

**The Meadowlands • August 8, 2020 • Purse \$1,000,000**

## **The Sensational Filly Beats the Boys**

The sensational filly Ramona Hill took a well-deserved gulp from the Hambletonian trophy after beating the boys on Saturday (Aug. 8) in the \$1 million trotting classic at the Meadowlands Racetrack.

It was the latest chapter in the developing saga of harness racing's newest superstar.

The victory, the 15th by a filly in the race's illustrious history, was hardly a surprise. She was the 2-5 favorite following the previous week's jaw-dropping win from an impossible spot, kicking home with a :25.4 final quarter in the Hambletonian eliminations.

She was just as good in the final. Andy McCarthy turned Ramona Hill loose down the backside and she easily surged past Threefiftytwo to take command for good.

"When I came out early there, I sensed I could find the front," McCarthy said. "I went for it, and she knows her job."

As Ramona Hill made the lead, main rivals Ready For Moni — the other elimination winner — and Back Of The Neck took up the chase.

Through the lane, Ramona Hill remained solidly in command, beating Ready For Moni by a length with Back Of The Neck third.

"She was starting to work a little bit towards the wire, but she finished it off," McCarthy said.

The time for the mile only confirmed what observers already knew: Ramona Hill is the real deal. The 1:50.1 clocking equaled the stakes mark set by her sire Muscle Hill in 2009.

It was a muted winner's circle celebration with access limited and everyone masked to ward off the coronavirus.

John Campbell, president of the Hambletonian Society, summed up the day and the performance eloquently.

"What a great performance by a tremendous filly," Campbell said. "Throughout history, society has dealt with crises and troubles, but great horses and great horse racing have found a way to bring people together to forget about what's going on in their everyday lives. I think that's what's happened here today."

It was the first Hambletonian victory for McCarthy and

trainer Tony Alagna, who took a very patient approach with his talented filly. The race was only her fourth of the year and 11th of her career.

"People talked earlier about how COVID affected this filly's schedule," Alagna said. "Honestly, this was our schedule from the beginning, with or without COVID. She's very much like a Thoroughbred. She doesn't need the starts to be at her best."

Of course, the Hambletonian Oaks for fillies earlier in the day was a possible target. But after Ramona Hill cruised to a convincing win in the Del Miller on July 18, Alagna set his sights on the bigger goal.

"We always had it (the Hambletonian) in the back of our minds, but nobody wanted to be the first one to say it," Alagna said. "After the Del Miller, it became a reality."

It had already been a great afternoon for McCarthy with four victories. Number five, the Hambletonian, will be the one he'll always remember.

"It was a very good start to the day and I was trying to keep my cool, and I was trying to let it sink in too much because I still had a lot of work to do," McCarthy said.

The driver and the filly completed the mission in style.

"The adrenalin you get from winning a race like this, words can't explain it," the Australian reinsman said. "It's an amazing event and a privilege to be involved."

With the victory, Ramona Hill improved her record to 9-0-2 in 11 starts for Bradley Grant, Crawford Farms Racing, Robert LeBlanc and In The Gym Partners. The 2019 Breeders Crown and Dan Patch Award winner is the second filly to capture the Hambletonian in the last three renewals, joining Atlanta (2018).



## Ramona Hill

**RAMONA HILL**, bay filly 3, by Muscle Hill-Lock Down Lindy by Lucky Chucky  
 Driver: Andrew McCarthy  
 Trainer: Tony Alagna  
 Owners: Bradley Grant, Crawford Farms Racing, Robert Leblanc, In The Gym Partners  
 Breeder: Crawford Farms

FINAL TIME BY QUARTERS	¼	½	¾	MILE
FINAL	26.2	54.3	1:22.2	1:50.1

### Final Payouts

RAMONA HILL	2.80	2.10	2.10
READY FOR MONI		3.40	2.40
BACK OF THE NECK			2.40

**READY FOR MONI**, bay colt 3, by Ready Cash-Nothing But Moni by Credit Winner  
 Driver: Yannick Gingras  
 Trainer: Nancy Takter  
 Owners: John Fielding, Lindy Farms of Conn, Herb Liverman, Bob Hatfield  
 Breeder: Moni Maker Stable

**BACK OF THE NECK**, bay colt, 3, by Ready Cash-Big Barb by Andover Hall  
 Driver: Scott Zeron  
 Trainer: Ake Svanstedt  
 Owners: Howard Taylor, Order By Stable, Judith Taylor  
 Breeder: Order By Stable



**The Meadowlands • August 3, 2019 • Purse \$1,000,000**

## **Canada's Forbidden Trade upsets large Swedish contingent in 94th Hambletonian**

Hambletonian Day was to be a day to unfurl Swedish flags at The Meadowlands.

Why not? Rising star Marcus Melander started the day with a powerhouse four-horse contingent locked and loaded, taking dead aim at the 3-year-old trotting classic.

But when the dust settled, it was our friendly neighbors to the north celebrating, as Forbidden Trade pulled a 15-1 upset.

Canada's champion 2-year-old showed the heart of a warrior to hold off 3-10 favorite Greenshoe by neck in a dramatic fight to the finish.

And it was the first Hambletonian victory for the Canadian trio of owner Serge Godin's Determination Stable, trainer Luc Blais and driver Bob McClure.

Coming in, McClure said "the sky was the limit" for his colt. Forbidden Trade backed up that confidence with the race of his life.

Forbidden Trade, third in his Hambletonian elimination, was always in contention throughout the mile. McClure and his colt tracked Green Manalishi S, an elimination winner and a member of the Melander brigade, into the stretch. Forbidden Trade took charge, but danger was looming with Greenshoe uncorking a menacing rally.

For an instant, it appeared Greenshoe would blow on by. McClure admitted he was headed, but Forbidden Trade was not done. After all, this was the day of the Maple Leaf.

"It was two incredible colts fighting it out," McClure said. "I don't think there was a loser in that, but we're really happy to get out on top."

It's also been a remarkable comeback for McClure, 28, who suffered a broken pelvis in a qualifier accident in April. He was back in action by May 23, using a hyperbaric chamber to hasten the recovery.

"I was really lucky to have a good physical trainer," McClure said. "I probably rushed it back a little faster than I should have. I'm sure most drivers in this business have done this a time or two."

Melander didn't get the victory, but his trio of qualifiers for the final raced well. Gimpanzee rallied from far back to get third and Green Manalishi S held on for the fifth and final purse check.

Greenshoe never looked comfortable behind the starting gate for the final as driver Brian Sears held him together to prevent a break. That put him further back than expected, a loss of ground that proved costly.

The time was 1:51 on a warm sunny afternoon as the threatened showers never materialized to spoil the day. Forbidden Trade paid \$33.80 to win.

It was the 12th win in 18 starts for the son of Kadabra. He was a \$110,000 purchase at the Harrisburg sale.

Earlier in the day, a determined Green Manalishi S pulled a 9-1 upset in the first Hambo elimination. He left strongly from post eight, briefly dropped into fourth before

ranging up first-over to wear down Osterc in a lifetime best 1:50.3.

Melander and Courant Inc. also won the second elimination. In a favorite's delight, it was with Greenshoe, the 1-5 favorite, in 1:50.2.

Green Manalishi S (\$20.60) outlasted a first-over grind to collar Osterc in 1:50.3 in the first \$70,000 Hambletonian elimination on Saturday (Aug. 3) at The Meadowlands, while fourth-place finisher Gimpanzee suffered defeat for the first time after winning the first 12 races of his career.

Now an eight-time winner, the son of Muscle Hill commenced his uncovered bid out of fourth just beyond a :54.4 half mile, advancing steadily on the far turn in line to Tim Tetrick to engage 30-1 long shot Osterc (Yannick Gingras) at the midpoint of the far turn. The pair dueled the length of the stretch, with Green Manalishi S just reaching in the final strides. Osterc was a game runner-up, while Soul Strong (Dexter Dunn) launched a belated rally down the grandstand side to finish third.

Gimpanzee (Brian Sears), sent off the 2-5 favorite, gapped third-over cover but finished evenly to save fourth, and Cantab Fashion (Scott Zeron) finished fifth.

Greenshoe (\$2.60) looked every bit the part of an odds-on favorite in the second Hambletonian elimination on Saturday (Aug. 3) at The Meadowlands, seizing command from Marseille with three-eighths to go and coasting to a handy 1:50.2 victory.

