and Black Stable while piling up \$1,144,922 in earnings. The son of Speightstown retired after the 2018 season, and was a stallion without ever quite breaking through. Now, he's



Susie Raisher/NYRA Photo

A Grade 1 winner in last year's Spinaway late in the Saratoga meet, Leave No Trace is nearing a comeback race for Phil Serpe.

a gelding and at Old Friends Farm in Kentucky and awaiting a return to his native New York for a full retirement at Old Friends Cabin Creek. Serpe wishes the stallion career panned out (*Itsallcomintogetha* and a few others are doing their parts), but understands.

"He could have been a good sire in New York but if you don't have the mares to get to them

you're kind of stuck. There has to be something in that female line too for it to work and that's what happened to him. We'll bring him back when there's a vacancy at the Old Friends here. We're going to make sure he has a good life and go see him as often as we can. In my job, if they can walk out of here sound and get to somewhere I know they're safe, that's a win."



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Almost

Sacred Wish meets
Wet Paint, others
in iconic Spa Grade 1

BY JOE CLANCY AND TOM LAW

From a front-row box seat in the clubhouse just above the Saratoga Race Course winner's circle, George Weaver went into full-on root mode – he stood tall, raised his hand, shook out his wrist, leaned, leaned some more and begged for the finish line.

The trainer didn't get it, not in time anyway, and he forced himself to settle for a game second by Sacred Wish in the Grade 1 Coaching Club American Oaks July 22. She lost by a neck to Wet Paint and tackles that rival again, plus eight others, in today's Grade 1 Alabama. The 1 1/4-mile race, worth

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Dave Harmon
Wet Paint (left) reels in Sacred Wish in the CCA Oaks.

\$600,000, goes as the ninth of 11 races with a post time of 5:45 p.m.

Weaver was proud of his 3-year-old filly's effort, and believes she will show up and deliver it again, even if that defeat was tough to take.

"She ran a big race, I thought she was a win-

ner and was saying, 'Man, where is the wire' there late," he said Thursday morning outside his barn on the Oklahoma side. "She bounced back pretty good. I don't think she had any ill effects from it. I know horses know when they win, definitely, or at

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 SPENDTHRIFT

Alabama —

■ Continued from page 12

least they seem to. She didn't win, but she's trained well since, seems pretty happy and is in good form."

Owned by Black Type Thoroughbreds, Swinbank Stable, Steve Adkisson, Christopher Dunn and Anthony Spinazzola, Sacred Wish has breezed twice since the Coaching Club – a half in :50 on the Oklahoma Aug. 4 and five-eighths in 1:01.55 on the main track a week ago. The Kentucky-bred didn't race at 2, won at Oaklawn Park in March for Spinazzola and trainer Lynn Chleborard, was sold privately and joined Weaver's team at Gulfstream Park.

She's been second three times since – the Grade 2 Gulfstream Park Oaks in April, a Belmont Park allowance in June and then the CCA Oaks. The only bad race came when she finished last of nine in the Grade 2 Black-Eyed Susan at Pimlico May 19. That 16 1/2-length defeat was so bad Weaver doesn't give it much credence.

"I worked her one time and ran her in the Gulfstream Park Oaks and she kind of showed she had some quality finishing second there," Weaver said. "She's not a brilliant work horse. If you ask her to, she'll go fast but she's kind of workmanlike in her breezes. She's shown now, except for the race at Pimlico, that she does have quality."

Sacred Wish breaks from the inside post for John



Dave Harmon

Wet Paint and Flavien Prat try for their second Saratoga Grade 1 of 2023 in today's Alabama.

Velazquez, who gets back aboard after missing the CCA Oaks while at Monmouth Park for the Haskell. Manny Franco deputized and nearly pulled off a Grade 1. That day, Sacred Wish stalked She's Lookin Lucky early, took the lead before the quarter pole, stretched the advantage to 2 1/2 length but couldn't quite make it stand up as Wet Paint rallied from fifth in a five-horse field. Saturday features a bigger field and another furlong. None of the 10 have tried the distance.

"Was that distance that got her the other day? I don't know," Weaver said. "Most of the time I feel like if a horse can get a mile-and-an-eighth they'll get a mile-and-a-quarter, but it's obviously a ques-

tion mark for her, all of them really. She ran well over the track which is a plus."

Weaver called the inside post – she broke from there at Pimlico – a negative, though he'll leave strategy up to Velazquez. The trainer said his filly doesn't need to be in front, though she'll be ahead of closers such as Wet Paint and some others in Saturday's field.

"I don't know if the rail had anything to do with it, but it didn't go well," he said of the Black-Eyed Susan. "I'll let Johnny do the thinking on that. From the rail, if you go to the lead then you're going to be the first one that gets attacked. But then again, speed on the rail is the shortest, easiest way to get around there if you can dictate. We'll see."

Weaver finished fifth with Tizahit in the 2010 Alabama, and called the race – first run in 1872 – one of Saratoga's headliners.

"The Alabama has such prestige," he said. "Winning an Alabama at Saratoga would be huge. It's one of those marquee races you think about when you think about Saratoga."

Brad Cox respects the history of Saratoga more and more with every summer and hopes to make some when he sends out Godolphin's Wet Paint in the Alabama.

The determined winner of the CCA Oaks could join elite company if she completes the CCA Oaks-Alabama double today. She'd become the 20th two-time Grade 1 winner at a single Sara-

Continued On Page 16

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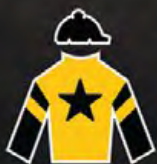
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WEST POINT
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Alabama —

■ Continued from page 14

toga meet, joining CCA Oaks-Alabama winner and eventual champion 3-year-old filly Nest last year.

“That’s huge,” Cox said of the chance to win two Grade 1s.

Who else could she potentially join? According to statistics provided by Equibase Co., champions and Hall of Famers Easy Goer, Go For Wand, Heavenly Prize and Songbird pulled the feat, along with the likes of Versailles Treaty, November Snow, Society Selection, Lawyer Ron, Princess Of Sylmar, Stopchargingmaria and Ginger Punch.

Wet Paint, who drew post two and is 2-1 on the morning line for Flavien Prat, breezed twice on the Oklahoma Training Track between the CCA Oaks and the Alabama. She went a half in :48.85 the morning of the Whitney and followed it up with a 5-furlong tightener in 1:02.24. Cox called the latter “a super good work” and expects a big run from the five-time winner in the Alabama.

“I love how she’s doing physically and how she’s training, so I expect her to run big,” he said Friday. “She’ll need to, it’s a solid race. If she brings her A game, which I expect her to, she’ll be tough.”

Randy Morse will always remember May 19, 2023, but not solely for the obvious reason of winning the

Black-Eyed Susan Stakes with Taxed the day before the Preakness.

“I’ll never forget the look on his face when I came down those stairs,” Morse said of the filly’s owner Richard Bahde. “They were interviewing me or something, and I looked out there and he just had that look like he couldn’t believe what just happened. That was a big deal for somebody that had never been at that level. And the way she did it. She really ran a good race that day.”

Morse wouldn’t mind giving Bahde reason for another shocked look on an even bigger stage in the Alabama. The daughter of Collected is 8-1 on the morning line, coming off a somewhat troubled second in the Grade 3 Indiana Oaks July 8 at Horseshoe Indianapolis in her first start after the Black-Eyed Susan.

Morse thought about running Taxed in the Coaching Club American Oaks, but opted to keep the filly he and Bahde claimed for \$50,000 last fall closer to home. She finished 1 ¼ lengths behind Alabama entrant Defining Purpose in the Indiana Oaks after breaking from the rail, brushing with a rival at the break and being forced about six paths off the fence on the far turn while making her run.

“Her last race she didn’t break good and got in behind a slow pace,” Morse said. “I’m glad it’s a bigger field, it looks like there will be more pace. That’s what we want. She’s got

Continued On Page 18



Taxed tackles Grade 1 company in today’s Alabama.

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DATAMAN
Bald Eagle Derby
winner at Laurel
8.13.2023

Alabama —

■ Continued from page 16

enough speed, she can be somewhat up close as long as she breaks well.”

Morse and Bahde claimed Taxed out of a win in a 1-mile maiden claiming race at Churchill Downs in late November. She wintered at Oaklawn Park and made the key preps leading up to and ran in the Grade 3 Fantasy Stakes. She finished second in the Fantasy but didn't have sufficient points to draw in off the also-eligible list for the Kentucky Oaks.

Bahde likened that to a fortunate break when she came into the Black-Eyed Susan fresh. She won the 9-furlong Black-Eyed Susan after stalking from sixth and blowing past Hoosier Philly in the lane under Rafael Bejarano, who returns to ride today.

Morse brought small strings to Saratoga on and off from 1997 to 2013, competing in stakes with the likes of Torrid Sand, Prospector's Song, Morluc, No Distinction and Jan's Perfect Star. Based in Kentucky most of the year and at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs, Ark., over the winter and spring, Morse claimed Well Noted at the 1999 meet out of a victory and won the Grade 3 Razorback Handicap the following March.



Tod Marks

Gambling Girl.

Bahde and Morse won a three-way shake for Taxed last November.

“We got lucky. You used to go for a horse like that and you wouldn't even have to shake,” Morse said. “With Well Noted, we claimed him off Gasper Moschera up here and we didn't shake for the horse. That was a good claim for us.”

Hall of Fame trainer Todd Pletcher bids for his fifth Alabama and third straight with the trio of Julia Shining, Chocolate

Gelato and Gambling Girl.

Stonestreet Stable's homebred Julia Shining, the 5-1 third choice from post three under Luis Saez, makes her first start in more than four months. The daughter of Curlin was also entered in the Kentucky Oaks, didn't draw in and was freshened up for a late summer and fall return. She won the 9-furlong Grade 2 Demoiselle Stakes in her second start last season and hasn't been out since a close third behind Defining Purpose in the Grade 1 Ashland April 7 at Keeneland.

Gambling Girl faces Wet Paint and Sacred Wish again after finishing 8 3/4 lengths back in third in the CCA Oaks. Second in the Kentucky Oaks two starts back, the New York-bred daughter of Dialed In is one of five in the field with a victory at Saratoga. Owned by Repole Stable, she is 8-1 on the morning

line under Irad Ortiz Jr. from post seven.

Repole also runs Chocolate Gelato, who breaks just to Gambling Girl's inside and is 15-1 on the morning line for Jose Ortiz. Winner of a maiden last summer at Saratoga and the Grade 1 Frizette, the daughter of Practical Joke hasn't been out since finishing fourth in the 6-furlong Jersey Girl Stakes June 11 at Belmont.

Trainer Chad Brown tries for his second Alabama victory with two runners – Juddmonte's Fireline and Klaravich Stable's Randomized.

Randomized, the 9-2 second choice from post eight under Joel Rosario, comes off a victory in the Wilton Stakes going 1 mile at Saratoga July 14. Fireline, a daughter of Arrogate who broke her maiden by 13 1/2 lengths last fall at Aqueduct, exits a fourth in the Grade 3 Delaware Oaks as the odds-on favorite. She's 12-1 from post five under Javier Castellano for the Alabama.

Trainer Kenny McPeck bids for his third Alabama victory with Katsumi Yoshida's Defining Purpose, who drew the outside post in the field of 10 and is 10-1 on the line for regular rider Brian Hernandez Jr. The daughter of Cross Traffic finished seventh in the Kentucky Oaks after winning the Ashland Stakes at 20-1.

Valene Farm's Louisiana-bred Cross Traffic filly Sabra Tuff, fourth in a 9-furlong allowance-optional on Opening Day, completes the field at 30-1 from post four for trainer Dallas Stewart and jockey Reylu Gutierrez.

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Sunday Best

Harrigan's Kentucky shipper aims for second Grade 2 score

BY SEAN CLANCY

Bill Harrigan keeps a set of dark blue and red silks ready. The longtime pinhooker buys eight to 10 yearlings for his partnership each year and aims to sell all as 2-year-olds. About once a year, the gavel doesn't fall, and the silks are put to use.

