



Ohio State Racing Commission

77 South High Street • 18th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6108
(614) 466-2757 FAX (614) 466-1900
www.racing.ohio.net

John Kasich
Governor

Robert K. Schmitz
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Altissimo captures \$75,000 Babst-Palacios Memorial

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by Kimberly Rinker for the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

Altissimo and jockey Christian Pilares scored a mild, 3-1 upset in Saturday's \$75,000 Edward Babst-Albert Palacios Memorial Handicap at Belterra Park.

The son of Noble Causeway cruised through the six furlongs on the front end from gate to wire, tripping the timer in a snappy 1:09.89, and besting three-time Babst-Palacios champ and 3-5 favorite **Rivers Run Deep** (Perry Ouzts) by six lengths in the process.

Owned by Nancy Lavrich and Elizabeth Elizabeth Rankin, Altissimo notched his first career stakes victory in the Babst-Palacios Memorial, upping his career earnings to \$221,888. The victory was his second of the season in three starts for the 5-year-old gelding, whose best efforts have come in allowance efforts prior to this triumph.

Cake Pop, the public's 2-1 choice, got up for third with Marcelinio Pedroza in the irons, while 30-1 longshot **My Pardner Cal** nabbed fourth-place honors for jockey Gabriel Lagunes, followed by **Jocker Justice** and **Prime Time Justice**.

Altissimo now has nine wins, three seconds and a trio of third-place finishes in 26 lifetime starts for his connections. Conditioned by Richard Zielinski, Altissimo—whose Italian name means 'very high' in music— was bred by Nancy Lavrich and Niknar Farm, LLC.

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Photo Outline: Altissimo strides clear in victory for jockey Christian Pilares in Saturday's \$75,000 Babst-Palacios Memorial at Belterra Park. *Coady Photography*