Greenshoe threw his head briefly at the start, but Brian Sears held him together before floating him into third behind Marseille (Ake Svanstedt) and Forbidden Trade (Bob McClure) on the first turn. After clearing from post eight in a :27.3 first quarter, Marseille rebuffed a pocket bid from Forbidden Trade en route to a :56 half before facing the first-over onslaught of Greenshoe on approach to the far turn.

With three-eighths to go, the son of Father Patrick surged to the fore and edged away willingly in the home straight to a wrapped-up two-length score, the seventh of his career.

Don't Let'em (Yannick Gingras) chased well after losing cover to protect second from Forbidden Trade, who switched three-wide from the pocket and accelerated in mid-stretch. Marseille finished fourth, and Pilot Discretion (Andy McCarthy) finished fifth to secure the final berth to the 94th Hambletonian, carded as race 12.

Marcus Melander, whose Green Manalishi S took the first Hambletonian elimination, trains Greenshoe for Courant Inc., Hans Backe, Lars Granqvist and Morten Langli.

## Forbidden Trade

**FORBIDDEN TRADE**, brown colt, 3, by Kadabra-Pure Ivory by Striking Sahbra  
 Driver: Bob McClure  
 Trainer: Luc Blais  
 Owners: Determination [Serge Godin]  
 Breeder: Steve H Stewart

TIME BY QUARTERS	¼	½	¾	MILE
1ST ELIMINATION	:26.3	:54.4	1:23.0	1:50.3
2ND ELIMINATION	:27.3	:56.0	1:23.3	1:50.2
FINAL	:26.1	:55.0	1:23.2	1:51.0

**GREENSHOE**, bay colt 3, by Father Patrick-Designed To Be by Donato Hanover  
 Driver: Brian Sears  
 Trainer: Marcus Melander  
 Owners: Courant Inc, Hans R Backe, Lars I Granqvist, Morten Langli  
 Breeder: AL J Libfeld & Marvin Katz

FIRST ELIMINATION	SECOND ELIMINATION
GREEN MANALISHI 22.60 10.00 5.60	GREENSHOE 2.60 2.10 2.10
OSTERC 22.20 9.40	DON'T LET'EM 2.80 2.60
SOUL STRONG 4.00	FORBIDDEN TRADE 3.80

**GIMPANZEE**, bay colt, 3, by Chapter Seven-Steamy Windows by Muscle Massive  
 Driver: David Miller  
 Trainer: Marcus Melander  
 Owners: Courant Inc, SRF Stable  
 Breeder: Order By Stable

### Final Payouts

FORBIDDEN TRADE	17.00	6.40	5.40
GREENSHOE		3.00	2.40
GIMPANZEE			4.00



- Luc Blais, 57, started Jake in the 2017 Hambletonian; the horse finished sixth in his elimination and failed to advance to the final. Also in 2017, Blais' filly Dream Together finished third in the Hambletonian Oaks final.
- In 2018, Blais trained two O'Brien Award winners: 2-year-old male trotter Forbidden Trade and older female trotter Emoticon Hanover. Past stars included O'Brien Award winner Intimidate.
- Bob McClure, 28, won his Hambletonian debut but also the 2018 John R. Steele Memorial for female trotters with Dream Together, trained by Luc Blais, a year ago on Hambletonian Day.
- McClure likened his victory to the Toronto Raptors' recent NBA Championship victory, led by Kawhi Leonard. "I absolutely love the Raptors," said McClure. "The entire nation was so proud and I think even a lot of Americans were cheering for them, probably because we were the underdog and everybody loves an underdog." Six weeks later, as a rank outsider, McClure himself got the opportunity to embrace and capitalize on the underdog role.
- Determination, QC is Canadian Serge Godin, who founded CGI in 1976, when he was only 26 years old. Under his leadership, CGI has grown into a full-service IT and business process consulting company, employing more than 74,000 people worldwide. After having led CGI since its inception, Mr. Godin is now the Executive Chairman of the Board of Directors.
- Godin has owned horses for many years and likely spent millions chasing this Holy Grail, but he wanted to heap praise on the rest of his carefully-crafted harness racing team led by trainer and fellow Quebecer Luc Blais and driver Bob McClure. "We selected the best horses and conformation and everything, then we have assembled a very strong team, the A team. We are very lucky," said Godin, a man not afraid to pay handsomely for yearling stock he truly covets. "The trainer is a fantastic guy and Bob McClure is really, really good so I'm really privileged to be surrounded by some really strong people."
- Greenshoe was also voted Dan Patch sophomore colt trotter of the year, though Forbidden Trade won the Canadian counterpart of divisional honors, his second straight O'Brien trophy.
- The Hambletonian Future wager proved to be an extreme value play for those following and cashing in on the race winner Forbidden Trade. The son of Kadabra captured the \$1 million event at The Meadowslands in dramatic style returning \$33.80 to win for those placing wagers close to post time.
- Adam's Bagel Café and Deli in River Vale debuted a Hambletonian Sandwich. No ham, but turkey and pastrami.
- Jimmy Takter's record of six straight Oaks victories (and driver Yannick Gingras' five straight wins piloting them) was snapped by the Allard brothers and a phenomenal filly named When Dovescry. The daughter of Muscle Hill – Cedar Dove was an easy two-length winner over Millies Possession in 1:50 2/5. Asiago finished third. When Dovescry paid \$6.60 to win and the victory launched her to Dan Patch divisional honors as well.
- The Peter Haughton "jinx" continues: In 2018, Don't Let'em and Green Manalishi S were 1-2 in the Peter Haughton. In the Hambletonian final, Don't Let'em made a break and finished last and Green Manalishi S was fifth. Only two horses have won both the Peter Haughton and the Hambletonian in 38 years: Donato Hanover 2006-2007 and Muscle Hill 2008-2009.
- Trainer Marcus Melander may not have won the Hambletonian, but he won the most money on the day with \$839,947.50 in purses. He scored in the Jim Doherty, both Hambletonian elims, was second, third and fifth in the Hambletonian final, fourth in the Hambletonian Oaks, fifth in the Cashman, fourth in a Hambletonian elim, and 2-3-4 in the Peter Haughton.
- Attendance on the day was 19,901 with more than \$7.3 million wagered, an increase of nearly 15 percent and consistently the most by any harness track in North America.
- Forbidden Trade was voted Horse of the Year in Canada at the O'Brien Awards, adding a second trophy to his shelf having won the O'Brien two-year-old title in 2018.



## The Meadowlands • August 4, 2018 • Purse \$1,000,000 Go Atlanta! The Filly Wins The Hambletonian

With files from the Horseman & Fair World

You'd have to reach way down to the bottom of the bag of improbable story lines to come up with the winner of the 93rd Hambletonian. The first foal – a filly, at that – from an unraced mare named for a Quentin Tarantino movie, trained and driven by a father and son team, marched through just four New York Sire Stake events into the Hambletonian winner circle and pulled a whole lot of history in with her.

Trainer Rick Zeron purchased a yearling daughter of Chapter Seven-Hemi Blue Chip for \$60,000 at the Standardbred Horse Sale in Harrisburg named Django Unchained by breeder Stefan Balazsi. He quickly renamed her Atlanta, and was pleased with her 2-year-old campaign, even though she had some missteps along the way. Atlanta recorded a solid \$100k freshman season, winning a Champlain division in Canada, a state-bred contest in New York, and was a respectable fourth in the Breeders Crown at Hoosier Park, behind of course, the latest four-legged comet from the Jimmy Takter Stable, Manchego. At the end of 2017, Manchego took divisional honors with a perfect 12-12 record and the Zerons took Atlanta to Florida for the winter.

Rick Zeron and his son, Scott are something of a rarity in modern-day harness racing. Both are skilled horsemen, both trainers and drivers, though in the last few years Rick has concentrated on training and Scott on driving. Scott already etched his name in the record books by becoming the youngest driver at age 27 to win the Trotting Triple Crown, capturing the first leg, the Hambletonian, with Marion Marauder for the Wellwood family in 2016. So with one Hambletonian to his credit, no one, not even Scott, foresaw himself hoisting the Hambo trophy just two years later.

"I never dreamed I'd win the Hambletonian for my Dad, let alone with a filly," said Zeron post-race.

But that's what horse racing is made of – dreams, and Rick allowed himself those thoughts during winter training with Atlanta. He believed his filly was headed for greatness. Though both Zerons sat behind Atlanta during her freshman season, it was her form in 2018 that made the senior Zeron sense something special was brewing. Those high expectations led to the Zeron's decision to not race Atlanta in the Oaks versus her own peers, but instead take on the colts in the Hambletonian.