Heavenly Sunday carries those silks in today's Grade 2 Lake Placid. Trained by Brad Cox and ridden by Tyler Gaffalione, the dark bay filly breaks from the rail as the 6-1 sixth-choice in a field of eight 3-year-old fillies. The \$200,000 stakes, the co-feature on the 11-race card, runs at 5:02 p.m.

Harrigan purchased Heavenly Sunday privately at Keeneland September after the daughter of Candy Ride failed to sell for \$170,000. Bred

LAKE PLACID STAKES PREVIEW

by Randal Family Trust, she was broken at Harrigan's Miacomet Farm in Georgetown and prepped at Payson Park in the winter. Catalogued as Hip 107 in the OBS April Sale, the Kentucky-bred filly worked a furlong in 10 seconds before becoming the 30th horse to scratch from the sale.

Harrigan wasn't worried.

"We didn't get her sold in the 2-year-old sales, so I said, 'Fine, we'll keep her.' I knew what we had, or I thought I knew what we had. She was brilliant for me all winter," Harrigan said. "No worries with me. She was the best 2-year-old we ever sent to a

Continued On Page 21



Tod Marks

Surge Capacity looks to add the Lake Placid to her win in the Lake George last month.

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SCAN ME

Lake Placid —

■ Continued from page 20

2-year-old sale. We didn't get her sold and we took a shot. That's how things go. She had a great demeanor, she was very sound, I never get a chance to keep a horse like this. We had high, high anticipation of what she could be."

And still do.

Heavenly Sunset returned to Harrigan at Payson Park and then moved with him to Keeneland in the spring. When Brad Cox had room, she transferred to the multiple Eclipse Award-winning trainer. She won her debut on the turf at Horseshoe Indianapolis Sept. 27 and came right back to win an allowance on the turf at Keeneland Oct. 28.

"The two Breeders' Cup races, a week later, the numbers came out almost identical," Harrigan said. "So, I talked to Brad and said, 'Let's try to get to the Appalachian and the Edgewood.'"

Heavenly Sunday made her 3-year-old debut in the Sweetest Chant, finishing third in the Grade 3 stakes at Gulfstream Park in February. Two months later, she finished third in the Grade 2 Appalachian at Keeneland. A month later, she banked the Grade 2 Edgewood.

"Winning that race at Churchill was this amazing thrill for everybody," Harrigan said. "Heavenly Sunday is very, very special and is an amazing story for our farm. She's been a great flagbearer for our farm. The amount of congratulations we got, it was like, 'Wow.' We really appreciate it all."

Heavenly Sunday came back to finish second in the Tepin at Ellis Park July 1 to increase her earnings to \$473,133.

"She'll run well Saturday, I'm pretty sure they'll know she's in there," Harrigan said. "She's been up here since the end of July, she's trained well, she's done everything you want her to do, gained weight, worked well. I would be surprised if she doesn't really run well."

Heavenly Sunday has posted four half-mile breezes on the Oklahoma turf this summer. A model of consistency, she's hit each one between :48.55 and :49.49.

Harrigan and his team, led by long-time farm manager Mark McEntee, have had 31 Grade 1 winners through the training barn at Miacomet over the past 27 years. A.P. Indy, Mineshaft, Miss Alleged, Storm Flag Flying, El Condor Pasa, Far Bridge...to name a

Continued On Page 25

KEENELAND September Yearlings

BOOK ONE

Monday 9/11 • Barn 6

37 c. AUTHENTIC – Beyond Blame
Out of a GSW and dam of G1 SP Loggins.
Family of STREET BOSS, JACK CHRISTOPHER

Tuesday 9/12 • Barn 6

222 f. GUN RUNNER – Mama Yay
Half-sister to SW, GSP EMPIRE HOUSE out
of a full sister to G1 SW DIALED IN

BOOK TWO

Wednesday 9/13 • Barn 34

638 c. NOT THIS TIME – New Angel (GB)
Out of a daughter of GSW ANGLE TERRACE.
Family of Champion ORDER OF ST. GEORGE

712 c. MACLEAN'S MUSIC – Si Si Tequila
2nd foal out of a Stakes-placed half-sister
to G2 SW/G1 SP RUN AWAY

756 f. MUNNINGS – Tropical Wave
1st foal out of a mare from family of G1 SW
GENERAL QUARTERS and G2 SW A SHIN TOP

BOOK THREE

Saturday 9/16 • Barn 11

1176 c. MUNNINGS – Bella Aurelia

1242 c. VOLATILE – Exclude (GB)

1244 f. MCKINZIE – Fancy and Flashy

1307 f. NYQUIST – Kauai Katie

1421 f. GOOD MAGIC – Ragtime Hope

1433 c. GHOSTZAPPER – Roberta Turner

1445 f. MUNNINGS – Saratoga Belle

1456 c. COLLECTED – She Is Bedazzling

1487 f. PRACTICAL JOKE – Star Super

1488 f. CARAVAGGIO – Stayclassysandiego

1500 f. LIAM'S MAP – Sumptuous

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SARATOGA ENTRIES

Saturday, August 19.

1ST (1:10PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, 6F

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

1	.....1	.....Risk It	.....T. Gaffalione	.....S. Asmussen	.....4-1
2	.....2	.....Remember the Name	.....L. Saez	.....R. Handal	.....10-1
3	.....3	.....Hunt Ball	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....3-1
4	.....4	.....Middle Market	.....J. Castellano	.....C. Brown	.....6-1
5	.....5	.....World Fair	.....J. Leparoux	.....R. Moquett	.....10-1
6	.....6	.....Act of Mutiny	.....J. Ortiz	.....C. McGaughey III	.....5-1
7	.....7	.....Special Element	.....J. Lezcano	.....W. Mott	.....7-2
8	.....8	.....Gypsy Mischief	.....M. Franco	.....H. Motion	.....8-1

2ND (1:42PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

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

1	.....1	.....Houlton	.....D. Davis	.....M. Maker	.....8-1
2	.....2	.....Tom Collins	.....J. Rosario	.....C. McGaughey III	.....4-1
3	.....3	.....Divine Empire	.....J. Lezcano	.....W. Mott	.....8-1
4	.....4	.....Buffoon (FR)	.....R. Silvera	.....M. Maker	.....10-1
5	.....5	.....Dancing Groom	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....A. Sano	.....6-1
6	.....6	.....Walley World	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....7-2
7	.....7	.....Skylar's Artemis	.....J. Velazquez	.....J. Terranova, II	.....12-1
8	.....8	.....Blast Furnace	.....T. Gaffalione	.....C. DeVaux	.....5-1
9	.....9	.....Dangerous Driver	.....J. Torres	.....J. Jimenez	.....30-1
10	.....10	.....Get Ready to Rock	.....T. McCarthy	.....J. Kimmel	.....12-1
11	.....AE	.....Rocket Night	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....8-1
12	.....AE	.....Real Men Violin	.....J. Leparoux	.....K. McPeek	.....6-1
13	.....AE	.....Fortune Seller	.....J. Ortiz	.....K. Rice	.....7-2
14	.....AE	.....Spirit Prince	.....M. Franco	.....C. Clement	.....5-2
15	.....AE-MTO	.....Right to Vote	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....3-1

3RD (2:16PM). \$149,500, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	.....2	.....My Sweet Affair	.....J. Castellano	.....G. Weaver	.....7-2
1a	.....9	.....Miss Domina	.....M. Franco	.....G. Weaver	.....7-2
2	.....1	.....Georgees Spirit	.....F. Prat	.....J. Abreu	.....9-2
3	.....3	.....Violet Gibson (IRE)	.....J. Ortiz	.....S. Joseph, Jr	.....10-1
4	.....4	.....Numero Seis	.....T. Gaffalione	.....J. Sharp	.....5-1
5	.....5	.....Golden Dagger	.....D. Davis	.....W. Morey	.....10-1
6	.....6	.....Shootouttheights	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....W. Ward	.....3-1
7	.....7	.....Dontlookbackatall	.....J. Rosario	.....C. Clement	.....4-1
8	.....8	.....You Gotta Have Fun (IRE)	.....L. Saez	.....M. Maker	.....12-1
9	.....AE-MTO	.....Howyourcashflow	.....M. Franco	.....R. Rodriguez	.....4-1
10	.....AE-MTO	.....Obrigada	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....5-2
11	.....AE-MTO	.....Little Prankster	.....T. Gaffalione	.....P. Bauer	.....7-5

4TH (2:46PM). \$42,000, CLM \$16,000, 4 YO'S & UP, 6F

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

1	.....1	.....Ensign Parker	.....D. Davis	.....R. Handal	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....Handsome Cat	.....O. Hernandez Moreno	.....D. Jacobson	.....9-2
3	.....3	.....Flamingo Hawk	.....M. Franco	.....R. Atras	.....10-1
4	.....4	.....Winning Drive	.....T. McCarthy	.....M. Kantarmaci	.....15-1
5	.....5	.....Ragtime Blues	.....L. Saez	.....P. Walder	.....6-1
6	.....6	.....In Sky We Trust	.....K. Carmouche	.....S. Lake	.....5-1
7	.....7	.....Poppy's Pride	.....J. Lezcano	.....G. Rodriguez	.....8-1
8	.....8	.....Quickflash	.....K. Davis	.....R. Sells	.....20-1
9	.....9	.....Air Show	.....J. Torres	.....R. Rodriguez	.....12-1
10	.....10	.....No More Talk	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....W. Potts	.....4-1
11	.....11	.....Great Workout	.....R. Silvera	.....M. Maker	.....20-1

5TH (3:18PM). \$149,500, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, 6F

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

1	.....3	.....Lafitte's Fleet	.....J. Rosario	.....R. Rodriguez	.....7-5
1a	.....4	.....Daufuskie Island	.....T. McCarthy	.....R. Rodriguez	.....7-5
2	.....1	.....Harrington	.....L. Saez	.....N. Moubarak	.....15-1
3	.....2	.....Abadin	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....T. Pletcher	.....3-1
4	.....5	.....Tivy	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....12-1
5	.....6	.....A La Carte	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....8-1
6	.....7	.....Leddy	.....K. Davis	.....C. Goberdhan	.....20-1
7	.....8	.....Notable Bob (CHI)	.....J. Castellano	.....M. Arenas	.....15-1
8	.....9	.....Durante	.....M. Franco	.....D. Jacobson	.....3-1

6TH (3:52PM). \$50,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1 1/16M (TURF)

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

1	.....1	.....Miss Barb	.....T. McCarthy	.....M. Nevin	.....20-1
2	.....2	.....Outta the Cloud	.....R. Gutierrez	.....J. Tebbutt	.....30-1
3	.....3	.....Berning Honor	.....F. Prat	.....D. Schettino	.....7-2
4	.....4	.....Dream Road	.....K. Carmouche	.....E. Persaud	.....8-1
5	.....5	.....Pinstripepizzo	.....R. Santana, Jr	.....H. De Paz	.....8-1
6	.....6	.....Samaritan's Purse	.....L. Saez	.....H. Bond	.....12-1
7	.....7	.....Jayla	.....J. Castellano	.....J. Antonucci	.....10-1
8	.....8	.....Stone of Destiny	.....J. Velazquez	.....D. Donk	.....8-1
9	.....9	.....Leadership Ability	.....T. Gaffalione	.....C. Brown	.....5-2
10	.....10	.....Lem Me Drink	.....D. Davis	.....B. Levine	.....5-1
11	.....AE	.....Arisaema	.....F. Prat	.....J. Abreu	.....3-1
12	.....AE	.....So Are You	.....S. Uske	.....P. Meadow	.....50-1
13	.....AE	.....Bella Sonadora	.....M. Luzzi	.....C. Figueroa, Jr	.....50-1
14	.....AE-MTO	.....Flutie Flakes	.....D. Davis	.....J. Englehart	.....12-1
15	.....AE-MTO	.....Lieutenant's legacy	.....K. Davis	.....D. Schettino	.....20-1
16	.....AE-MTO	.....Mucho Mama Mia	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....J. Englehart	.....6-1

