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Sophmores Sizzle in Ohio Sires Stakes

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by Kimberly Rinker, Ohio Standardbred Development Administrator

A pair of \$50,000 Ohio Sires Stakes began the Cleveland Trotting Classic evening at Northfield Park on Saturday night, June 29, with sizzling performances put forth by a pair of notable Buckeye-bred sophomore side-wheelers. This was the second round of the four-leg series.

In the first OSS division, 9-2 **Cross Country** and driver Luke Ebersole stole the show with a 1:50.4 lifetime best clocking for owners Luke C. & Logan C. Ebersole of Chesterville, OH and Cody Sipe of Mt. Gilead, OH. **Shamma Lamma**, the 4-5 choice, survived a stewards inquiry to nab place honors with Peter Wrenn in the sulky, 1¼ lengths behind the winner, while 3-1 **Ohio Vintage** (Aaron Merriman) got up for third.

"He's been a good horse all along," related Ebersole in the Northfield winner's circle. "I knew once I landed in the two-hole that he was going to be tough to beat tonight."

The victory was Cross Country's fifth of his career in 12 starts and upped the homebred son of Palone Ranger's earnings to \$60,246.

In the second OSS division Ronnie Wrenn, Jr., steered 1-9 **Rock Candy** to a front-stepping, 1:50.4 triumph for the Ohio-based partnership of Country Club Acres, Joe Sbrocco and Richard Lombardo. The son of Pet Rock—who was bred by mark Moger and Albert Delia, Jr.—easily took command of the one mile test and never looked back, finishing 2¾ lengths ahead of 19-1 longshot **Black Smile** (Brett Miller), while 6-1 **Yankee Boots** (Aaron Merriman) nailed down show honors.

The win was Rock Candy's sixth in a row for trainer Brian Brown and upped the gelding's career bankroll to a hefty \$305,626. He now has nine wins and six seconds in 15 lifetime starts.

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