And on a hot and humid Saturday afternoon, they were rewarded handsomely when Atlanta captured the \$1 million final of this year's Hambletonian.

17 colts and the lone filly entered the 93rd Hambletonian, splitting evenly into two nine-horse heats. The first elim featured Goodtimes winner Wolfgang as the slight favorite, sent to the gate by the powerhouse duo of Jimmy Takter/Yannick Gingras at 3/5.

Scott Zeron had other ideas, and didn't wait for the favorite and Gingras to dictate strategy. He rocketed out of the gate with Atlanta to record the fastest fractions in Hambletonian history – :26, :53.2 and 1:21.1, maintaining an unbelievable four-length lead over the field while doing it.

The torrid fractions took their toll on the filly though, with Crystal Fashion rallying to track down Atlanta, getting a neck past her at the wire. The 1:50.1 mile tied as the fastest Hambo heat ever, matching the legendary Muscle Hill's win in the final in 2009.

The second elim featured O'Brien divisional winner Alarm Detector and Dan Patch champ Fourth Dimension, both of whom had struggled to maintain their freshman form. The favorite, Six Pack, a picture of consistency with a record of 6-5-1-0, entered the Hambletonian fresh off a devastating world record of 1:50 in a Stanley Dancer Memorial division on July 14, making him the fastest three-year-old trotting colt in history. The mile broke the previous world mark of 1:50.1 co-held by 2009 Hambletonian winner Muscle Hill and Donato Hanover.

The intriguing Tactical Landing was trained and driven by Jimmy Takter only in the months leading up to the Hambletonian and had just three starts in 2018. The blue-blooded colt by Muscle Hill out of the Varenne mare and Breeders Crown champion Southwind Serena (making him a full brother to two-time champion Mission Brief) was an \$800,000 yearling buy, still seeking to justify his purchase price.

Tactical Landing dominated his elimination, winning by more than a length in 1:52.1 as Six Pack locked wheels with another competitor, Classichap, and was out of the money.

The stage was set for the \$1,000,000 final. Since elimination winners draw for inside posts 1-5, Atlanta was in the open draw, starting from post seven, as she had in her elim. Being in the first elim gave both Zeron and Atlanta an extra half hour to regroup.

"Yes, it was important because of the way I drove her in the first elim that she needed another 30 minutes," Scott told the Horseman & Fair World's Gordon Waterstone.

Scott also added that his thoughts of racing the filly off the pace in the final were extinguished when he saw the draw and realized post seven would dictate the same tactics used in the elim.

Heat winners Tactical Landing and Crystal Fashion drew posts two and three, respectively.

The final went the way Zeron hoped as Atlanta opened a two-length lead early with a 26.2 first quarter and never lost it as she sailed through more comfortable fractions. Opening up by three lengths in midstretch, Atlanta prevailed to a length win over Met's Hall and driver Andy Miller. Tactical Landing, who gave a valiant first-over effort, edged Crystal Fashion for third.

With an effort that defied belief—even for her connections—Atlanta proved she could be among the all-time great filly trotters when she stepped out to a 1:50.4 victory in the rich final. Atlanta joined Duenna (1983) and Continentalvictory (1996) as the only fillies to capture the Hambletonian since the race moved to the Meadowlands in 1981. With the Hambletonian trophy under her belt and the belief by her connections she could trot a mile in 1:49, Zeron was quizzed as to whether Atlanta was on her way to becoming the greatest filly of all time.

"Like Muscle Hill and Somebeachsomewhere, those are once in a lifetime," said Scott. "Those are the horses that have no boundaries and are the greatest. To me, that's Atlanta. Everybody remembers who won the Hambletonian. It doesn't get any better than that."

The final-heat victory also allowed Zeron, just 29 years old but a veteran with more than 22,000 drives and 3,400 wins, to quickly redeem himself for an elimination drive he said was the "worst mistake" he'd ever made in the sulky.

Rick Zeron shared ownership of Atlanta and he and partners Howard Taylor, Brad Grant, Al and Michelle Crawford (Crawford Farms) and William Holland (Holland Racing Stable), watched the elim from tables in the Trotters dining room.

It was the first Hambletonian win for everyone in the partnership, as well as the first breeding credit for Swedish breeder Stefan Balazsi's Order By Stable. Balazsi was a partnership owner of 2010 Hambletonian winner Muscle Massive.

The \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks was won for the eighth time, including the last six straight by a Jimmy Takter trainee, a record probably unmatched in any breed. It was also the sixth breeders credit for Brittany Farms, as Manchego (Muscle Hill-Secret Magic) won her elimination the week before and the final, easily tacking a 26.3 last quarter onto the fastest Oaks in history, 1:50.0. It was the fifth straight Oaks title for top reinsman Yannick Gingras.

Attendance on the day was 18,252 with more than \$6.8 million wagered, consistently the most by any harness track in North America.

## Atlanta

**ATLANTA**, bay filly, 3, by Chapter Seven-Hemi Blue Chip by Cantab Hall  
 Driver: Scott Zeron  
 Trainer: Rick Zeron  
 Owners: Rick Zeron, Crawford Fms, Holland Racing Stb, Howard Taylor, Brad Grant  
 Breeder: Order By Stable

TIME BY QUARTERS	¼	½	¾	MILE
1ST ELIMINATION	:26.0	:53.2	1:21.1	1:50.1
2ND ELIMINATION	:27.0	:54.4	1:23.3	1:52.1
FINAL	:26.2	:55.2	1:22.4	1:50.4

**MET'S HALL** bay colt 3, by Cantabl Hall-Met's Inn by Mutinee  
 Driver: Andy Miller  
 Trainer: Julie Miller  
 Owners: Stroy Inc [Julie Miller; Natalia Stroy], Andy Miller Stable  
 Breeder: Winbak Farm

FIRST ELIMINATION			SECOND ELIMINATION		
CRYSTAL FASHION	10.00	4.20	3.00	TACTICAL LANDING	3.60 3.40 2.10
ATLANTA		3.60	3.00	PATENT LEATHER	50.20 36.20
MET'S HALL			9.60	FASHIONWOODCHOPPER	21.40

**TACTICAL LANDING** bay colt, 3, by Muscle Hill-Southwind Serena by Varenne  
 Driver: Jimmy Takter  
 Trainer: Jimmy Takter  
 Owners: The Tactical Landing Stable[Kevin Greenfield, Andrea Lea Racing Stb, Michael Creps, Wayne Farthing, Michael Frank, Lynda Stewart, Taylor Stewart, Christina Takter, Howard Taylor & Jean Pierre Dubois' D Farm LLC]  
 Breeder: Steve Stewart, Black Creek Farm, Andrea Lea Racing Stable

**Final Payouts**

ATLANTA	6.40	4.20	3.60
MET'S HALL		19.40	7.60
TACTICAL LANDING			3.40



- "I thought I lost the Hambletonian in the elimination," admitted Zeron. "I thought I lost the race because I let her get away from me the whole mile when I should have reined her in."
- Atlanta's great Hambletonian Day on August 4, 2018, was a far cry from exactly one year ago when the daughter of Chapter Seven won a qualifier that was needed after making breaks her first two career starts in New York Sire Stakes (NYSS). "She was never ready to go to Yonkers or Batavia her first two starts. She was immature mentally," said Scott Zeron.
- Atlanta won her sophomore debut on May 11 in an overnight at the Meadowlands, besting older male trotters in the process. She then swept her way four straight times against New York-sired competition, including a 1:50.3 all-age track-record effort at Vernon Downs in the Empire Breeders Classic final.
- Atlanta wears trotting hobbles, though Scott said the hobbles are more for security than necessity. "Dad doesn't like to put trotting hobbles on but before she ever got to the races she would make breaks training," he said. "He put the belly hobbles on her just for the mental support. Aside from those early half-mile breaks, she's flawless with them. Training back down we tried to go without them but it felt like she needed that security of having them."
- Zeron is now the youngest two-time Hambletonian winner after capturing the 2016 renewal with Marion Marauder.
- 61-year-old Rick Zeron was born in Ottawa, Ont., and got his start in racing at Connaught Park in Quebec when he was 15. Training and driving, he later became a fixture at nearby Blue Bonnets Raceway before moving in 1995 to the Woodbine/Mohawk circuit. He has more than 8,100 driving wins, 1,400 training wins and two Canadian O'Brien Awards for Horsemanship to his credit.
- While Atlanta was Zeron's first Hambletonian starter, he trained and drove 2011 Hambletonian Oaks runner-up Lady Rainbow. The Zerons also teamed up two years ago on Marion Marauder's Hambletonian day with Shamballa, who won the U.S. Pacing Championship.
- Six Pack won the Yonkers Trot and Kentucky Futurity, while Atlanta went on to win the Kentucky Filly Futurity.
- She cruised to Dan Patch divisional honors and also earned Trotter of the Year in the U.S.
- Breeder of the Year went to Order By Stable and broodmare honors to Southwind Serena, dam of Tactical Landing.
- Atlanta is the fourth Hambletonian winner in four years to return to the races rather than head to the breeding shed. She joins 2015 gelding winner Pinkman, stallions Marion Marauder (2016) and Perfect Spirit (placed first in 2017) and now racing overseas, in making a triumphant return to the racetrack.