7TH (4:26PM). \$200,000, STK - THE LAKE PLACID, 3 YO, F, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

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

1	.....1	.....Heavenly Sunday	.....T. Gaffalione	.....B. Cox	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....Aspray	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....7-2
3	.....3	.....Gloria's Princess	.....L. Saez	.....B. Walsh	.....9-2
4	.....4	.....Tax Implications (GB)	.....M. Franco	.....C. Brown	.....5-1
5	.....5	.....Junipermarshmallow	.....J. Ortiz	.....T. Pletcher	.....12-1
6	.....6	.....Soviet Excess	.....D. Davis	.....T. Pletcher	.....15-1
7	.....7	.....Surge Capacity	.....J. Rosario	.....C. Brown	.....3-1
8	.....8	.....Prerequisite	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....C. Brown	.....9-2
9	.....AE-MTO	.....Leave No Trace	.....J. Lezcano	.....P. Serpe	.....2-1
10	.....AE-MTO	.....Undervalued Asset	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....C. Brown	.....4-5

8TH (5:02PM). \$162,500, AOC \$80,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1M

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

1	.....1	.....Movie Moxey	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....4-1
2	.....2	.....Battle Bling	.....K. Carmouche	.....R. Atras	.....15-1
3	.....3	.....Gerrymander	.....J. Rosario	.....C. Brown	.....5-2
4	.....4	.....Favor	.....T. Gaffalione	.....T. Pletcher	.....6-1
5	.....5	.....Royal Take Charge	.....R. Gutierrez	.....A. Stall, Jr	.....10-1
6	.....6	.....Mosienko	.....L. Saez	.....D. Lalman	.....10-1
7	.....7	.....Nostalgic	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....3-1
8	.....8	.....Misty Veil	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....M. Maker	.....6-1

9TH (5:45PM). \$600,000, THE ALABAMA PRESENTED BY KEENELAND SALES, 3YO, F, 1 1/4M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	.....1	.....Sacred Wish	.....J. Velazquez	.....G. Weaver	.....8-1
2	.....2	.....Wet Paint	.....F. Prat	.....B. Cox	.....2-1
3	.....3	.....Julia Shining	.....L. Saez	.....T. Pletcher	.....5-1
4	.....4	.....Sabra Tuff	.....R. Gutierrez	.....D. Stewart	.....30-1
5	.....5	.....Fireline	.....J. Castellano	.....C. Brown	.....12-1
6	.....6	.....Chocolate Gelato	.....J. Ortiz	.....T. Pletcher	.....15-1
7	.....7	.....Gambling Girl	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....T. Pletcher	.....8-1
8	.....8	.....Randomized	.....J. Rosario	.....C. Brown	.....9-2
99TaxedR. BejaranoR. Morse8-1
1010Defining PurposeB. Hernandez, JrK. McPeek10-1

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SARATOGA ENTRIES

10TH (6:19PM). \$156,000, AOC \$62,500, 3 YO'S & UP, 1M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

1	.....1	Duke of Hazzard (FR)	.....K. Carmouche	.....R. Dutrow, Jr.	.....8-1
2	.....2	Napoleonic War	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....7-2
3	.....3	Call Me Harry	.....L. Saez	.....F. Abreu	.....10-1
4	.....4	Storm the Court	.....D. Davis	.....T. Amoss	.....8-1
5	.....5	Whisper Not (GB)	.....T. Gaffalione	.....B. Walsh	.....9-2
6	.....6	Maxwell Esquire	.....J. Rosario	.....R. Rodriguez	.....20-1
7	.....7	Runningwscissors	.....J. Ortiz	.....J. Sharp	.....10-1
8	.....8	Floki's Flight	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....D. Romans	.....15-1
9	.....9	Verbal	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....C. Brown	.....5-2
10	.....10	Rinaldi	.....J. Torres	.....H. Bond	.....12-1
11	.....AE-MTO	Magnolia Midnight	.....Rider TBA	.....L. Rice	.....10-1
12	.....AE-MTO	Accretive	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....C. Brown	.....2-1
13	.....AE-MTO	Tonal Impact	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....8-5
14	.....AE-MTO	Uncle Moonlight	.....K. Carmouche	.....M. Nevin	.....9-2

11TH (6:52PM). \$50,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

1	.....AE	Ripe for Mischief	.....L. Saez	.....H. Bond	.....5-2
1a	.....AE-MTO	Petrolo	.....J. Torres	.....H. Bond	.....5-2
2	.....1	Onofrio	.....R. Gutierrez	.....G. Giglio	.....20-1
3	.....2	Impulsive Spending	.....O. Hernandez Moreno	.....M. Arenas	.....20-1
4	.....3	Heroneandonly	.....E. Greenidge	.....G. Goodwin	.....10-1
5	.....4	Okaloosa	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....H. De Paz	.....5-1
6	.....5	Kid Emerald	.....D. Davis	.....M. Miceli	.....8-1
7	.....6	Majestic Arc	.....J. Torres	.....L. Shivismangal	.....15-1
8	.....7	Kern River	.....M. Franco	.....M. Maker	.....3-1
9	.....8	It's Not My Fault	.....K. Davis	.....B. Brown	.....15-1
10	.....9	Henson	.....J. Velazquez	.....B. Cox	.....8-5
11	.....10	Somama Beach	.....J. Martinez	.....S. Jerkens	.....20-1
12	.....AE	Spoofy	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....C. Baker	.....8-1
13	.....AE	War Prince	.....M. Franco	.....R. Atras	.....9-2
14AE-MTO	Blue Plate SpecialJ. OrtizL. Rice2-1
15AE-MTO	Woodside WarriorRider TBAM. Friedman10-1

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Tod Marks

Mosienko seeks her fourth Saratoga win in the eighth race.

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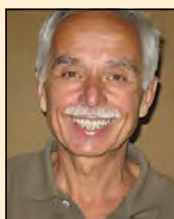
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The **POWER** Grid



John Shapazian



Tom Law



Rob Whitlock



Charles Bedard



Jessica Paquette

Race	John Shapazian	Tom Law	Rob Whitlock	Charles Bedard	Jessica Paquette
1	Risk It Special Element Hunt Ball	Risk It Hunt Ball Special Element	Special Element Act Of Mutiny Hunt Ball	Risk It Hunt Ball Middle Market	Hunt Ball Risk It Gypsy Mischief
2	Right To Vote Blast Furnace Walley World	Right To Vote Tom Collins Walley World	Right To Vote Dancing Groom Blast Furnace	Right To Vote Buffoon Tom Collins	Walley World Tom Collins Skyler's Artemis
3	Little Prankster Shootoutthelights Weaver entry	Little Prankster Shootoutthelights My Sweet Affair	You Gotta Have Fun Little Prankster Dontlookbackatall	Little Prankster Georgees Spirit Weaver entry	Dontlookbackatall Georgees Spirit My Sweet Affair
4	Handsome Cat In Sky We Trust No More Talk	Ensign Parker No More Talk Handsome Cat	No More Talk Ragtime Blues Handsome Cat	Ensign Parker Air Show No More Talk	In Sky We Trust Ensign Parker Handsome Cat
5	Rodriguez entry Durante Abadin	Rodriguez entry Abadin A La Carte	Durante Abadin Daufuskie Island	Durante Rodriguez entry Notable Bob	Abadin Daufuskie Island Durante
6	Berning Honor Leadership Ability Mucho Mama Mia	Leadership Ability Arisaema Jayla	Mucho Mama Mia Leadership Ability Dream Road	Mucho Mama Mia Burning Honor Lem Me Drink	Jayla Leadership Ability Dream Road
7	Undervalued Asset Aspray Tax Implications	Undervalued Asset Surge Capacity Heavenly Sunday	Tax Implications Prerequisite Aspray	Gloria's Princess Aspray Heavenly Sunday	Gloria's Princess Aspray Surge Capacity
8	Gerrymander Nostalgic Movie Moxy	Nostalgic Gerrymander Royal Take Charge	Nostalgic Favor Gerrymander	Nostalgic Gerrymander Misty Veil	Nostalgic Gerrymander Favor
9	Wet Paint Taxed Randomized	Wet Paint Taxed Gambling Girl	Taxed Wet Paint Gambling Girl	Taxed Wet Paint Defining Purpose	Julia Shining Sacred Wish Wet Paint
10	Tonal Impact Napoleonic War Verbal	Accretive Verbal Storm The Court	Call Me Harry Storm the Court Verbal	Tonal Impact Whisper Not Call Me Harry	Whisper Not Verbal Napoleonic War
11	Henson Blue Plate Special Keen River	Henson Blue Plate Special Okaloosa	Blue Plate Special Henson It's Not My Fault	Bond entry Henson Kid Emerald	Henson It's Not My Fault Kern River
2023 Records	85/274	74/274	70/274	87/274	50/274



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Lake Placid —

■ Continued from page 21

few. Their bronze name plates hang on the lacquered barn wall.

“It’s a big reflection on the horses we’ve had to work with,” Harrigan said. “I’m not saying we have the secret to anything. We get good horses to work with. Most of the people I’ve had horses for are people who I know personally so it’s a lot of fun and very satisfying to see those horses go on.”

Miacomet has already enjoyed a successful season at Saratoga. Their homebred daughter of Omaha Beach and Complicated drew a \$750,000 bid from Live Oak Plantation on the first night of the Fasig-Tipton Select Sale. Harrigan purchased Complicated for \$110,000 at Keeneland November 2016. The Phipps Stable-bred daughter of Blame has produced \$1,055,000 in sales for Harrigan and partner Mike Pietrangelo. Churchtown, a 4-year-old son of Air Force Blue and Complicated, failed to sell twice and has banked \$304,989 for Harrigan, Pietrangelo and trainer Roger Attfield.

“For me, there is nothing like winning a race. Much less a really big race. For me, it’s not even close,” Harrigan said. “We’ve been fortunate to sell horses for a lot of money and we did at Saratoga two weeks ago but it’s nothing like winning a race. A lot of nervous anticipation heading into Saturday. I stopped by and visited her, she’s a really cool horse. She’s very friendly, responds when you when you talk to her and when you pet her.”

As always, the 3-year-old filly turf stakes centers around a Chad Brown battalion. The leading trainer at the meet unleashes four runners in search of his fifth win in the 3-year-old filly stakes. Brown has nabbed four of the last six runnings with Rushing Fall, Regal Glory, Technical Analysis and Haughty.

Owned by Ran Jan Racing, Aspray breaks from post two for Flavien Prat. The homebred daughter of Quality Road won her first three starts, including the Hilltop at Pimlico in May before finishing fourth in the Belmont Oaks July 8. Aspray is 7-2.

Tax Implications at 5-1 seeks her second career win after triumphing in her debut and placing second in three consecutive stakes starts. The Brit-

ish-bred daughter of Mehmas chased Surge Capacity in the Grade 3 Lake George. Owned by Klaravich Stable, the chestnut filly breaks from post four for Manny Franco.

Surge Capacity returns fresh off a win in the Lake George for Klaravich. Bred by her owner, the daughter of Flintshire won her debut at Monmouth Park in June and turned back Tax Implications by three quarters of a length in the Lake George. Joel Rosario returns at 3-1.

Prerequisite led for most of the way in the Belmont Oaks before finally succumbing to Irish raider Aspen Grove. Owned by First Row Partners and Team Hanley, the daughter of Upstart broke her maiden at Belmont in May and tacked on the Grade 2 Wonder Again in June. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides at 9-2 from the outside post.

