



Ohio State Racing Commission

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

Mike DeWine
Governor

Scott Borgemenke
Chairman



Looking Back to 1983

Cornstalk wins 2-Year-Old Colt Trot Championship

May 7, 2019

by Kimberly Rinker, Ohio Standardbred Development Fund Administrator

Ohio trainer-driver and Hall of Famer Howard Beissinger was no stranger to the winner's circle and in 1983, he brought forth onto the Ohio Sires Stakes scene a colt with close ties to his heart, the youngster Cornstalk.

Cornstalk was the son of a previous Beissinger trainee, Lindy's Pride, 3, 1:57.3 (\$396,209) who Howard had driven to win trotting's top five stakes in 1969: The Yonkers Trot, Kentucky Futurity, Hambletonian, Dexter Cup and Colonial Stakes.



CORNSTALK WITH ROBERT ROBERTS IN THE SULKY AT THE MEADOWLANDS IN 1984

Beissinger's connections to Cornstalk—who was leased by Scioto Down's owner Charlie Hill—ran deep. The colt was bred by Howard's wife Ann of Hamilton, OH and Faye Gillen of Waynesville, OH, and was foaled on February 12, 1981 in Cream Ridge, NJ. He was out of the Speedy Crown 3, 1:57.1 (\$545,495) mare Crown Viva 2, 2:03.4 (\$6,618).

It was Beissinger who had piloted the great stallion Speedy Crown to a Hambletonian victory in 1971 and then repeated that feat with Speedy Crown's son, Speedy Somolli, in 1978, earning him the moniker of "Hambo Howard" after his third Hambo triumph.

The Hamilton, OH horseman was known for his no-nonsense approach to training and driving and was an expert at shoeing and rigging young horses. Those qualities had given him international recognition and he enjoyed racing fame throughout North America and across Europe and Russia as well.

So, it was with this same work ethic that Beissinger conditioned Cornstalk for his freshman campaign. The young bay stallion with the white star, strip and snip on his face, complemented a few splashes of chrome on three of his ankles, did nothing less than win eight races his freshman season, with one second and a third in 11 tries.

His standout performance in 1983 was clearly his triumph in the \$98,200 Ohio Sires Stakes 2-Year-Old Colt Trot at Northfield Park. Beissinger expertly steered the youngster to a 2:02.4h clocking on Aug. 29, a seasonal best. At the end of his 2-year-old season Cornstalk had racked up \$113,407 for his connections.

The gangly colt didn't stop his winning ways as a 3-year-old either and Beissinger thought so highly of his striking bay that he entered him, along with three stablemates, in the 1984 edition of the Hambletonian. However, not wanting to show favoritism to any owners, he opted out of driving Cornstalk and instead employed the services of Robert Roberts of Cedarville, OH.

In his first Hambletonian heat Cornstalk finished fifth, clocked in 1:57.1 after sitting in the two-hole behind second-place finisher Historic Freight (Ben Webster). Delvin G. Hanover (Hakan Walner) captured that heat in 1:56.2 with an impressive come-from-behind performance. Gentle Stroke, with George Sholty driving, had won his heat in 1:57.4. Unfortunately, Cornstalk did not fare much better in his second heat, finishing sixth in 1:58, far behind the winning Historic Freight, who went on to win the final heat in 1:58 and earn the Hambletonian Crown.

Cornstalk would get his revenge, however, and he would get it in a big way. Two weeks later, on Aug. 15, 1984, with Beissinger at the lines, Cornstalk trotted to a new world record clocking of 1:53.4 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, besting his sire Lindy's Crown's 1980 record by a full second.

Cornstalk went on to add another \$33,104 to his coffers that season, with five wins and two seconds in 12 starts. He retired after his 3-year-old season, with lifetime earnings of \$146,511, and stood stud in Ohio from 1986 through 1989.

During those years he sired 216 registered foals, with 152 starters who earned \$2,889,075. Some of his top progeny include Teddy's Toy (out of OK's Mate) 4, 1:58.1f (\$254,672); V-Annas Good Stock (out of V Anna Speedy) 4, 1:57.1h (\$244,738); Starch Hill (out of Sweet And Tender) 7, 1:58.4f (\$194,891); Letters From Hill (out of Letters From Home) 6, 2:00.3f (\$144,431); McBernie (out of McPam) 5, 1:56.3 (\$117,787); and Kernel (out of Ann Justin) 4, 1:58f (\$120,566).