## Perfect Spirit Wins On A DQ

What began as a perfectly normal, even routine edition of the 92nd Hambletonian, transformed in the last few strides into an historic event – as the horse first across the wire, What The Hill, was disqualified for interference with another competitor and Perfect Spirit became the first Hambletonian winner to be placed first because of an infraction.

In the fourth year of the restored same-day heat formats, 19 hopefuls entered for two evenly-matched elimination fields.

One important contender was not entered, certainly taking some luster from the day by his absence. The 2016 Dan Patch divisional champion Walner had dominated his freshman crop with nearly half a million in earnings and a mark of 1:51.3, making him the fastest two-year-old in history. However, the blazingly fast son of first crop sire Chapter Seven struggled to put together a string of consistent races as a three-year-old, but finally took an overnight race in early July in an eye-popping 1:51.1, followed a week later with a victory in a \$159,000 Stanley Dancer Memorial division in 1:50.2. Though an improbable run-up to a race of this importance, it seemed likely Walner would be headed for a Hambletonian victory.

However, a few days before the entry box closed for the Hambletonian, his trainer, Linda Toscano, the first woman to win the Hambletonian with Market Share in 2012, announced Walner had suffered an injury and would not be entered.

The sophomore crop of trotters had not quite sorted themselves out by the first Saturday in August, but Julie and Andy Miller's Devious Man entered the race as the favorite off wins in \$252,000 Empire Breeders Classic final and the \$500,000 Beal Memorial on the road to the Hambletonian. Co-owned by the Millers and Stroy Stable, Devious Man was the soul of consistency, and probably represented the best chance the Millers had to date to win a Hambletonian title. With more than \$750,000 in earnings, his bank overshadowed that of any other sophomore colts in the race.

In the first elimination, International Moni, winner of his Goodtimes elim and the \$182,230 final in Canada, as well as an overnight prep race for the Hambo, entered off a scorecard of four wins in four starts on the year. He was rightfully sent off the 3-5 favorite, and held off Bill's Man by a nose in 1:52.3 to win the first of two \$100,000 Hambletonian elimination.

Scott Zeron, fresh off his 2016 Hambletonian win driving Marion Marauder, steered the three-year-old son of French stallion Love You, out of two-time Horse of the Year and 1996 Oaks winner Moni Maker, for trainer Frank Antonacci and the Moni Maker Stable of Enfield, CT.

International Moni paid \$3.40, \$2.80, \$2.20. Bill's Man returned \$5.00, \$3.20. Victor Gio It, (another foreign-sired son of the famous Ready Cash) was third, and paid \$3.60.

Also advancing from the first elimination to the \$1 million Hambletonian final for three-year-old trotters, were Guardian Angel AS for first time driver Jordan Stratton and Giveitgasandgo, fourth and fifth respectively.

In the second elimination, Devious Man was favored, but Marcus Melander, the nephew of Stefan Melander, who won the 2001 Hambletonian with Scarlet Knight, scored a mild upset with his trainee Enterprise. Tim Tetric guided Enterprise (\$13.80) to the Chapter Seven colt's fifth win in seven starts this year for Melander and owner Anders Strom, who races as Courant Inc. of Delray Beach, FL. Devious Man (\$3.80, \$3.20) was second best with Andy Miller at the lines. Perfect Spirit (\$6.40) was third with Ake Svanstedt.

Also advancing were What The Hill and Dover Dan in the 1:52 mile.

Fourth place-finisher What The Hill was trained by Ron Burke, and represented the mega-stable's current hope to win the Hambletonian, after finishing second twice in the last two years – by a nose to Marion Marauder with Southwind Frank in 2016, and second again to Pinkman in 2015 with the world champion filly Mission Brief.

The Hambletonian is one of the very few races in in the sport that had eluded both What The Hill's trainer and his driver, Hall of Famer, David Miller. Rumors swirled from the paddock that Burke had pulled the shoes on What

The Hill and was ultra-confident in his colt's chances in the final.

As the ten finalists made their way to the gate, Devious Man was again the favorite, off his consistency alone. However it was Perfect Spirit, driven by 58-year-old expatriate Swede Ake Svanstedt, who left and took command of the field, as the rest of the pack vied for position behind him. Victor Gio It, driven by Yannick Gingras crowded then interfered with International Moni in the first turn, causing that one to go off stride and lose all chance.

Svanstedt was able to steal a somewhat pedestrian half of :56 flat, as Stratton and Guardian Angel AS advanced on the leader providing cover flow. What The Hill, pinned down along the rail had David Miller licking his chops at the perfect trip and fresh horse he felt in his hands. As Perfect Spirit tired and drifted out, and Devious Man made a late rush in the stretch, Miller squeezed What The Hill out and powered past everybody to the wire in 1:52.3. The jubilation was short-lived as the inquiry light began to blink and the judges considered whether Miller had clearance or had struck Guardian Angel AS in his haste to vacate the pocket spot.

After an agonizing wait, What The Hill's number came down, and Perfect Spirit's number went up. A roar from the crowd marked the unprecedented incident in harness racing's most storied event – a first in 93 years.

What The Hill was placed ninth by the judges, behind the contestant he bothered.

Trainer-driver Ake Svanstedt and Perfect Spirit, were second across the wire, beaten a half-length, but were placed first in the official order of finish, giving Svanstedt his first Hambo trophy. Owner Lennart Agren of the SRF Stable had purchase Perfect Hanover for \$75,000 at the Standardbred Horse Sale in Harrisburg, PA as Grill Hanover.

"I didn't like the name... so we changed it," Agren said. "I had another proposal for the name Free Spirit, but that was taken already, so we went with Perfect Spirit:

The official order of finish was Perfect Spirit first, 2-1 favorite Devious Man second and Enterprise third. Perfect Spirit paid \$17.00 to win and now has seven wins in 16 lifetime starts and sports a bankroll of \$646,419.

The Hanover-bred son of Andover Hall – Good Common Cents, by Kadabra gave the Pennsylvania nursery their record eleventh winner of the Hambletonian.

What The Hill proved his dominance during the remainder of 2017. He was voted Dan Patch sophomore colt champion off his wins in Canadian Trotting Classic, an elimination of the Kentucky Futurity, the Breeders Crown and finally the \$350,000 TVG against older trotters. He was subsequently retired to stud in Ohio at the end of his three-year-old year.

Perfect Spirit did not win another race in 2017, and in fact only started twice more in this country. He has developed into one of the best four-year-olds in Sweden of his owner and trainer Daniel Reden, and has amassed a serious international bankroll.

In October, Walner reinjured his suspensory, and was permanently retired by owner Ken Jacobs, to a lucrative stallion deal. He stand in New Jersey at Southwind Farm as did such breed-changing sires as Valley Victory and now Muscle Hill.

Devious Man, the Rodney Dangerfield of his crop, also did not win another race after July, but earned more than \$1 million, the most of any male sophomore trotter that year. He was sent to stud in New York as a four-year-old.

ARIANA "GRANDE" IN OAKS: Ariana G brought her "A" game in the Hambletonian Oaks for 3-year-old trotting fillies, and as a result, the rest of the field had no chance.

The daughter of Muscle Hill toyed with nine overmatched foes in the \$500,000 sister event to the Hambletonian, putting on a dazzling display as she sped clear of the field through the stretch to win by 4¾ lengths over Magic Presto. Dream Together was third.

## Perfect Spirit

As the heavy favorite, Ariana G returned \$2.40 to win and upped her lifetime stats to 15 wins in 18 starts, good for earnings of just over \$1.2 million.