Todd Pletcher counters Brown with two outsider entrants.

Junipermarshmallow aims for her third win in her third start for St Elias Stable. The daughter of Quality Road broke her maiden at Keeneland in October and came back to win the Wait A While in December. The homebred makes her 3-year-old debut off five works at Belmont and a turf work here Aug. 13. Jose Ortiz rides for the first time at 12-1.

Pletcher completes his hand with Soviet Excess. Owned and bred by Wertheimer and Frere, the daughter of Uncle Mo won on the synthetic and the turf at Gulfstream Park before finishing third in the Wild Applause. Dylan Davis takes the return call at 15-1 from post six.

Brendan Walsh sends out 9-2 third choice Gloria’s Princess for Harvey A. Clarke Racing Stable. The daughter of Cairo Prince broke her maiden over the Churchill Downs turf May 3 before wiring nine foes in an allowance on the turf at Ellis June 25. Luis Saez rides.

Brown is also represented if the stakes comes off the turf. Undervalued Asset has Irad Ortiz Jr. booked from the outside post. Owned by Klaravich, the daughter of Speightstown owns two wins from five starts, including a win here July 22.

WellSpring Stable’s Leave No Trace lines up again as a main track only entrant for trainer Phil Serpe. Jose Lezcano, aboard the daughter of Outwork in the Grade 1 Spinaway victory here last summer, takes the call. She’s 2-1 if the race comes off the turf.



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Above: Henry Stull (American, 1851-1913)

Down the Stretch (detail)

New Ride

Jockey Prat tackles driving game in Saratoga Harness match race

BY NOLAN CLANCY

Last year, early in the Saratoga meeting, veteran Standardbred trainer Kevin McDermott asked John Velasquez if he'd like to jog a harness horse.

The Hall of Fame jockey told him he wouldn't get behind a horse for a million dollars. But he knew someone who would: fellow NYRA-circuit jockey Flavien Prat.

"He told me he would never do it, but that Flavien's family is involved, and he introduced me to Flavien that day," McDermott said. "From the day we met each other, we basically hit it off like brothers. It's been a great, great relationship."

Starting last summer, Prat jogged horses just about every Monday and

Two Sport Showdown
Flavien Prat vs. Brett Beckwith
8:15 p.m. Saturday
Saratoga Harness, 342 Jefferson St.

Tuesday from McDermott's Barn 24 at Saratoga Harness. He's continued doing it just about every Saratoga dark day this summer.

"He tries not to on race days, he's pretty professional," McDermott said. "But on his days off, he's pretty much religious."

Prat's skills will be put to the test in an exhibition match race tonight at Saratoga Harness to benefit two Saratoga charities: Belmont Child Care Association's Faith's House and the Franklin Community Center.

Two-and-a-half hours after riding



Jessica Hallett

Flavien Prat gets in a practice lap at Saratoga Harness.

the morning line favorite Wet Paint in the Grade 1 Alabama, Prat will get in the race bike behind Foxe Ella, a 3-year-old filly trained by Scott Mongeon. She's won two races in 14 starts this year.

Opposing them is Cross Creek Samara and Brett Beckwith, the sec-

ond-leading driver at Saratoga Harness this year. Trained by Brian Cross, the filly has yet to find the winner's circle this year, but won twice in 2022.

Standardbred racing is unique in that trainers can drive their own hors-

Continued On Page 27

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Harness —

■ Continued from page 26

es in the mornings and even at the races if they want. Beckwith is what they call a catch driver hired to drive for a trainer, more akin to a Thoroughbred jockey. He drives 11 races tonight, in addition to the exhibition match race.

“They talk a lot of trash,” McDermott said. “Flavien only met him a couple of times, and when we pulled up training the other day, Brett said “This is bull—” because they’re driving trotters. He wants pacers.”

Pacing is the faster of the two Standardbred gaits, with stronger accelerations in the straightaways.

The two horses from the same division met July 28. Foxe Ella finished fifth, driven by her trainer, and Cross Creek Samara sixth, driven by Jim DeVaux, brother of Thoroughbred trainer Cherie DeVaux.

McDermott says Prat picked up harness driving as fast as anyone he’s ever seen try it.

“I’d be the first one to say he’s no good or nothing. He can ride in a professional race right now. He’s that good,” McDermott said. “The other day we trained in the race bikes together, and literally I was going to beat him on purpose. Like I wanted to just beat him. He went by me.”

Prat has experience working with Standardbreds as a child in France, but he didn’t do it in the United States until he connected with McDermott last year.

“It’s fun to do it again, it’s something that I always enjoyed doing, but on the West Coast I never had the opportunity to do it,” Prat said Wednesday. “I’m really happy to do it here.

“It’s different, you obviously don’t have the contact with the horse but in the meantime, being behind it gives you a lot of how they move and how they use the hind end and stuff like that.”

McDermott said Jose Lezcano is another frequent visitor, also hopping on some jog carts on his days off. Lezcano even follows harness racing closely enough to text McDermott congratulations after a win.

“Jose comes over and jogs too. He brings his kids over,” McDermott said. “Steve Asmussen’s supposed to be coming over, but he hasn’t been here yet.”

Continued On Page 28



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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
\$200,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
1 Mile (Turf)



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SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE KHRC

Harness —

Continued from page 27

McDermott and his daughter Mary have organized and promoted the match race since its inception. Mary spread the word on social media, gathered sponsors and did most of the organizational heavy lifting, according to Kevin. He appeared on America's Day at the Races on Fox Sports last week.

"It'd just be nice, out of this whole experience if we can get 50 new fans in the business. I'm from New Jersey, I raced in New Jersey for 30 years against the best horses in the world," McDermott said. "We promote the sport better. The sport is not promoted here."

Klaravich Stable won the fundraising contest for the right to outfit Prat, so he'll wear the red and white colors in the race bike tonight.

Faith's House is a childcare center opened in 2022 in Saratoga for the children of backstretch employees operated by the Belmont Child Care Association. The Franklin Community

Center is a Saratoga Springs organization founded in 1983 that includes a food pantry, education services and an afterschool program to support Saratoga families.


The match race is set for approximately 8:15 p.m., between the sixth and seventh races on a 15-race card. The first race is the New York Sires Stakes for 3-year-old male horses with a \$171,000 purse attached. First post is at 6:15. Saratoga Harness has food and ice cream vendors, autograph sessions, and a virtual reality harness racing experience to welcome new fans.

So who's going to win?

"Flavien. Not a question in my mind," McDermott said. "A lot of people think it's fixed, like a lot of people think we're letting Flavien win. A hundred percent no. I'd be so upset if that happened. We're letting them race."

"I'm not going there to lose, but we'll see," Prat said. "I think the most important thing is to have fun, it's for a charity and a good cause so hopefully a lot of people can come and enjoy the night."

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Hot Seat

Powerscourt, McGivern provide quite the ride at Saratoga Harness

BY NOLAN CLANCY

Late Thursday morning, a day after interviewing flat jockey Flavien Prat about harness racing, I crossed Nelson Avenue myself and took a ride in a two-seater jog cart with Standardbred trainer Mickey McGivern.

Our ride was Powerscourt, a 7-year-old winner of 16 races in 120 starts, with 32 seconds and 28 thirds. "A Cadillac" in the words of Cheryl McGivern, Mickey's wife and assistant trainer.

Powerscourt, a gelding by Credit Winner out of Miss Connor, was named the 2019 top 3-year-old trotter at Saratoga Harness.

It's hardly his biggest triumph, because in 2022 he fought an infection that nearly took his life. It's not our area of expertise, so I'll instead point you to an article called "McGivern's Miracle: The Story of Powerscourt" by Jessica Hallett on harnesslink.com.

Now back doing what he does at full strength, Powerscourt stood tacked up in McGivern's barn, waiting patiently for his jog cart and driver(s). The earner of \$275,984 was all business.

Once hooked up, Powerscourt led us out of the barn, in the middle of Saratoga Harness' half-mile training track, and turned right. Standardbreds jog (the equivalent of a Thor-

oughbred's daily gallop) turning right, and only turn left when training (working, in Thoroughbred language) or racing. McGivern said that Powerscourt, along with just about every Standardbred, knows that counterclockwise means go time.

Thursday, thankfully, was not go time, but an easy 3-mile jog in preparation for his race Friday. Powerscourt finished third Friday night in a hard-charging finish.

Powerscourt knew the drill, and picked up his trot. The training track is about four or five cart-widths across, plenty of space for the dozen-or-so horses on the track Thursday. It's not an oval and it's not flat, more of an oblong square with four distinct turns and an incline and decline. An orange barn cat sat a few feet outside the stone-dust track, supervising passersby.

Between races Wednesday, I asked Flavien Prat if I needed to know anything special before hopping in the sulky. He told me it's a different experience than being on a horse's back, but not as different as I might think. Then he told me to have fun.

Prat's assessment is accurate enough. The rhythm of it feels more or less the same as trotting on a horse. The difference lies more in where the power is coming from. If riding a horse is like riding a bike, sitting in



Joe Clancy

The Special's Nolan Clancy (with assistance from trainer Mickey McGivern) gets a feel of harness racing with Powerscourt.

the jog cart feels more like an electric scooter.

I took the reins for about a lap. Maybe Powerscourt is a special kind of pro, but the responsiveness to any and all cues surprised me. Steering is as you would expect, but it requires just gentle pressure on the left or right rein to move to either side of the track.

When it was time to head back to the barn after six laps, Powerscourt eased off his trot with a few "whoas" from his trainer and exited the track right, stopping outside the barn for

his passengers to dismount.

"They're obviously still all horses, and the care and the exercise program are the same," McGivern said. "It's similar, but also has a lot of differences. I think a lot of the people who do harness racing, a lot of us like the hands-on. As a trainer, I'm not really the manager, I actually do the training."

Special thanks to Joe Battaglia for being The Special's harness knowledge base and chief networker this week.

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BIG ASS FANS



Smart Buy

Cal-bred, Washington-sold Ship Cadet wins off-turf stakes

BY TOM LAW

Peter Proscia and David Staudacher will go just about anywhere in search of a horse they feel will fit their program.

They most often venture into the claiming ranks, landing such stalwarts as 2022 Claiming Crown Horse of the Year Invaluable and 2021 National HBPA Claiming Horse of the Year Special Reserve. Last fall, Staudacher and Nolan Ramsey, one of trainer Mike Maker's assistants, headed to the Pacific Northwest and came away with the second and third most expensive horses at the Washington Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Association summer yearling and mixed sale.

Ship Cadet, a California-bred son

SKIDMORE STAKES RECAP

of Midshipman out of Washington champion Bella Mia, cost \$79,000 and continued to look like a smart buy Friday with a victory in the \$150,000 Skidmore Stakes at Saratoga Race Course. Ridden by Manny Franco, Ship Cadet won the off-the-turf 5 ½-furlong stakes by 1 ¼ lengths for his second win in four starts. He's placed in two other stakes and boosted his bankroll to \$182,000.

"I can't take credit for that purchase," said Proscia, who races as Paradise Farms Corp. and owns Ship Cadet with Staudacher, Kevin Haynes and John Huber. "We bought two horses out there in Washington, my partner Dave who is not here, and



Dave Harmon

Ship Cadet heads to victory in Friday's Skidmore Stakes.

Nolan, they went out and found him and another colt."

Both came out of Terry and Mary Lou Griffin's Griffin Place consignment, and both are Cal-breds. The other, the Sharp Azteca colt Sharp Wonder, cost \$70,000 and hasn't

made a start after breezing this spring at Maker's base at Churchill Downs' Tracks Training Center before going to the sidelines.

Ship Cadet started his career fast, just as he did in the Skidmore.

Continued On Page 31



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Skidmore —

■ Continued from page 30

He won his debut going 5 furlongs on the turf May 12 at Belmont Park before a second behind runaway winner Gold Sweep in the Tremont Stakes a month later on the dirt. Ship Cadet followed that up with a second behind No Nay Mets, the morning-line favorite for the Skidmore, in Monmouth Park's Tyro Stakes again at 5 furlongs on the turf.

