

Pye on Racing

2019 Ohio Fair Column

By Thom Pye

Putnam powers it up

The Ohio Colt Racing Association stakes for 2 and 3-year-old trotters and pacers at Putnam County Fair were filled to the brim with 32 races as near-perfect weather brought the fans out on both Tuesday, June 25th and Wednesday, June 26th to the Ottawa, Ohio half-mile oval.

And it is safe to say that none of the devotees in attendance were disappointed with the two-card program, both dedicated in memory of the late Eleanor Risser (1938-2018) a Putnam Fair official for 36 years.

Tuesday's 18-race program began at 3:30 p.m. instead of the usual time of 5:00 and Skip De Mull sent Rockin Cali, Richard Johnson's 3-year-old by Rockin Amadeus, to win by 4 ½ in 2:08h as she paced home in :29 flat. Linda Main trains the filly.

Ken Holliday hopped aboard Winchester Baye Acres Inc's Cruisinatmidnight for trainer Ed Telle and steamed a final panel of :26.3 to win by 6 ¾ in 2:05.1h with the 2-year-old filly by Big Bad John-Cruise On Ashley. It would be the first of four for driver Holliday.

Trainer/owner Deborah Swartz' Don't Front Me (a Dontyouforgetit gelding) and driver Russ Swartz went down the road to grab the \$3,991 OCRA 3-year-old trot in 2:03.2h by 10 ¾ lengths.

Mike Lowe would win by four with his Father Time (by Uncle Peter) in his \$4,266 OCRA 2-year-old colt trotting division, stepping off a mile in 2:09.4h.

Jeff Nisonger answered a few questions with Donald Bean's How About Murph in the \$3,068 3-year-old filly pace as the Mark Winters Sr pupil bested Rose Run Ultimate (Ken Holliday) and Blooming Sunflower (Pierce Henry) by ½ length with a sharp time of 2:02.2h.

Roy Burns brought Roger Hughes' Rockys Wedding to the Winners Circle with a gutsy performance in his \$3,991 OCRA 3-year-old division to win in 2:09.2h as he stayed trotting to the wire in :29.2.



Can the Spring Haven Farm Ladies Driving Series get any better? The influx of newcomers Jazmin Arnold and Elizabeth Murphy adds even more intense competition to the talented group. The 1st division's winner called for a photo as Why Don't U Stay (Jazmin Arnold) nipped Reido Star (Elizabeth Murphy) by a mere nose in 2:04.3h as Fudge (Mary Dawson) was third. In the second division, as Sports Band and "veteran" Mandy Jones battled Elizabeth Murphy and Light Up The Sky down the stretch, Jazmin Arnold squeezed through between them with ER Maria to take it by a neck in 2:04.4h. Alisha Binkley on Energy Shakes stepped off a humongous last quarter to join them at the wire as well.

The Racing With The Stars tent was the collection point for the canned goods going to the Mid Ohio Food Bank as C.E.O. Linda Hamilton joined the OHHA in the Winners Circle to accept the donations.

Johnny Keams' T Degengold (Pet Rock-Goldies Cam) was very impressive again with her victory in the \$3,368 OCRA 2-year-old filly pace division as trainer/driver Jeff Nisonger zoomed home in :28 flat to win by 15 ½ in 2:05.2h and remained unblemished in her 3rd lifetime start.

And Black Magic Stable LLC's Hardware Princess, with trainer/driver Ken Holliday, loosened a few bolts off the cash register again as the 3-year-old filly by Big Bad John took her \$3,068 OCRA division with a mile in 2:04h and paid a whopping \$104 to win.

Eighteen entertaining races and we all got to enjoy a prime Ohio sunset.

On Wednesday, June 26th, it was driver/trainer Ed Greeno Jr keeping EG Trot LLC of Findlay's Yankee Sis (by Wishing Stone) unblemished in her \$5,674 OCRA two-year-old trotting filly stake when she secured her 2nd win of the year with a mile in 2:10.2h as Laurel's Dream (Jeff Nisonger) and Spurfik (Duke Sugg) followed her to the wire.

Justin Belanger guided Big See, owner/trainer Philippe Belanger's 3-year-old pacing gelding by Big Bad John, to victory in his \$3,983 OCRA stake by 7 ¾ lengths

with a mile in 2:02.3h to complete the first double.

Dig Danny Dig, Jennifer K. Brown's 2-year-old McArde gelding, grabbed his share of the \$3,375 OCRA purse with driver Beau Brown in 2:08.2h, pacing a final panel of :29.1 for trainer Brian Brown.

Trainer Jessica McCown's TK'S Lexi Lee, piloted by driver Cam McCown, would take her \$3,858 OCRA 3-year-old filly division over She's Lovely (John Payne) and Beyond Amazing (Cody Greeno) by trotting a last quarter in :30.1 in her mile in 2:12.4h.

Cam McCown also teamed Kent Wilcox' 2-year-old gelding Western's Last Gun (by Gunthatwonthewest) to a 19 ½ length triumph in 2:03.3h as he paced home in :29 flat - under the wraps - in his 2nd lifetime start.

But from the sixth race on, when William Aldrich's Colossal Caliber (by McArde) took his \$3,983 OCRA 3-year-old stake in 2:04.1h, driver Jeff Nisonger would have a really nice day.

Nisonger would follow that with Brian and Kenneth Roebuck's Don't forget Muscle in the 7th as our Racing With The Stars fan contest winners turned out to be the Woods family from Lima as both dad Jason and son Easton won it. I think mom Lynette

took charge of the two \$25 gift cards though.

AWS Stable LLC and Mark Winters Sr's 3-year-old Pet Rock gelding Excavator (Nisonger) really dug in 2:00.4h in the 9th ; the Trent Stohler trainee Half A Virgin (Nisonger) went all the way in the 1st division of the Signature Series in 2:01.1h; Down The Lane Stables and Nisonger Stable LLC's 2-year-old Rockin Amadeus colt Rockin Daddy O (Nisonger) won in 2:06.2h in the 13th; another Trent Stohler-trained pacer Terroricvelocity (Nisonger) clipped off a mile in 2:00.2h to take the 2nd Signature Series division over Hardts Or Bettor (Pierce Henry) and Hanky L (Harrison Le Van) to cap the 2019 Season Finale at Putnam County Fair.

That was six wins in the last eight races for driver Jeff Nisonger and we can imagine, like a lot of us, he was sad to see the day end.

Until next year Ottawa!



The Brian Roebuck-trained Don't Forget Muscle and Jeff Nisonger trotted off by 3 ½ lengths to a victory in the \$3,858 OCRA stake for 3-year-old old fillies in 2:06.4h and were joined in the Winners Circle by our Racing With The Stars winners. Thom Pye Photo

Kinda a tough one, eh? Ken Holliday and Rose Run Ultimate can only wonder as How About Murph with Jeff Nisonger throws a last panel of :29.4 at them in a mile in 2:02.2h in the OCRA 3-year-old filly pace. Thom Pye Photo