For the team of driver Yannick Gingras and trainer Jimmy Takter, it marked their fourth consecutive victory in the Oaks. She also went on to divisional honors, and earned more than any sophomore trotter, with \$1.1 million. The ownership of Marvin Katz and Al Libfeld planned to bring Ariana G back to the races in 2018.

As for the historic disqualification, it went to the courts, with the ownership of What The Hill (Burke racing, Our Horse Cents Stable, J&T Silva Stable and Deo Volente Farms) as well as driver David Miller appealing the judge's actions. That case, like the dead-heat of 1989, entered the court system and was recently resolved in March, with no change to order and the disqualification of What The Hill upheld.

Attendance for the Hambletonian Day card was 18,356. ... All-source wagering totaled \$5,788,870. ... Takter trained five winners on the card while Gingras drove four. Svanstedt trained and drove three to victory lane.

**PERFECT SPIRIT**, bay colt, 3, by Andover Hall-Good Common Cents by Kadabra  
 Driver: Ake Svanstedt  
 Trainer: Ake Svanstedt  
 Owners: Srf Stable [Lennart G Agren]  
 Breeder: Hanover Shoe Farms Inc

**DEVIOUS MAN** bay colt 3, by Credit Winner-Miss Garland by Garland Lobell  
 Driver: Andy Miller  
 Trainer: Julie Miller  
 Owners: Stroy Inc [Julie Miller; Natalia Stroy]  
 Breeder: Winback Farm

**ENTERPRISE** bay colt, 3, by Chapter Seven-Shes Gone Again by SJ's Caviar  
 Driver: Tim Tetrick  
 Trainer: Marcus Melander  
 Owners: Courant Inc [Sabine Kagebrandt; Anders Strom; Peter C. Weisberg]  
 Breeder: Diamond Creek Farm; Melvin Hartman

### FIRST ELIMINATION

INTERNATIONAL MONI 5.60 3.40 2.80  
 BILL'S MAN 5.40 3.60  
 VICTGOR GIO IT 9.00

### SECOND ELIMINATION

ENTERPRISE 3.60 3.40 2.10  
 DEVIOUS MAN 38.60 11.20  
 PERFECT SPIRIT 3.00

TIME BY QUARTERS	¼	½	¾	MILE
1ST ELIMINATION	:27.4	:56.1	1:24.2	1:52.3
2ND ELIMINATION	:28.0	:55.4	1:24.0	1:52.0
FINAL	:27.1	:56.0	1:24.0	1:52.3

### Final Payouts

PERFECT SPIRIT 17.00 6.40 5.40  
 DEVIOUS MAN 3.00 2.40  
 ENTERPRISE 4.00





## Marion Marauder Measures It

With files by Gordon Waterstone & Kathy Parker of the Horseman and Fair World.

As Jean Wellwood stood in the new Meadowlands winner's circle on a hot and sultry Saturday afternoon, basking in the glory of Marion Marauder's victory in the \$1 million Hambletonian final, she said she had immediate flashbacks to 1977 in Du Quoin, Ill., and the family's first Hambletonian starter, Sugarbowl Hanover.

Sugarbowl Hanover was driven by her late husband, William Wellwood, who died in 2003, two years after being inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame. She also remembered William trying in vain three more times to win the trotting classic until his passing, including driving Day Care in the first-ever Hambletonian at the Meadowlands in 1981. The Wellwood family had five other starters through the years, most recently nine years ago in 2007 when Laddie gave them a third-place finish.

As the family's eighth starter, Marion Marauder, who is owned by Jean and her 19-year-old grandson, Devin Keeling, was able to fulfill three generations of Wellwood family dreams when he won this year's 91st renewal of the Hambletonian.

Marion Marauder captured his elimination for driver Scott Zeron in stunning come-from-behind fashion in 1:51.3 and then won the final by a nose over Southwind Frank and a neck over a late-closing Sutton in 1:51.4.

The three-way photo finish was the closest in the Hambletonian final since 2012 when Market Share edged Guccio and My MVP by a neck. Not including the historic 1989 dead heat between Park Avenue Joe and Probe, it was the eighth Hambletonian final decided by a nose and the first since Bonefish in 1975.

Marion Marauder is trained by Wellwood's daughter, Paula, and Paula's husband, Mike Keeling.

"When he won the Goodtimes and then the Stanley Dancer, neither race I was at because of some bad health," Jean Wellwood said in the winner's circle, wearing sunglasses not only to avoid the bright sunlight but also to hide eyes likely red from her tears of joy. "But I knew I had to be ready and have my health back for this. I think he would be pretty proud today," she added when asked what her late husband would say.

Paula Wellwood echoed her mother's sentiments about the significance of Marion Marauder's victory.

"It means the world, especially when you train trotters," she answered when asked about having the Wellwood name etched on the Hambletonian trophy. "I'm sure (my father) was rooting on for that last push."

Despite having a resume that included the Goodtimes and Dancer, Marion Marauder came into the Hambletonian playing second fiddle to Southwind Frank, the reigning divisional champ who had five wins in six starts this year, including a Dancer division and the Earl Beal Jr. Memorial. The two trotters met five times last year, with Southwind Frank coming out on top every time.

Marion Marauder and Southwind Frank drew into separate Dancer divisions last month and both came out victorious. That set the stage for a first-time-in-2016 showdown in the Hambletonian, which came in the second of two eliminations to whittle the 18 starters down to a final field of 10.

Bar Hopping, driven by Tim Tetrick for trainer Jimmy Takter, won the first Hambo elim on Saturday in 1:51.4, taking the lead past the opening quarter and cruising to a 5 ¼-length decision. While Southwind Frank was gunned to the early lead in the second elim by driver Yannick Gingras, he was unable to fend off the late rally by Marion Marauder, who overcame a six-length gap in the final turn to rush by and score by a half-length.

"The trip was way more adventurous than you would think," Zeron said. "It looks like I pulled past the half but I pulled at the quarter pole. I knew I would get Andy to come (with Sutton) but I didn't expect Timmy to come (with Jimmy William). So I hit another roadblock and ended

up third-over, and it wasn't great flowing either. When I moved at the quarter I was slowed up, and when I moved in the last turn I was slowed up. Frank got the jump on me and he was gone. I moved over three wide and when my horse moved with enough momentum, I thought that maybe there was a chance I could catch him. If Frank stayed at his high speed I wouldn't have had the opportunity to catch him. But as I got closer and closer down the lane I was ready to pull the plugs and take a run at him."

While Devin was in the grandstand with some friends, Paula, Mike and Jean watched the elim from the paddock. Paula said her attempt was nearly all in vain.

"The first one, I didn't hardly know where he was," she said. "The TV (in the paddock) went off as they were going behind the gate so I went to watch it on the tarmac. But I still couldn't see him. So I ran back in and saw Mike (Keeling) standing at the TV and I said, 'Where is he? What's happening?'"

The two elimination winners drew for posts one through five, and Bar Hopping drew the three and Marion Marauder the five. In the open draw among the others, Southwind Frank drew post one, and that gave Zeron reason to pause.

"I just rolled my eyes as it didn't matter that I won the elimination as Frank got the rail," Zeron said with a laugh.

In the final, Zeron got away fifth with Marion Marauder as some early give and take led to Southwind Frank and then Bar Hopping securing the lead. Zeron tipped Marion Marauder first-over past the half and charged toward the front, coming up alongside Bar Hopping turning for home.

"I didn't know if my horse was going to be as strong the second heat as he was in the first, but it turned out he was stronger, said Zeron. "When I was coming first-up he was grabbing on, and he rarely grabs on. He wanted to mow them down. It was only a matter of when I was going to turn my horse loose."

When Southwind Frank got rough gaited in the pocket, it appeared Marion Marauder was home free. But when Gingras was able to gather Southwind Frank and then find room along the inside, there was a frantic rush to the wire.

"I knew Frank got rough in the last turn but I didn't think he was done," said Zeron, who at age 27 is the second youngest driver to win the trotting classic.

"All the way down the lane I thought that this was my race to lose. I thought I had the race and I felt like I had the lead the whole way down the lane. "I was a little farther out and (Marion Marauder) could barely see Frank, but he could see him enough that he put his nose out there. I knew Frank got rough in the last turn but I didn't think he was done," said Zeron.

"When we crossed the wire, Yannick looked over and said congratulations," Zeron remembered. "At the same time, we were on CBS and I didn't want to start going nuts and we lose the race. It was great to hear the roar when the photo came up."