Heavy rains overnight and into training hours Friday pushed all of the day's turf races to the main track.

Maker and his crew huddled, some scouted out the surface during and after training hours and figured out a game plan before morning scratches were due.

"We debated all morning," Maker said. "The way I looked at it, we might as well run. The horse was doing well and if we waited another month, something might happen. That was my thoughts. I didn't share that with anybody but that was it."

Proscia was on board either way.

"We walked the track this morning and we figured it would dry out a little bit and it did, I think," he said. "Not knowing if he'd like the surface but we gave it a shot. He was feeling good and he showed it. Pretty happy about that."

Ship Cadet broke fast from post two under Manny Franco and was a half-length in front of his eight opponents in a matter of a few strides. He opened up from there, under a hustling ride from Franco, and was 1 1/2 lengths in front of Hawthorne Race Course shipper Five o'Somewhere entering the far turn.

The margin was cut to a half-length through the sharp opening quarter-mile in :21.77, with Five o'Somewhere trying to keep up with El Grande O another length back and Untroubled doing the best of the other chasers. El Grande O encountered some trouble under Jose Ortiz near the quarter pole and shuffled back a bit while Five o'Somewhere retreated and Ship Cadet cut the corner and clear past the half-mile in :45.47.

"I was down there and the way the track is, the speed is holding today," Franco said. "So, that was my plan — go forward."

El Grande O recovered enough to

pass tired rivals in the lane and into a clear second, as 9-5 favorite Seize The Grey rallied from last into third. Franco gave a few glances at the in-field monitor, saw he was clear and hand rode Ship Cadet inside the sixteenth pole. He won in 1:05.30. El Grande O finished 1 1/2 lengths clear of Seize The Grey in third and 7 1/4 lengths ahead of Billy The Greek in fourth.

"Maker never said nothing," Franco said of his early tactics. "He let me ride the horse however I see it and that's what I did. I saw when he ran on the dirt, he showed speed. ...He handled it well. He's probably a little bit better on turf, but I guess he can run on both."

Proscia feels Ship Cadet might be better on the grass, and Maker agreed enough to consider him for some of the lucrative turf stakes at the Kentucky Downs meeting in September. The \$500,000 Kentucky Downs Juvenile Mile Sept. 10 or the \$500,000 Kentucky Downs Juvenile Sprint are the two options.

"I think he's better on grass. That's my opinion, but we'll see," Proscia said. "I'll go with Mike. He's the man."



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Super Soak

Rain wipes out turf races again

Inclement weather struck again Friday at Saratoga Race Course, forcing all the scheduled turf races off the turf and onto the drying out main track.

The surface changes included the featured Skidmore Stakes, where morning-line favorite No Nay Mets was one of four scratches. Ship Cadet, who finished second to No Nay Mets in the Tyro Stakes at Monmouth Park, won the off-the-turf event.

The other four planned turf course events also suffered many defections. The fifth race took the biggest hit, going from a nine-horse field of allowance horses on the Mellon Turf Course to just a trio of participants, with only one from the main body of the field staying to compete. Crupi, one of two main track only entrants, won the 9-furlong dirt contest.

FRIDAY RACING RECAP

The sixth held together the best, with nine runners going to post in the maiden special weight for 2-year-olds out of the Wilson Chute, a sixteenth of a mile shorter than the scheduled turf distance. Dancing Mischief, for trainer George Weaver and owners R. A. Hill Stable and SGV Thoroughbreds, won the race to break his maiden in his third start.

The third and 10th races featured 5 horse fields. Western Lane won the third, a starter allowance going a mile, by a nose over Duckphat. Cut The Cord rallied from off the pace en route to 3 1/2-length win in the allowance finale.

Today's card includes six turf races, headlined by the Grade 2 Lake Placid Stakes, and a cloudy forecast



Dave Harmon

Corey And Quinn wins Friday's opener.

in the Saratoga Springs area for the day with no precipitation expected offers hope that the races can be run as scheduled.

— Alec DiConza

• Brad Cox could be in for a big weekend, with Alabama Stakes favor-

ite Wet Paint attempting to strengthen her case for the 3-year-old filly divisional honors with another Grade 1. Cox started things off Friday when he sent first-time starter Corey And Quinn to victory in the opener for owners Madaket Stables, Robert La-

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Friday —

■ Continued from page 32

Penta and ERJ Racing.

The 3-year-old daughter of Uncle Mo broke sharply in the 6-furlong maiden special weight and stalked the :22.09 quarter mile split set by Spun Special. Corey And Quinn struck the lead at the top of the stretch, cruised past the half in :45.67 and won by 1 1/2 lengths under Florent Geroux.

Heavy rain early Friday morning caused the dirt course to be listed as muddy and sealed, but Cox was not worried about his filly's chances in the conditions.

"She's a first timer, so we don't know, but I think pedigree suggests she would like it," he said. "She did. She's kind of built for wet tracks. She's not a really heavy filly, she's athletic, gets over the ground well, so it looked like she liked it."

Cox brought Corey And Quinn from his Churchill Downs string after she trained well for her debut. The public agreed with Cox's assessment and sent her off as the 7-5 favorite.

"She did well training at Turf-



Dave Harmon

Blue Devil (left) charges to the win in Friday's seventh.

way in Kentucky and Churchill," Cox said. "I thought she showed us enough to give her an opportunity to bring her to Saratoga. At this point in the meet, it's kind of like when you come you've got like them or try to get the job done because there won't be time for another. She stepped up, she ran well. Very proud of the effort."

— Alec DiConza

• Blue Devil delivered Jeff Hiles his first win of the meet July 14 and five weeks later gave him his second.

Rocket Ship Racing's 4-year-old Uncle Mo gelding won a three-way photo in the seventh, a 1 3/16-mile allowance on the main track. He also won for the third time at distances between 9 and 10 furlongs, proving to his trainer that he's a distance specialist.

"It sure played a part today," Hiles said. "He's won at a mile and a quarter, a mile and three-sixteenths (and) a mile and an eighth. He's pretty versatile."

Blue Devil hadn't run on the main track until that win in July at Saratoga, when his scheduled start on the turf was rained off. He won by 12 lengths that day, which gave Hiles the confidence to run him in Friday's allowance that was carded for the dirt. Now 2-for-2 on the surface, Hiles plans to keep him running on the main track for the remainder of his career.

"I don't think we're going to be playing with turf much more," he joked.

Blue Devil stalked the pace set by Speed Bias before getting in the mix for a three-way battle turning for home. He prevailed by a nose over Costa Terra at the finish with Speed Bias third. Hiles was surprised when Blue Devil's number went up, thinking he'd been edged out of the photo. He paid \$25.60 in the seven-horse field.

"No," Hiles said when asked if he

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Smart Business

Program Trading edges Webslinger

BY TOM LAW

Mike Ryan will scour the globe on the hunt for a good horse. He's enjoyed success all over, especially at recent renewals of the Tattersalls October yearling sale, buying for Seth Klarman's Klaravich Stable. He purchased **TECHNICAL ANALYSIS** out of Book 1 at Tattersalls October Stakes at Saratoga. He purchased **MCKULICK** at the same sale in 2020 for \$245,369 and Thursday the daughter of Frankel won the Grade 2 Glens Falls Stakes at Saratoga. He purchased **PROGRAM TRADING** at the same sale in 2021 for \$356,551 and Saturday the son of Lope de Vega won the Grade 1 Saratoga Derby Invitational at Saratoga. "All three of them; unbelievable," Ryan said after Program Trading held off Webslinger by a head to win the \$600,000 Saratoga Derby

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Friday —

■ Continued from page 33

was confident in the photo. “I didn’t think we won.”

— Alec DiConza

• The 10th and final race on Friday’s card saw eight scratches and drew in three main-track-only entrants.

Cut The Cord, one of those MTOs, took advantage of the New York-bred allowance contest coming off the turf to score for owner and trainer Jeremiah Englehart. The 4-year-old gelding has now won four races in 15 tries.

“He really just started coming into his own. I had him down at Belmont over the winter last year, and he’s just kind of growing up,” Englehart said. “He’s always shown us he’s had some ability in the mornings, but if you looked at him now in comparison to where he was when I first got him, he’s grown up a lot.”

Cut The Cord and Kendrick Carmouche exited the Wilson Chute second-last in the six-horse field, while Little Maddy Brown made the running down the backstretch through an opening quarter-mile in :23.90.

Factually Correct and Jose Lezcano took over the lead around the far turn, with a few closers hot



Dave Harmon

Cut The Cord wins Friday’s finale for trainer Jeremiah Englehart.

on his heels. Cut The Cord still sat in fifth when the field reached the quarter pole, but angled out to make his run shortly after and had plenty left to track down the leader.

The son of Creative Cause went on to win by 3 ½ lengths, with Factually Correct hanging on for second.

Bourbon Chase closed up the rail to finish third under Irad Ortiz Jr.

The gelding out of Cable won over a sloppy track at Finger Lakes last summer, and Englehart thinks the experience, along with a favorable pace scenario, set his horse up well.

“Kendrick knew, it looked like on paper a pretty good speed duel on the front, and we got a pretty good pace to run into,” Englehart said. “The track’s a little heavy. Once he angled him out I felt pretty good.”

“I’m one of the world’s worst main-track-only trainers ever. I’d love to know my stats. I probably only have about 10 main-track-only starts in my career. There was a main-track-only race I wanted to run him in, it didn’t come off. And then two days later they used the same race and I didn’t enter him, and then it came off... But he got into this one and he made it count.”

— Nolan Clancy

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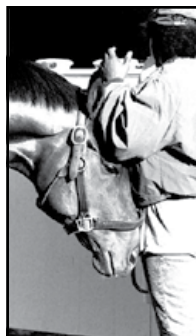
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Judgment Call

Ramblin' Wreck gets put up via DQ in NY-bred turf stakes

BY TOM LAW

Dean Reeves took one look at the stretch-run replay of Friday's \$125,000 Rick Violette Stakes from the television in the winner's circle at Saratoga Race Course and let his take rip.

"We were going by," Reeves said, spinning on his heel and heading out to the track.

Ramblin' Wreck, under Irad Ortiz Jr. in the white and dark green colors of Reeves Thoroughbred Racing, looked to be doing just that in the stretch. The 3-year-old son of Redesdale circled the field around the far turn, set sail for the leader Let's Go Big Blue in midstretch but came up a nose short at the wire.

Let's Go Big Blue, running for Hall of Fame coach Bill Parcells' August

RICK VIOLETTE STAKES RECAP

Dawn Farm, won the photo under Jose Lezcano but eventually lost in the stewards' stand as the officials reversed the order of the 1 1/16-mile turf stakes. The latest controversial call, which came after Ortiz claimed foul against Lezcano, earned a round of boos throughout the track and especially from those near the winner's circle.

Parcells, who endured the loss of his filly Maple Leaf Mel in the Grade 1 Test Stakes Aug. 5, made a quick exit from the winner's circle along with George Weaver, who trains the son of Cairo Prince for the popular former coach of the New York Giants, disagreed with the call.

Continued On Page 36

THURSDAY RACING



Dave Harmon

Ramblin' Wreck (left) battles Let's Go Big Blue late in Thursday's Rick Violette.

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Violette —

■ Continued from page 35

“I don’t see enough to take the horse down,” Weaver said. “The one horse’s (Ramblin’ Wreck) momentum was never stopped.”

Reeves, who campaigns Ramblin’ Wreck with Peter and Patty Searles, and trainer Danny Gargan obviously disagreed.

“That’s what this is for,” Reeves said of the inquiry. “You can’t come over three lanes, bump a horse and he loses by a neck and say it wasn’t interference. That’s what it was.”

