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Neophyte Trotting & Pacing Colts shine in Ohio Sires Stakes

Burke Brigade & Page prevail in eight contests

July 4, 2019

by Kimberly Rinker, Ohio Standardbred Development Administrator

Temperatures weren't the only thing sizzling on July 4th, as the harness racing public got a look at some of the Buckeye State's finest 2-year-olds for the first time.

Eight \$40,000 Ohio Sires Stakes for 2-year-old trotting and pacing colts went postward on a blistering hot afternoon at Scioto Downs in a special matinee program, beginning at 2 pm, ET.

Trainer Ronnie Burke harnessed four OSS winners (two trots and two paces), while driver Chris Page piloted five OSS victors, including four for team Burke, winning a total of three trotting events and two pacing events in OSS competition.

Five of the 2-year-old winners were first time starters at the pari-mutuel level, with three favorites taking home first prize and five longshots prevailing at the wire. Three of the OSS winners were homebred, while Hanover Shoe Farms was the breeder on three of the contestants. Stallions represented by OSS winners include two by Uncle Peter and one each by Dejambro and Wishing Stone (trotters), and one each by pacing stallions Dragon Again, Pet Rock, Rockin Amadeus and Yankee Cruiser.

Opportune Hanover posted a 1:52.3 clocking for Burke Racing, Chris Page, J&T Silva-Purnel&Libby and Weaver Brusce mi in the last of the four OSS pacing tests—just one fifth off the track record. The son of Dragon Again is the fifth foal out of the Artsplace mare Ozmopolitan p, 4, 1:53.2f (\$185,025) and is a half-brother to Ostro Hanover (by Betterthancheddar) p, 3, 1:52.1f (\$161,076) and Lyons Sands (by Somebeachsomewhere) p, 3, 1:52.2s (\$60,786). Opportune Hanover—the even money favorite with Page in the sulky—was a \$15,000 yearling purchase at the Ohio Select Sale last fall and this was his second start for his connections. **Mr D's Rock** was second for Aaron Merriman at 4-5, with **Dancin Wayon L** (Hank LeVan) third at 27-1.

Burke also harnessed **Elver Hanover** to a 1:53.4 triumph for Burke Racing, B. Jablonsky, J&T Silva-Purnel&Libby. Another Hanover Shoe Farms product, the son of Yankee Cruiser is the seventh foal out of The Panderosa mare Edra Hanover p, 2, 1:51 (\$171,753) and was a \$50,000 yearling purchase at the Ohio Select Sale. He is a half-brother to Eddard Hanover (by Dragon Again) p, 5, 1:49.3 (\$508,397) and East Side Hanover (by Somebeachsomewhere) p, 3, 1:51 (\$63,801), among others. Elver Hanover—the 9-1 choice, was steered by Chris Page, besting second place 9-2 finisher **Stanford Court** (Wrenn, Jr.), with 6-1 **Hot Shot McJeffers** (Kyle Ater) nailing down show honors.

Page was back in the sulky to steer the trotting-bred **It's Academic** to a 1:58.4 winning clocking for Burke Racing, Bill Donovan, Joe Sbrocco and the Hatfield Stables. The win was the son of Uncle Peter's second career victory. Bred by Gbw Breeding Farms, It's Academic is the first foal out of the Muscle Hill mare Annapolis p, 3, 1:55 (\$49,594) and was a \$50,000 yearling purchase at the Ohio Select Sale.

"We liked the look of this colt and so Bill (Donovan) and I bought him together initially," offered co-owner Sbrocco. "We sent him to Ronnie (Burke) to train and he thought so much of him he bought in and later the Hatfields became a partner as well."

It's Academic used wire-to-wire tactics to nail down the win, finishing 2½ lengths ahead of 22-1 **Attache'** (Ronnie Wrenn, Jr.) with 9-1 **Howyadoingbub** (Brett Miller) third.

Burke's other trotting victor was the 7-5 homebred favorite **Wading Boots**, who scored a 1:57.4 clocking with Page at the lines. The son of Wishing Stone, who is owned by Burke Racing, Weaver Brusceci, Larry Karr, and Phil Collura was making his pari-mutuel debut in his first career win. He is the third foal out of the SJ's Caviar mare Sequin Hanover and is a full brother to U Need Stones 4, 1:53 (\$205,920) and Well I'm Fancy 2, Q1:59.3f (\$34,355). **Exhibit Class** and Ronnie Wrenn, Jr., were second at 7-2 while 6-1 **Expect The Sweep** was third for Aaron Merriman.

Rocknthatafterparty surprised everyone as he slid up the rail to win the first pacing division in 1:55, besting six rivals with a crafty drive by Kyle Ater. The son of Rockin Amadeus is trained by Dan Ater for Ivy Holdings and is out of the unraced Cambest mare Cameo And Lace, making him a half-brother to Commander Ruff (by Stand Forever) p, 4, 1:54.4s (\$56,557).

"I owned his dam and turned her over to Hickory Lane Farm," said breeder Rebecca Ewing. "When he went through the sale, I thought he looked so good that I bought him for \$10,000."

Rocknthatafterparty was a 27-1 longshot, returning \$52.00 on a two-dollar ticket and finishing half a length in front of 4-5 favorite **Nvrpopdaplugs** (Ken Holiday), while 5-1 **One Last Laugh** (Ronnie Wrenn, Jr.) got up for third.

Garnering his first career victory was 13-1 **Rock Smart**, well-driven by Danny Noble in a come-from-behind effort to prevail by 1½ lengths in 1:54.3 over 8-5 favorite **Big Bad Whamo** (Ryan Stahl) with 9-1 **One Rock** (Greg Grismore) getting up for third. This Pet Rock youngster—who brought down the gavel for \$30,000 at the Ohio Select Yearling Sale—is out of the Camluck

mare Smartygirl and is a full brother to Smarty's Filly p, 3, 1:54.2f (\$37,795). Rock Smart was bred by Dr. David Fisher and is trained by Bret Schwartz for Stephen Sexton of Xenia, Ohio.

Also winning his first career start was the trotting youngster **Jambalou**, who stopped the clock in 1:57.3 with Chris Page at the lines for trainer/owners/breeders Rick and Reginal Beinhauer. Sent off at 11-1, Jambalou bested 20-1 **Stonefire US** (Dewayne Minor), with 6-1 **Willing Spirit** (Kurt Sugg) third. Jambalou is out of the Chip Chip Hooray mare Chiptomylou, making him a half-brother to Imallthatmatters (by Explosive Matter) 2, 2:00f (\$38,298).

Finally, it was **Big Box Hanover** who gave a fine effort in his first official start—posting a 1:57.4 clocking for driver Trevor Smith and trainer Dalton Walls, who owns the colt in partnership with Bruce Soulsby. Purchased for \$13,000 at the Ohio Select Sale, Big Box Hanover bested 2-1 **Doubleyellowline** (Danny Noble) and third-place finisher 9-1 **Upfront Stone** (Aaron Merriman). This well-named youngster is a son of Uncle Peter and the ninth foal out of the Donerail mare Box Of Dreams 3, 1:58.1f (\$86,100), and is half-brother to Boadicea Hanover (by Andover Hall) 5, 1:53.1 (\$113,287); Ballare Hanover (by Broadway Hall) 5, 1:55 (\$98,552); and By Chance Hanover (by Cantab Hall) 3, 1:59f (\$34,811).

Ohio Sires Stakes action continues Friday, July 5 with four, first-round divisions of 2-year-old pacing fillies going postward at Northfield Park at 6 pm, ET.

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