With his two victories and his \$535,000 take on the day, Marion Marauder increased his 2016 earnings to \$729,905 and became a new millionaire with a career total of \$1,011,891.

While Gingras gave credit to Marion Marauder, he stated the obvious that Southwind Frank didn't appear to be at top form, especially since he showed signs of making a break. In fact, Southwind Frank went on a gallop just a couple strides past the wire in the final.

Gingras said he recommended and trainer Ron Burke went along with a change from an open bridle to blind bridle minus blinkers for the elimination. Burke then went back to an open bridle for the final.

"In the first heat he was a little too keyed up and in retrospect -- maybe the bridle change," offered Gingras. "I suggested it, but maybe it wasn't the right call. The second heat he wasn't really right. He's never been bad gaited in his life and he was really bad gaited."

Sutton rallied for third, beaten just a neck, and driver Andy Miller

### Marion Marauder Measures It

was thrilled. "I just ran out of time," said Miller. "If he shakes loose a little quicker he might have got there, but I was tickled to death with a good check. But getting that close, I would rather have won it all."

Waitlifter K, trained by Andrew Harris and driven by Matt Kakaley was third in his elim at 70-1 and picked up the fourth place check worth \$80,400 for his efforts. Bar Hopping, the race favorite at ten cents on the dollar finished fifth for Jimmy Takter and driver Tim Tetrick.

Zeron, who won his first Hambletonian in his first-ever drive, perhaps summed up Marion Marauder's victory best by saying, "Everything felt like the stars were aligning. The way they picked this horse. The way he started developing all year this year coming into this race. During the Hambo draw, I felt that this was my time. I just felt that this was right and I was going to get the job done."

Though the Hambletonian victory was the apex, Zeron had a day for the ages, upsetting the heralded trio of Always B Miki, Wiggle It Jiggle It and Freaky Feet Pete in the U.S. Pacing Championship with Shamballa, a pacer trained and co-owned by his trainer-driver dad, Rick. He then swept his elim and the Hambletonian final on his first-ever try, a victory many more seasoned drivers still cannot claim, and as a finale Zeron wrapped up the leading drivers title at the Meadowlands. He is the youngest driver ever to top the Meadowlands leaderboard, scoring 82 wins, a dozen more than runner-up Tim Tetrick.

In the distaff division of the Hambletonian, the Oaks, it was déjà vu all over again as a filly trained by Jimmy Takter and driven by Yannick Gingras picked up the E. T. Gerry Sr. Memorial Oaks trophy for the third straight year.

Gingras rallied in the stretch with All The Time in 1:52.1 to win by 3/4 lengths over Caprice Hill to capture the 91st edition of the \$500,000 companion race for 3-year-old fillies. Gingras won his third straight Oaks, as did Takter, who now has six victories overall in the Hambletonian's sister event. It's a record he shares with Jan Johnson of Continental Farms.

"I was hoping to follow Brian Sears (with Windowshopper), I thought his filly was one of the fillies to beat, and they had a little bobble on the backstretch," said Gingras. "She felt so strong and she was able to catch the gap really quickly. I was just hoping not to be first up around the last turn. I figured John (Campbell) would come (with Celebrity Eventsy) and when he did it, it made my job really easy."

The 2-year-old Breeders Crown champion from last year paid \$9.20, 4.40 and 3.00. Caprice Hill, the 5-2 favorite with Tim Tetrick aboard, finished second, paying \$4.40 and 3.00, and Celebrity Eventsy, driven by John Campbell and the fifth choice at 5-1, rounded out the top three, paying \$3.60 for show.

"She was really sharp today. She had a good week and the timing had to be perfect. I know I had a ticket that was very strong with a couple of good fillies. We pulled the front shoes on her, which I think might have kicked her up a little bit. It was the first time she ever did that," said Takter. "There were three horses in the race that I had tremendous respect for. We were the lucky ones."

Tetrick had Caprice Hill on the lead at the top of the stretch, but Gingras had another gear and was able to cruise to the finish line as All The Time improved to 11-for-19 on the year-time, snapping a two-race losing streak.

All The Time lost most of her mid-season to a life threatening bout of colic that occurred just the day after the Oaks. Given just a 50% chance at survival, instead the daughter of Muscle Hill – Cantab It All recovered, rallied and returned to the races in the fall, ending her racing career with just shy of \$1 million earned over two years. The illness did cost her a Dan Patch championship, as Broadway Donna won the Breeders Crown and Kentucky Filly Futurity to gain the edge in year-end voting.

Bred and owned by Marvin Katz and Al Libfeld, All The Time's precocious full sister Ariana G turned heads on Hambletonian day, winning the \$306,500 Jim Doherty Memorial for freshman filly trotters.

She would go on to be the dominant filly in the class of 2017 to date.

For the second straight year, The Meadowlands hosted the first leg of both Triple Crowns: the Hambletonian which leads the Trotting trifecta and is followed by the Yonkers Trot and the Kentucky Futurity, and the initial Pacing Triple Crown event, the Cane Pace, which is followed by the Messenger and the Little Brown Jug. They are also the only track to host two Triple Crown events on the same day.

The Hambletonian was featured on a 90 minute live broadcast on CBS Sports Network. Attendance on the day was 20,122, and total handle was \$6,975,124.

**MARION MARAUDER**, bay colt, 3, by Muscle Hill-Spellbound Hanover by Donerail  
Driver: Scott Zeron  
Trainer: Paula Wellwood  
Owners: Marion Jean Wellwood, Devin Keeling  
Breeder: William Mulligan

**SOUTHWIND FRANK**, bay colt 3, by Muscle Hill-Flawless Lindy by Cantab Hall  
Driver: Yannick Gingras  
Trainer: Ron Burke  
Owners: Southwind Frank Partners, Burke Racing Stable [Ron & Sylvia Burke], Mark Weaver, Mike Brusceci, Sylvia Burke, Diamond Creek Racing [Adam Bowden, Chris Bowden], Jerry & Theresa Silva, Our Horse Cents Stables [Marcia Gingold, Gene Kurzrok, Scott Kurzrok, Stephen Springer, Richard Taylor]  
Breeder: Southwind Farm

**SUTTON**, bay colt, 3, by Donato Hanover-I Wanted Wings by Muscles Yankee  
Driver: Andy Miller  
Trainer: Julie Miller  
Owners: Andy Miller Stable, Jason & Douglas Allen  
Breeder: Let It Ride Stables, J&T Silva Stables

TIME BY QUARTERS	1/4	1/2	3/4	MILE
1ST ELIMINATION	:27.2	:55.4	1:24.0	1:51.4
2ND ELIMINATION	:26.4	:55.1	1:23.2	1:51.3
FINAL	:28.2	:56.0	1:24.2	1:51.4

FIRST ELIMINATION	PAYOFFS			SECOND ELIMINATION			
BAR HOPPING	5.60	3.40	2.80	MARION MARAUDER	3.60	3.40	2.10
MILLIGAN'S SCHOOL	5.40	3.60		SOUTHWIND FRANK	38.60	11.20	
LAGERFELD		9.00		WAITLIFTER K		3.00	