Ramblin’ Wreck, second last time out under Ortiz in the Cab Calloway division of the New York Stallion Series after making a similar late run, won for the second time in three starts in 2023.

“It cost us the win,” Gargan said of the bump. “When these colts and geldings get next to each other, they want to lay on each other. We lost half a stride and we didn’t even get beat a half-length. The stewards made the right call. That cost us the nose we lost by.”

Reeves celebrated with Ron Bowden, who bred Ramblin’ Wreck out of his Lemon Drop Kid mare Dakota Kid. Bowden also co-bred another stakes-winning Reeves colorbearer, \$707,950-earner Dakota Gold, out of the same mare. Reeves Thoroughbred Racing purchased both at Fasig-Tipton Saratoga auctions – Dakota Gold as a weanling for



Dave Harmon
The Violette field
leaves the gate.

\$83,000 at the 2019 fall mixed sale and Ramblin’ Wreck for \$140,000 at the 2021 New York-bred yearling sale. The horses were foaled at Lili Kobielski’s The New Hill Farm in Hoosick Falls and prepped and consigned for by the same operation.

“She’s done a marvelous job. I’m so thankful,” Bowden said of Kobielski. “And thankful to Dean, too. He’s put a great program together. We’re both business guys and I’m impressed at what he’s done. ... I said to him, ‘you’re carrying it, it’s all on your shoulders.’”

Reeves, who celebrated New York-bred stakes wins on consecutive days after Silver Skillet won Wednesday’s Suzie O’Cain, didn’t miss a beat.

“I’m only as good as what you give me,” he said.

Ramblin’ Wreck earned \$68,750, and improved to 3-for-8 with \$339,460 in the bank. Willintorisk-ital, fourth in the Cab Calloway, finished 5 1/2 lengths back of the first two and in third in the Rick Violette, with Cab Calloway winner Itsallcomintogetha fourth.

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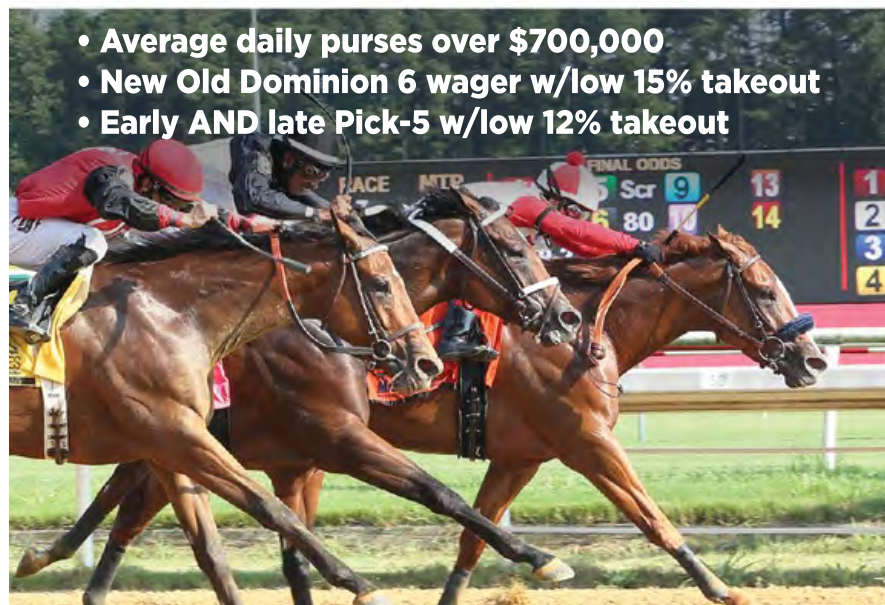


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Next Step

Thoroughbred Aftercare Day spotlights retired racehorses

Those who looked at the program on Thursday probably noticed that the words aftercare, retirement and adoption frequently appeared above the past performances. That would be because eight of the 10 races were named for different Thoroughbred aftercare groups, which are programs dedicated to providing homes and second careers to retired racehorses. Additionally, the feature race of the day was named after the late trainer Rick Violette, who heavily advocated for Thoroughbred aftercare in the state of New York.

Before the opener, there were several demonstrations with retired Thoroughbreds showing off the skills they've acquired since their racing days. It started with a pair of horses

THURSDAY RACING RECAP

es jumping over small hurdles towards the dirt course's outside fence, drawing attention and support from railbirds as the horses successfully cleared them.

Next, four-time graded stakes winner Drafted, who retired after competing in last month's Alapocas Run Stakes, was given a retirement ceremony in a place quite familiar to him: the winner's circle. In 38 starts, Drafted got a winning picture taken 10 times, including in last year's Grade 3 Toboggan Stakes at Aqueduct and Grade 3 Runhappy at Belmont. The fan favorite's presence drew many

Continued On Page 38



Dave Harmon

Locke And Key scores in Thursday's finale for trainer Jamie Begg.

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Thursday —

■ Continued from page 37

reporters and fans, who gathered around the 9-year-old gray gelding to wish him a happy retirement and a good start to his new life at the New Vocations Racehorse Adoption program.

Shortly after, two other Thoroughbreds circled around each other near the finish line, with their heads cocked toward one another as though they were ready for battle. Actually, they were...kind of. As it turns out, this pairing of horses found their second career in reenacting historical wars, with their riders Thursday dressed as Colonial men from the Revolutionary War.

Below the grandstand in the “Horse Sense” stall was 11-year-old mare Woodville, who won her first two lifetime starts at Saratoga. Going to Lucky Orphans Horse Rescue after her career was cut short due to colic, she was a happy horse Thursday while posing for pictures with smiling children who came to visit her.

With many people engaged in the activities and visiting information booths, it's safe to say that the third annual aftercare day at Saratoga was a success.

— Alec DiConza

- “Today is about celebrating all the aftercare organizations and the strides the New York racing community has made in taking care of the horses after they leave the track.” This was Zazie Pence, the executive director of Akindale Thoroughbred Rescue in Pawling, New York.

She was talking about the third annual Thoroughbred Aftercare Day. Yes, it was a great day of Saratoga racing in beautiful weather for once, but it also offered a number of events and demonstrations drawing attention to the impressive work of the New York aftercare community.

Pence's Akindale was just one of a long list of groups and organizations that were given recognition on the day. The list can seem a bit bewildering on first encounter: Akindale Thoroughbred Rescue, ACTT Naturally, Equine Advocates, Lollipop Farms, Lucky Orphans, New Vocations, NTRA, NYTHA, NYTB, Old Friends at Cabin Creek, Rerun, TAKE 2, TAKE THE LEAD, Thoroughbred



Dave Harmon

Retired millionaire Drafted visited the Saratoga winner's circle one more time as part of Thoroughbred Aftercare Day.

Retirement Foundation, Therapeutic Horses of Saratoga, and this is only the New York groups.

And yet despite the tangle of group names and alphabet soup, it is all incredibly simple: each of these organizations is dedicated to making after-track life healthy and happy for the horses who have given so much during their careers.

It's worth noting that New York — through NYRA, the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, the New York Thoroughbred Breeders and New York owners — contributes more than any other state in the country. More than \$1.2 million annually.

It's needed. Because as Steve Courtney, from Racing For Home, said, “We get a lot of horses who've retired at 5 or 6. They have another 20 years of life. We can make that 20 years healthy and happy. We can offer them a second career.”

Courtney's wife Sherrie is one of the re-trainers, preparing the horses for their next careers,

“The horse will tell us what they want next,” she said. “One might say, ‘I kind of like jumping.’ This might make a show horse and we train accordingly. Or ‘I'm good at moving on the flats.’ Maybe dressage is right. Or a relaxed and quiet horse would be good with children or could be a trail horse. And then we connect them with new homes off the track. Basically, we do the same thing as all these

great New York people.”

Though the Courtneys' Racing For Home is based in Connecticut, they have already made a major contribution to the New York racing community in the form of their daughter Acacia, who can be seen as a host and paddock reporter for Fox Sports' America's Day at the Races. She is also the founder (at age 17) and CEO of Racing For Home.

— Terry Hill

- Frank Rispoli's Ad Hoc Stable won its first race at Saratoga in Thursday's fifth race with second-time-start-er Flowers For Me.

Trained by Jim Ryerson, the 2-year-old filly broke her maiden in the 6-furlong race after finishing sixth on debut here July 19. Rispoli purchased the Kentucky-bred Flowers For Me for \$18,000 in what he described as a spur-of-the-moment decision.

“This one here, she walked into the ring at the sale, and I said ‘I'm buying her.’ She was at the wrong sale,” Rispoli said. “I was looking for a New York-bred or a Florida-bred, because I race here and Gulfstream, so I hadn't looked at her. She walked in the ring and she was so big. Her neck was too long, but the rest of her was perfect.”

Flowers For Me and jockey Dylan Davis left the gate sharply from the inside post and settled into a stalking

third as the field moved down the backstretch behind the pacemaking Leslie's Loot and La Colorada, who rolled through the opening quarter-mile in :22.26.

The daughter of West Coast picked off La Colorada as they entered the far turn, with Leslie's Loot alone on the lead. As the field turned for home, Davis rallied the filly past the leader, and they opened up a length, then 2, as they hit the wire in 1:12.96. Ginucha ran on for second, while Accommodate Eva finished third.

“The experience of having a race coming back against a lot of first timers, it really helps,” Ryerson said. “She just did a lot of things better today than she did in the first race.”

Rispoli said his decision to buy the filly at OBS wasn't based on pedigree.

“[West Coast] wasn't a big stud, most of them take forever to develop,” Rispoli said. “The mare wasn't anything to speak of, but she looked good, and I think she's got a future. I'm elated.”

The filly out of I Do Declare gave Ryerson his second win of the meet in 10 tries.

“We broke her in Florida, and she's done everything right since,” Ryerson said. “She's been very forward, acted like she was going to be OK, and she is OK.”

— Nolan Clancy

Continued On Page 39

Thursday —

■ Continued from page 38

• Chad Brown may have had a four-win lead in the Saratoga trainer's standings coming into Thursday, but Linda Rice is not out of the fight yet. Winning the fourth with Watasha, her second victory of the day after Ride Up's win in the opener, Rice exited the winner's circle knowing the deficit was, at the time, cut in half. Brown later won the seventh with Tangential, extending his lead back to three.

With it being a close duel between the two leading trainers, Rice is not counting her chickens when it comes to her chances at winning the title.

"Certainly not confident," she said. "I mean, Chad is a great trainer and he has an arsenal of horses and clients. But we'll do the best we can."

Watasha, Rice's 21st winner of the meet, sat last early in the \$40,000 claimer going 6 1/2 furlongs on the dirt, but a sweeping move around the far turn put the 4-year-old gelding by Into Mischief back into contention at the top of the stretch. Continuing his momentum through the lane, Watasha was able to outrun his hard trying rival Western Ghent to win by 1 1/4 lengths at the wire. The final time was 1:17.49 for owner Winning Move Stable and jockey Jose Ortiz, who also successfully teamed up with Rice in the opener.

Rice claimed Watasha from Mike Maker in his previous race, which came on the grass in a \$50,000 conditioned claimer at Belmont. Not happy with his fourth that day, Rice made the switch to dirt, which she said was key to getting him back to winning ways.

"I was disappointed in his grass race the day I claimed him," Rice said. "When I took him, I took him because he had good previous races on the dirt, and that's important to me. So I decided just to flip the switch and go back to the dirt."

Watasha is now 2-for-11 and, with Thursday's win, passed the \$100,000 mark in total earnings.

Three Diamonds Farm and trainer Joe Sharp claimed Watasha Thursday. It was the third consecutive time he was claimed.

— Alec DiConza

• Michelle Giangiulio got her first win at Saratoga in 2021 when Sea Foam won the Evan Shipman Handicap. A year later, she received her second with Tiergan in an allowance. This summer, she got her third Friday and first of the meet with Win For Gold in a 6-furlong starter allowance on the main track.

"It feels great," she said. "It's so satisfying. My horses have all been running really well. I've had two seconds and a third out of seven starts and now a win, so they've been running really well. It's satisfying to get the win."

Win For Gold broke sharply under Kendrick Carmouche and pressed a fast pace set by Pay Zone, running the quarter in 22.29 and the half in 44.88. Though Pay Zone paid the price of the quick



Dave Harmon

Win For Gold hits the line first in Thursday's eighth race for trainer Michelle Giangiulio.

tempo, Win For Gold kept on going, running away to a powerful 3 3/4 length score in 1:10.27 for Ten Strike Racing, Four Corners Racing Stable, Broadview Stable and Cory Moelis Racing.

"He looked like he was doing it really easily," Giangiulio said. "He was very relaxed, he sat in a good spot. It was slower than his last race and he held on last time going really fast, so he's able to hold a quick pace. He would prefer a fast race to run into. It was great."

Giangiulio claimed the 5-year-old gelding in February for \$25,000 after a win at Aqueduct. Since then the son of Goldencents picked up three seconds and two thirds in five races. Giangiulio believes training Win for Gold in Saratoga put him on top of the podium.

"Honestly, I think the way we trained him into this race was a little better," she said. "I was able to do a little bit more with him, training him at Belmont is a little bit tricky. I'm able to train him on the pony track here and kind of keep his energy level down a little bit. It helped a lot, really he was even better coming into this race today. That was a big help."

— Alec DiConza

• The nightcap gave trainer Jamie Begg his first career win at Saratoga when Locke And Key delivered a 1 3/4-length victory in a 5 1/2 furlong off the turf maiden for New York-breds.

"This is actually my first win at Saratoga ever, so it means a lot," Begg said.

Locke And Key transferred to the Begg barn after his last race at Belmont. He was originally with Joseph Catanese for the first five starts of his career

before breaking his maiden in start number six.

"I've got to give big credit to Joey Catanese who had this horse before," Begg said. "He wasn't able to make it up for the meet, but he'd done a good job when I got this horse. So I give a lot of credit to those guys."

The 4-year-old gelding by Mr. Z took the stalk-and-pounce approach to his success, sitting just off pacesetters Russi and Vaunted before putting his nose in front past the eighth pole.

Coming into the race, Locke And Key had run under many different conditions in his career. His debut, similar to the race he ran Thursday, was a 6-furlong dirt maiden at Gulfstream Park, where he finished fifth. Afterwards, he tried the all-weather and turf, and never went shorter than a mile in those four starts. Though Begg had actually wanted him to run on turf, he was willing to test the waters back on dirt when it was taken off.

"I was happy with it on the turf because it was a bunch of changes," he said. "He had run for a tag in Florida so he wasn't really eligible to get back in these races. He kept getting excluded. I knew he was always a nice horse. He was competitive in those."

Owned by Backwards Stable and ridden by Irad Ortiz Jr, who won four on the card, Locke And Key seemed to appreciate the cutback in distance from 10 furlongs to 5 1/2 furlongs.

"I was hoping for the cutback," Begg said. "The cutback is a good deal. I was happy with that. I wasn't too worried, he had been working well on the dirt."

— Alec DiConza

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WEDNESDAY RACING



Dave Harmon

Silver Skillet sizzles to victory in Wednesday's Suzie O'Cain Stakes.

Cookin' with Grease

Silver Skillet dominates field

BY ALEC DICONZA

SUZIE O'CAIN STAKES RECAP

Dean Reeves made the joyful walk to the Carmen Barrera Room to celebrate with friends and partners, almost all with glasses of champagne in their hands, after the 3-year-old filly Silver Skillet he owns in partnership dominated Wednesday's \$125,000 Suzie O'Cain Stakes at Saratoga Race Course.

Reeves Thoroughbred Racing is certainly no stranger to success with New York-breds. Last year, the stable won the Cab Calloway division of the New York Stallion Series Stakes at Saratoga with Dakota Gold, and collected five stakes victories with City Man that included three on the NYRA circuit. This year, City Man

won the Kingston, Dakota Gold won the Hudson Valley and Ramblin' Wreck won the Spectacular Bid division of the NYSS before being put up by disqualification in Thursday's Rick Violette Stakes.

"We're big in the New York program," Reeves said. "We kind of look at these races and try to spot our horses for these races. ... We'll be running Dakota Gold and City Man in New York-bred races later in the meet. We spot our horses for these because the purse money is very, very good. Anytime you win at Saratoga,

Continued On Page 41

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■ Continued from page 40

we'll take it in a New York-bred or an open company."

Silver Skillet broke from post five in the field of nine and sat behind a fast pace set by Kosuke, who went the opening half in :46.80. Silver Skillet was sixth in the strung-out group going into the far turn. She swung four-wide turning for home and kicked clear of stakes winner Orange Freeze to win by 3 1/4 lengths under Joel Rosario. The final time for the 1 1/16 miles was 1:41.67 for trainer Christophe Clement and Reeves Thoroughbred Racing, Steven Rocco and Tango Uniform Racing.

"I told [Rosario] before the race, 'there's still plenty of juice in the turf. Be sure to save something for the quarter pole,'" Clement said. "If anything, the other filly moved too early and paid for it at the end. There's a bunch of juice in the ground. Very happy, it keeps Reeves happy. Life is good."

Rosario rode to the instructions, making sure she had enough at the end.

"We are always concerned with how fast we were going, but it looked like she was responding really well to me," he said. "I felt very confident when turning for home. Every time I asked her, she was there for me."

Rain, which forced three of the five carded turf races to switch to the main track, left the course listed as good. Clement was not worried about the condition of the grass, though, when considering how Silver Skillet would perform.

"She won on it when she won the first race here," Clement said, referencing Silver Skillet's 1-mile allowance win July 15. "I thought it was also more good turf than firm turf. I was pretty sure she was going to do well in it. She was a touch rank early on, but mentally she handled it."

Silver Skillet ran five times on dirt to begin her career, highlighted by a third in the Maid of the Mist Stakes on Empire Showcase Day during the Belmont at the Big A meeting. She's improved since switching to the lawn, with two wins in three starts on the surface.

"She ran on dirt as a 2-year-old because I did not quite realize that she

was a turf horse; she's a Liam's Map," Clement said. "Then we switched her to the turf and since we switched her, she's always run nicely and finished second at Belmont. She's won two here."

Soraya Rocco, wife of Steven Rocco, was elated after the victory in the stakes named for the late former member of the New York Thoroughbred Breeders, Inc. board and a recognizable figure in the state's breeding and racing industries.

"It means the world to us," she said of Silver Skillet, a \$260,000 purchase at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale. "She's very special to my husband and I. He actually saw her at the sale and he knew there was something special. We're very, very proud and excited. It's our second win here, we're just over the moon."

Silver Skillet improved to 3-1-2 in eight starts and earned \$68,250 to boost her earnings to \$281,820. She was purchased from the Mill Ridge Sales consignment at the Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale by Joseph Migliore, agent.



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Jackpot

Pick six carryover rewards one winner

A cool \$179,735 pick six carryover highlighted the start of the meet's sixth week.

Trainer Tom Amoss started the sequence when Need Some Money notched the trainer's fifth win at the meet. The 3-year-old filly won by a length in the 5 1/2-furlong starter allowance, taken off the turf. Owned by Ron Groene and ridden by Dylan Davis, Need Some Money cut back in distance from 7 furlongs and shook off the challenge from Proud Foot to get her third career score.

The fifth race delivered a big price with 17-1 Ghostlyprince pulling off the upset by a nose. Under Flavien Prat, the 5-year-old won the 1 1/8 starter allowance on the Mellon turf in 1:49.04 for owner/trainer Rudy Rodriguez.

Three Rivers, 5-2, delivered for trainer Bill Mott and owner Mike Rutherford in the sixth, romping by 5 lengths in a 6-furlong allowance for fillies and mares.

Achilles Heel upset the biggest favorite of the sequence, South Street at 4-5, in winning the seventh by a half-length at 17-1. The 4-year-old gelding provided Rodriguez with his second winner of the day after passing runaway leader Happy Bob in the stretch. South Street wound up seventh.

Silver Skillet won the Suzie O'Cain Stakes for trainer Christophe Clement and Reeves Thoroughbred Racing, Steven Rocco and Tango Uniform Racing. As the 3-1 second choice, the gray/roan daughter of Liam's Map ran away to a 3 1/4-length victory for her second win of the meet.

To round out the pick six, Pauciloquent won the finale, a \$40,000 maiden claimer going 5 1/2 furlongs on the main track after rain forced the race off the grass. A bobble at the break did not keep the filly from winning by 2 1/4 lengths for Ascendant Farms and trainer James Bond.

For the bettor who was skilled and/or lucky enough to get all six winners on his ticket, the reward was certainly enough to buy a nice car and a new house. The 6-8-5-8-5-1 winning numbers paid a whopping \$611,475.50.

— Alec DiConza

- Three Rivers pushed her record to 2-for-2, drawing away from the field to win in Wednesday's sixth for Bill Mott.

The 3-year-old filly by American Pharoah won at Belmont on June 24 in her debut.



Dave Harmon

Three Rivers scores in Wednesday's sixth race to improve to 2-for-2.

Mott is taking his time with the Mike Rutherford homebred, who wintered away from the racetrack.

"We had her in Ocala, just turned out for a while, and we brought her back and she's done really well," Mott said.

Ridden by Junior Alvarado, The filly took on a field in the 6-furlong allowance race that included much more experienced horses. Rick Dutrow's Sa Foradada and David Jacobson's Mongolian Panther had run 15 times each prior to Wednesday. Jacobson's Starship Defiant had logged 24 tries.

Three Rivers sat just outside favorite Cuz Ur Pretty as they rolled down the backstretch in an opening quarter-mile in :22.18.

Both legs of the Jacobson entry sat in third and fourth, and the leading quartet opened up five lengths on the rest of the field. Three Rivers took the lead from Cuz Ur Pretty at the quarter pole and quickly opened up a gap on the field. The filly out of Flying Spur kicked on as Alvarado put away the whip by the eighth pole. Portage rallied into a distant second, while Mongolian Panther hung on for third. Three Rivers stopped the clock in 1:09.86 in a wrapped-up 5-length victory.

"She's a nice filly. Took us a while to get her to the races, but she's now 2-for-2," Mott said. "We gave her plenty of time over the winter, and she's come back. She's got conditions. The way she ran today, naturally we're hopeful that she will be stakes caliber."

— Nolan Clancy

- Caio Caramori hadn't run a horse at the Saratoga meet before Wednesday, but he made the first one count when Thestral won the second.

"One-for-one," he joyfully said in the winner's circle, being both the owner and trainer of the filly.

Thestral broke from the outside post in a field of four in the 1-mile \$40,000 maiden claimer out of the Wilson Chute. Sitting just off the pace, the 3-year-old filly by Cross Traffic made a move on the far turn to take over the lead. Though facing pressure in the stretch from Don't Tell Amy and Too-shay, Thestral was able to maintain her advantage and get the first victory of her career by a length under Joel Rosario.

"It's very exciting," Caramori said. "We kind of had Saratoga planned for this filly. We gave her a race last time, and came up here. I wasn't sure if they were going to claim her. We were putting her in a spot she could win. They took her today. It's part of the business. Best of luck to the connections. We came up here to win, and we got the job done."

Thestral had run on the dirt three times before Wednesday, but had taken a hiatus from the surface when she raced in all-weather and turf events.

"I wanted to try her on the grass, and she got a bad break last time," Caramori said. "She didn't show any speed. Maybe she can run on the grass, but she didn't last time. So we came back to the dirt where we know she's all right, and we hooked a good field, so that's why we are where we are."