FINAL PAYOFFS			
MARION MARAUDER	7.00	3.40	3.00
SOUTHWIND FRANK		3.80	3.00
SUTTON			6.60



## Marion Marauder



- Marion Marauder, bay colt, 3, by Muscle Hill – Spellbound Hanover by Donerail. Owned by Marion Jean Wellwood and Devin Keeling, of Stratford and Cambridge, Ontario, Canada. Bred by William Mulligan of New Hope, Pennsylvania.
- Hambletonian Day marked both the fastest and richest wins for 27-year-old driver Scott Zeron. He drove Marion Marauder to victory in the \$1 million Hambletonian the same day he piloted his father's pacer, Shamballa to a 1:47.1 upset in the U.S. Pacing Championship.
- Zeron is the eighth first-time driver to win the Hambletonian since it moved to the Meadowlands in 1981. The others are: Ray Remmen (1981), Ulf Thoresen (1986), Bill Fahy (1989), Jack Moiseyev (1991), Trevor Ritchie (2000), Stefan Melander (2001) and Eric Ledford (2002).
- 2009 Hambletonian winner Muscle Hill picked up his second Hambletonian sire credit (Marion Marauder - 2016, Trixton - 2014) joining Speedy Count, Speedster, Mr. McElwyn, and Ayres, as a Hambo winner who also sired a pair of Hambo winners.
- Muscle Hill sons won both Hambletonian elims, the Peter Haughton, the Jim Doherty, the Hambletonian Oaks, the John Cashman, went 1-2 in the Hambletonian final. The last time a stallion had this kind of day at The Meadowlands was in 2007 when Andover Hall's first crop was 1-2 in the Hambletonian (won by Donato Hanover with Adrian Chip second) and his daughter, Danae, won the Hambletonian Oaks.
- Hambo runner-up Southwind Frank won last year's Peter Haughton Memorial. He just missed joining only Donato Hanover (2007) and Muscle Hill (2009) as Peter Haughton winners to also win the Hambletonian. Southwind Frank was also the 2015 Dan Patch Award winner for best 2-year-old male trotter.
- Marion Marauder was bred by William Mulligan, who owns his dam Spellbound Hanover and won the Merrie Annabelle (now the Jim Doherty Memorial) with her 16 years earlier over the same racetrack. "It's unbelievable," said Mulligan, 86. "I went to my first Hambletonian when I was six or seven years old at the kite track in Goshen with my father. I always wanted to have a horse in the Hambletonian, and to have this happen at this time, I'm just thrilled. I certainly would have liked to be there. I didn't miss any of Spellbound's races."
- Paula Wellwood and her husband, Mike Keeling, bought Marion Marauder, then named Marion Monopoly, for \$37,000 at the Lexington Select Yearling Sale in Kentucky.
- Paula's mother, Marion Jean, noticed the colt's name, pedigree, and the fact that he was born the same day as her grandson Devin. "I looked at the name, and he was born on Devin's birthday, and I loved the family because we had (his sister) Sooner Hanover."
- Devin Keeling he plays linebacker for the McMaster University Marauders, one of the top-ranked college football teams in Canada. Hence the name change.
- Marion Marauder was Spellbound Hanover's 11th foal and fifth colt. As she was a small filly, most of Spellbound's offspring have also been small and perhaps brought less than her bloodline might suggest.
- Spellbound Hanover won 11 of 15 starts as a 2 year old and finished her racing career after her 3-year-old season with earnings of \$962,395 and a mark of 1:54.3.
- In 1965, Mulligan bought his first farm, a 65-acre spread, in Danville, Pa., and named it after his late mother, Marion. Twenty years ago, at the end of his career of traveling the world as an executive with Ingersoll Rand, Mulligan bought his present farm in New Hope, Pa., where he lives with his wife, Eileen.
- Spellbound Hanover was sold this spring to Crawford Farms of New York, who also own her daughter, Marion Mardi Gras, by Cantab Hall, and a subsequent pair of colts by Muscle Hill.
- Though Southwind Frank got his revenge on Marion Marauder in their next match-up, the \$500,000 Colonial at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs, winning by a half-length in 1:52.4, Marion Marauder would go on to win the two most important races of his life.
- First he swept the elimination and \$500,000 final of the Yonkers Trot, annexing the second leg of the Trotting Triple Crown. Though he won his elimination of the Canadian Trotting Classic, he was second in this final – this time to Bar Hopping. But the next race on the stakes calendar was one Marion Marauder was not eligible to: the third and final leg of the Trotting Triple Crown, the Kentucky Futurity.
- Though Team Wellwood claimed they had purposely not put the Futurity on their schedule, destiny definitely planned a trip to Lexington's famed Red Mile. After paying a supplemental fee of \$50,000. Marion Marauder marched into the history books with a heart-stopping head victory over arch-nemesis Southwind Frank, with Bar Hopping third to become just the ninth trotter in the history of harness racing to win the Triple Crown. He joined Windsong's Legacy (2004) and Glidemaster (2006) as the only trotters to do so since Super Bowl in 1972.
- Paula Wellwood became the very first female to train a Triple Crown winner of any gait. She followed her best friend Linda Toscano into the Hambletonian winner circle as the second women trainer of that classic event.
- After Lexington, Marion Marauder had only the Breeders Crown at the Meadowlands in October to contest. Another head loss in the elimination race to Sutton did not concern his connections, but Marion Marauder's finished a disturbing tenth in the Crown final, and veterinary attention revealed a respiratory sickness that put a stop to his racing career. Marion Marauder banked \$1.48 million toward a career total of \$1,766,518
- Soon after a stallion deal for Marion Marauder to stand in Ontario was announced, but with an overwhelmingly healthy racehorse on their hands and an anemic breeding market, the Wellwoods decided to return Marion Marauder to the races in 2017. He would become the first Hambletonian winner to also win the next year's Hambletonian Maturity for four-year-olds.
- Marion Marauder was voted Dan Patch Trotter of the Year and 3-year-old male Trotter of the Year; won the O'Brien award as Canada's top 3-Year-Old Trotting Colt of the Year; and was the Secretary of Agriculture's trophy winner as New Jersey Standardbred of the Year.

# 2015

## The Meadowlands • August 8, 2015 • Purse \$1,200,000

### 90<sup>th</sup> Hambletonian A Taktertonian

by Dave Briggs for the Hambletonian Society

If the return to heat racing in the Hambletonian in 2013 was all about drama, the format provided that and more Saturday afternoon for the 90th edition of trotting's greatest race.

As nearly 22,000 at the Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, NJ and thousands more watching live, continent-wide, on the CBS Sports Network awaited driver Yannick Gingras' version of The Decision — would he pick the filly Mission Brief or the gelding Pinkman? — owner John Fielding knew exactly how it would play out. His trotter Pinkman would be looking for a driver and that driver would be Brian Sears.

"I actually knew what was going to happen when I saw the filly win the second division so easily," Fielding said of Mission Brief, who impressively won the second of two eliminations shortly after Pinkman won his from the 10-hole.

The final win photo said it all with Gingras watching Pinkman and Sears sail to victory with Ron Burke pupil Mission Brief a game three-quarters-of-a-lengths back in second in the \$1 million test won in 1:51.

The on-track product will be difficult to top and will go down in Hambletonian lore as the year Gingras had an agonizing decision, picked wrong and handed Sears the Hambletonian in front of a sea of hunter green Hambletonian ball caps.

"I know (Gingras) made the wrong decision and it was going to cost him," said Pinkman's trainer Jimmy Takter. "I asked him right after and he said, 'I've got to go with the filly.' I said, 'Are you sure? It's a bad choice.' I was a little disappointed, but Ronnie (Burke) would have been disappointed the other way around. I'll get over it."

So, too, will Gingras, who has yet to win the Hambletonian and was heartbroken a year ago when Takter-trained favorite Father Patrick made a break at the gate.

"I'm not disappointed in her effort at all," Gingras said of Mission Brief. "She wasn't quite as strong as in the first heat. She wasn't quite as good-gaited as before so I couldn't make the moves I wanted to with her... I knew I didn't have enough at the top of the stretch. You have to give it to Pinkman. He's a great horse and he's a winner."

Asked how quickly Sears agreed to drive Pinkman, Takter said, "I didn't have to twist his arm."

Sears, grinning like a lottery winner, said if he had inkling when the day started that he might end up a Hambletonian winner he likely wouldn't have agreed to race at Yonkers that night.

"Opportunity knocks and you try to take advantage of it," Sears said. "He is a great horse and he drew a great spot. When he landed in the two hole, I didn't know who Yannick was going to go with, but I knew (Pinkman) was in a good spot."

It was the third Hambletonian victory for Sears after Muscle Hill in 2009 and Royalty For Life in 2013, the first year the same-day heat format had been employed since 1996, which was also the last time a filly — in this case the great Continentalvictory — won the Hambletonian.

Apart from winning this year with Pinkman, Takter also finished third (Uncle Lasse), fourth (The Bank) and eighth (French Laundry) to grab \$680,000 of the total seven-figure purse. He also won the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks a race earlier with Wild Honey with Gingras in the bike. It was the trainer's second straight Hambletonian and fourth lifetime. In 2014, he drove his trainee Trixton to victory.

"I'm grateful for what God has given me," Takter said. "He granted me a very good gift. My father (Bo) is the one that probably was the most gifted horseman I know. Fortunately, I maybe got his talent to do this."

John Fielding, a Toronto native, owns Pinkman with his brother, Jim, fellow Canadian Herb Liverman, now living in Florida, Christina

Takter and Joyce McClelland of Zanesville, OH.

It was the first Hambletonian for the Fieldings and McClelland. John said he's tried to win the Hambletonian for 30 years.

"It feels fantastic. We've had a lot (of horses), but we're finally here. We finally did it," he said.