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Wednesday —

■ Continued from page 42

Caramori was pleased to witness Thestral's maiden score at the Spa, even though she was claimed by owner Nicky Strohkirch and trainer Tom Amoss,

"We always liked her," Caramori said. "She's a very talented filly. Big filly, could probably handle the shipping. So we've had this in the back of our mind. We've had friends that have had some success here. They wanted to run here, so we came here, and it's nice when everything comes together."

— Alec DiConza

- Owner/trainer Charlton Baker got his first victory of the meet in the third with Vegas Weekend, and though he wishes it came sooner, he is very grateful that his trip to the Saratoga winner's circle finally arrived.

"It's always good to get it," Baker said. "It's always great to come off the mark. You want to do it a little earlier than now, but you take your win whenever it comes. It's always a tough meet. So, it's always great."

Vegas Weekend got out to a comfortable lead in the early stages of the \$16,000 claiming event, going a mile on the main track. Setting fractions of :24.95 and :49.25, the 5-year-old daughter of Mineshaft never let her three rivals get within striking distance through the stretch, winning by an easy 4 1/4 lengths under Jose Lezcano.

Baker claimed Vegas Weekend in her last race, where she was fifth in a \$20,000 claimer at Belmont. Under his care, Baker believes his mare has improved nicely.

"She got a lot better," he said. "She was a little short in her back end when we got her. We had to work on her, we had to put some time into her. It took me awhile to get her to the races, but it was well worth it watching her run like that."

Vegas Weekend won at Saratoga in **Vegas Weekend prevails in Wednesday's third race.**



Dave Harmon

Saratoga Leaders

JOCKEYS.....	1ST
Irad Ortiz Jr.....	38
Luis Saez.....	28
Jose Ortiz.....	25
Tyler Gaffalione.....	24
Manny Franco.....	19
Flavien Prat.....	19
Joel Rosario.....	18
Jose Lezcano.....	17
Dylan Davis.....	16
Javier Castellano.....	12

TRAINERS.....	1ST
Chad Brown.....	24
Linda Rice.....	22
Todd Pletcher.....	18
Bill Mott.....	11
Christophe Clement.....	10
Rudy Rodriguez.....	9
George Weaver.....	8
Mark Hennig.....	7
Mike Maker.....	7
Brad Cox.....	6

Through Friday

the 2021 season, and is now 2-for-2 at the historic racetrack.

Baker thinks going back to the one mile distance, as well as dropping in class, helped his mare get the job done.

"The claiming price was great," he said. "We claimed her for 20, we dropped her in for 16, I figured it'd be a little easier spot. It's never easy here, but we got some scratches that made it a little easier. The mile seemed like she's more relaxed going there, so I think that's a comfortable trip for her."

— Alec DiConza

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High Tensile

Just Steel shines in Saratoga maiden for B C Stable, Lukas

BY JOE CLANCY

Buying horses with or selling horses to D. Wayne Lukas, it doesn't really matter. The Hall of Fame trainer – whose career began in 1974 – makes an impact.

“I've repeated this before but it's just a thrill to work with Wayne and I've only known him eight, nine, 10 years now,” said John Bellinger, a partner in B C Stable which owns recent Lukas-trained Saratoga juvenile winner Just Steel. “It's our second year of racing with Wayne and it's very special. He's the godfather of it all when it comes to racing and this stuff. To be with him in the last few years of his career is extremely, extremely special.”

“I've been looking at my horses alongside of Wayne for 35 years and I've actually learned an awful lot because he is very generous with his knowledge,” said Reiley McDonald of Eaton Sales, consignor of Just Steel as a yearling at Keeneland September in 2022. “I've learned from just standing there and listening to him. He has a great eye, always has.”

Just Steel, a bay colt by Triple Crown winner Justify, joined Eaton's Keeneland consignment thanks to an international pedigree which starts with Australian-bred dam Irish Lights. The daughter of Fastnet Rock earned \$492,950 with a victory in her country's Group 1 Thousand Guineas among others. She's the dam of four winners, topped by Group 2 victor Omei Sword and the Group 3-placed Lipizzaner. Keep digging and other Australian stakes horses appear along with a Japanese 2-year-old champion plus some American standouts in successful stallion Allen's Prospect and Grade 1 winner (and Grade 1 producer) Fall Aspen.



Tod Marks

Just Steel won a Saratoga maiden Aug. 5, his third start.

“We had him at Keeneland because it does get a deeper foreign group of buyers and we knew he would appeal to the Japanese, Australians, European or whatever,” said McDonald. “As it turned out, he was purchased for American racing but he would have fit with anyone. When I saw him in April, he was a top yearling and he stayed that way.”

McDonald remembers a young horse with a good shoulder and a deep girth, and also recalled Lukas making a relatively quick decision on a visit to the consignment.

“The funny part is he pretty well knows as soon as he puts eyes on one,” McDonald said. “The horse will come out of the stall and he'll know or he won't know in about two seconds. I thought he liked Just Steel as soon as he saw him.”

Sitting next to Bellinger and partner Brian Coelho, the now 87-year-old trainer bid \$500,000 and Just Steel joined the team. He breezed at Churchill Downs in May and early June, and made his first

start going 5 1/2 furlongs at Ellis Park June 17. He checked in fifth – 16 1/2 lengths behind Woodcourt. Bellinger was there, and got a pep talk afterward.

“There was nothing to be excited about,” the owner said, “but Wayne kept saying, ‘Be patient, be patient, it'll come.’”

The partners listened to the coach, Just Steel went to Saratoga and was second to Pirate going 5 1/2 furlongs again July 15. Lukas was looking for a longer race and got it – barely – when Just Steel drew in from the also-eligible list to make the field for a 6-furlong maiden race Aug. 5. The extra sixteenth of a mile was just enough as Just Steel broke from post 10 and won a duel with the Todd Pletcher-trained Keeneland September graduate Be You to score by a nose.

“He needed every bit of that . . . He's not a five-eighths horse, I hope he can get a lot more than 6;

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Just Steel —

■ Continued from page 44

I hope he can go double that,” Lukas said afterward. “He’s a big 2-year-old that’s finding himself now and I love him. I just love him.”

Bellinger loved the progression from that educational Ellis debut, the much-improved second at Saratoga and then the win.

“He got better every time,” said the owner. “Staying in there toward the end at Saratoga, that was just huge. He had to dig in and fight for it. We were proud of him.”

The victory earned Just Steel at least a tentative assignment in the Grade 1 Hopeful — along with fellow Keeneland graduates and Saratoga winners Pirate and Rhyme Schemes — going 7 furlongs Sept. 4.

“He’s been fun already and hopefully we can have some more fun,” Bellinger said of a chance to compete in a Grade 1 at Saratoga.

McDonald, who sells a full-brother to Just Steel (Hip 572) in this year’s September Sale, agreed.

“We follow our graduates pretty closely and it’s always a pleasure to see them do well,” he said. “I love to see them win races at Saratoga.”

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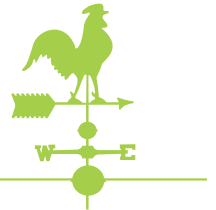
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Stable Tours.

2021. Art Collector. Owned and bred by Bruce Lunsford, the Blue Grass winner joined Mott's string after finishing sixth in the Kelly's Landing for Kentucky-based Tommy Drury. The 4-year-old won the Alydar here and the Charles Town Classic in three weeks. "Ate everything, goes back to the track tomorrow, only had three days of walking, looks like it didn't hurt him. We'll jog him a few days, freshen him up. If he's OK, we'll nominate to the Woodward. He came in good shape, the guy who had him is a good guy. All in all, he came in a fresh horse, he had one race which probably didn't suit him, got off a little bad, it was basically a 7-furlong workout for him. When he came to us, he was ready for that next step. We had him, what, five weeks, six weeks at the most, before we ran him. It was a good spot here, restricted stake. Good spot down there. He's got tactical speed, the race at Charles Town suited him, he's good at 9 furlongs, he's got speed and he's good at the distance and he was good enough to beat the champ from the year before (Sleepy Eyes Todd). That horse ran good, he left there running and was on the fence. We'll look at the Woodward, see where that takes us. He'd need to bounce back and be doing good for us to run him in there. Different kind of race. I guess it will come loaded up."

2022. Art Collector: Bruce Lunsford's homebred 5-year-old pulled another double, taking the Alydar here and the Charles Town Classic just like last year. The son of Bernardini wired seven rivals in the Grade 2 \$1 million Charles Town Classic Aug. 26. Mott opened the stall screen and took a long look at the \$2.3 million earner. "Oh, you don't want me coming up to you, taking up your space, that's your space. 'Don't get in my space and don't put your hand up there.' You probably heard plenty from Erma (Scott) about him yesterday. He's a little warrior himself. He's a little tough guy. Looks like he's handled his races OK. Could go for the Lukas Classic or the Fayette."

2023. "Art's pretty good, too," Erma Scott said when I commented that Cody's Wish was the best horse on the grounds earlier this season. Yeah, Erma, Art Collector was pretty good, too. And that, sadly, is the only moment we'll get with Art Collector this summer.

Bye, Art



CUP OF COFFEE

By Sean Clancy

The two-time Grade 1 winner and \$4,231,290 earner was put down due to laminitis Thursday. The Bill Mott Stable Tour – the Bill Mott stable – won't be the same.

The likeable, over-achieving, choke-out veteran breezed Aug. 5. He was gone by Aug. 17.

Tough game. Fragile animal.

A Blue Grass winner with Drury, Art Collector joined Mott two summers ago, won the Alydar, Charles Town Classic and did indeed try the Woodward that summer. He won that, becoming a Grade 1 winner. He finished sixth in the Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Classic and 12th in the Grade 1 Saudi Cup before bouncing back with a win in the Grade 1 Pegasus in January. Second in the Grade 2 New Orleans Classic and Grade 2 Alysheba, the 6-year-old was back in Saratoga with his eyes on his third consecutive Charles Town Classic.

Home for a few days in Virginia with Miles, I looked up the date of the race Thursday morning, thinking a road trip to Charles Town might work. By Thursday evening, I heard the news that Art Collector was gone. Another rocker to a rocky summer for Saratoga, for Thoroughbred racing. I thought of Art Collector first. Scott, second.

A mainstay in the Mott family and stable, Scott

adored Art Collector. She coddled him, hugged him, stuffed him with carrots, bragged about him every morning. "You here to see Art?" "Art's right over here." "Art's pretty good, too." It was always Art, always on a first-name basis. She helped raise Tina and Bill Mott's children. Brady. Riley. Olivia. And Art.

These days, Scott serves a lot of roles at Mott's enclave on the Oklahoma turn. Stable ambassador, carrot feeder, traffic director, comic relief.

I wish I could have given her a hug first thing Friday morning.

By late Friday morning, Miles and I went for a ride on Apse and Lemonade Thursday. Both competed at Saratoga. The former made his debut on the turf in 2011, finishing fourth, a few lengths behind Tiz Sardonio Joe and Dullahan. Two years later, the son of Arch won an allowance hurdle to elicit a winner's circle photo that included everybody from TVG's Peter Lurie to The Special's Tom Law. Lemonade Thursday never made the winner's circle at Saratoga, losing on the flat in 2018 and over hurdles in 2021.

Akse is 14. Now he hacks around the country with Miles, a 14-year-old horse with a 14-year-old boy. They call it a century when the combined ages of horse and rider equal 100. Is there a name for when horse and rider are the same age? It couldn't happen very often. Akse, like always, strolled around the farm without a care in the world, content to track his 8-year-old buddy, Lemonade Thursday.

As we rode over parched Virginia hunt country, I thought about Akse and Lemonade and I thought about Art Collector.

How do some get so lucky, and some get so unlucky?

These two found a field and a barn in Virginia. Nothing glamorous, nothing fancy, but a home just the same. Art Collector had a stall ready for him in the stallion barn at Claiborne Farm.

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