Takter was just as pleased to win it for Fielding. "It's very special," Takter said. "John has been with me a long time. Everybody knows in this sport that there's nobody better. I can race 20 horses and 19 race bad and one race well and he will never mention the 19 bad ones. Doing this for John means very much for me."

Liverman was part of the ownership group that won the 1998 Hambletonian with Muscles Yankee. The exact same group, minus McClelland, also owns Wild Honey.

"This is the best," Liverman said. "You can't do better. Last November we won two Breeders Crowns, but this is better. Even though I've won it before (with Muscles Yankee), to win this and the Oaks the same day is, wow."

Pinkman has won 14 of 17 races lifetime with earnings of \$1,766,800. Not bad for a horse the connections placed in the Harrisburg Mixed Sale as a two-year-old, but reconsidered after gelding the trotter improved his results on the track.

"I think castrating him was a big factor. It really was," Takter said last November after Pinkman won the Breeders Crown at the Meadowlands en route to U.S. two-year-old trotting colt of the year honors.

The card also included a major upset in the \$319,450 Cane Pace when 1-5 choice Wiggle It Jiggle it and driver Montrell Teague couldn't withstand hot early fractions and finished fourth. Dealt A Winner (David Miller), a 26-1 shot that was previously winless this year, held off Artspeak, the 2014 two-year-old of the year, by one-and-a-quarter lengths in a career best 1:47.3.

The win was so surprising owner Jeffrey Snyder had already left the Meadowlands to head home before Dealt A Winner was victorious, leaving his son Mike to pick up the spoils of the first leg of the pacing Triple Crown the first time it has been held at the Meadowlands.

"He didn't think the horse had a shot to win today. That's why he left," Mike said of his father. "He just contacted me. He's in shock now. He can't believe it."

Through it all, the Meadowlands threw a day-long celebration of its second Hambletonian in the new \$88 million building with a party that raged on the rooftop decks, in the owners' suites and from the tarmac all the way to the top of the lane in the track's stretch-running-park called The Backyard.

Even Gingras, who won the \$349,850 Peter Haughton Memorial for Burke with Southwind Frank, said, "it's still been a great day."

After all, Southwind Frank is now the early favorite for the 2016 Hambletonian where Gingras will try again to capture the Holy Grail.



## Pinkman

**PINKMAN**, bay gelding, 3, by Explosive Matter-Margie Seelster by Angus Hall  
 Driver: Brian Sears  
 Trainer: Jimmy Takter  
 Owners: Christina Takter, John & Jim Fielding, Joyce McClelland, Herb Liverman  
 Breeder: O Narutac Equine Nursery

**MISSION BRIEF**, brown filly, 3, by Muscle Hill-Southwind Serena by Varenne  
 Driver: Yannick Gingras  
 Trainer: Ron Burke  
 Owners: Burke Racing Stable, Our Horse Cents Stable [Marcia Gingold, Eugene Kurzrok, Scott Kurzrok, Stephen Springer, Richard Taylor], J&T Silva Stables, Weaver Brussemi  
 Breeder: S Stewart; Black Creek Farm

**UNCLE LASSE**, brown colt, 3, by Donato Hanover-Solveig, by Yankee Glide  
 Driver: David Miller  
 Trainer: Jimmy Takter  
 Owners: Solveig's Racing Partners [Goran Anderberg, John Fielding, John Fodera, Martha Frank, Frederick Hertrich III, Christina Takter], Goran C Falk  
 Breeder: Solveig's Breeders

TIME BY QUARTERS	¼	½	¾	MILE
1ST ELIMINATION	:26.2	:54.3	1:23.2	1:51.2
2ND ELIMINATION	:27.3	:54.2	1:23.0	1:51.3
FINAL	:27.2	:55.2	1:23.2	1:51.0

FIRST ELIMINATION			SECOND ELIMINATION		
PINKMAN	5.60	3.40	2.80	MISSION BRIEF	3.60 3.40 2.10
THE BANK		5.40	3.60	ALDEBARAN EAGLE	38.60 11.20
DONATOMITE			9.00	FRENCH LAUNDRY	3.00

FINAL PAYOFFS			
PINKMAN	5.60	2.60	2.60
MISSION BRIEF	2.40	2.40	
UNCLE LASSE		6.40	



- Pinkman, bay gelding, 3 by Explosive Matter – Margie Seelster by Angus Hall. Owned by Christina Takter, East Windsor, NJ, John & Jim Fielding, Toronto, Ont., Joyce McClelland, Zanesville, OH, Herb Liverman, Miami Beach, FL. Bred by O Narutac Equine Nursery [Vince Caturano], NY.
- There were 19 entrants in the Hambletonian, the third year of the return to same-day heat format. In 2014, only 11 entered and went straight to the final. In 2013, the last Hambletonian raced in front of the old Meadowland grandstand, there were 23 trotters entered.
- Pinkman posted his 14th victory in 17 starts, also providing a fourth training victory for Jimmy Takter. Takter is now tied with Chuck Sylvester at four wins. Bill Haughton, Stanley Dancer and Ben White all have five training victories.
- Pinkman overcame post 10 to take first elimination in 1:51 2/5, equaling the world record for 3-year-old geldings on a mile track with The Bank second. Donatomite, Habitat and Jackson's Minion also advanced to the final.
- Mission Brief took the second elimination by 4 ¾ lengths over long shot Aldebaran Eagle in 1:51 3/5. French Laundry, Uncle Lasse and Wings of Royalty also made the final.
- Elimination heat winners Pinkman and Mission Brief were both driven by Yannick Gingras. His choice to remain loyal to the filly Mission Brief in the final meant he lost the drive on eventual winner Pinkman (picked up by Brian Sears for his third Hambletonian victory.)
- Takter also continued his domination of Hambletonian Day at Meadowlands Racing & Entertainment. He swept both the \$1 million Hambletonian and the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks for a second straight year.
- In 2014, it was Trixton in the Hambletonian and Lifetime Pursuit in the Oaks. In 2015 it was Pinkman in the Hambo, and Wild Honey in the Oaks.
- Takter became the first trainer since Per Eriksson in 1991-92 to win the Hambletonian in consecutive years. The only other trainers to accomplish the feat are W. R. Haughton (1976-77), Frank Ervin (1966-67), Ben White (1942-43) and Henry Thomas (1937-38).
- Of his five trotters entered in the Hambletonian, four advanced to the final. Uncle Lasse (David Miller) was third followed by The Bank (driven by Takter's brother Johnny), so Takter horses finished first, third and fourth, good for \$680,000 of the \$1 million at stake. Ron Burke trainee Mission Brief was second for a \$225,000 paycheck, while the Tom Jackson trained and driven Jackson's Minion got the nickel for \$45,000.
- Gingras, who dominates the Meadowlands driver colony as well as national driver standings, has had a star-crossed record in the Hambletonian. Going into the 2015 race, he had earned just \$34,300 in five years. Most disappointing was a gallop before the start by heavy favorite Father Patrick in last year's Hambo edition. Mission Brief's elim win and runner-up effort in the final raised his bankroll considerably, but the Hambletonian remains one of the very few classic events Gingras hasn't won.
- Pinkman was a Lexington Selected Sale yearling purchase for \$77,000. Originally named Traffic Jam, he was renamed by the Taktters after Jesse Pinkman, a fictional character in the American television drama series Breaking Bad. The character is portrayed by actor Aaron Paul.
- He was the first foal of his dam, Margie Seelster, who was sold shortly before his divisional championship freshman year by breeder Vince Caturano's O Narutac Equine Nursery. "Story of my life," said Caturano. "At least I got some nice trophies."
- Margie Seelster, a solid earner of more than \$250,000 during her racing career, was sold to Jay Mossbarger of Ohio, but Pinkman's \$2.5 million bankroll remains her only claim to fame to date despite subsequent breedings to Jailhouse Jesse and Manofmanymissions.
- Pinkman failed to show Takter much as a 2-year-old, so he was gelded, and consigned to the Standardbred Horse Mixed Sale in Harrisburg in November of 2014. A change in the taciturn trotter's attitude caused Takter to withdraw him from the sale in mid-summer. Pinkman rewarded the ownership group by winning six of eight freshman starts, including the \$463,690 Valley Victory in 1:55.4 at Woodbine and lowered his own Meadowlands track record to 1:53.3 in \$500,000 Breeders Crown. He also won a \$77,120 division of the International Stallion Stake at The Red Mile.
- Pinkman kicked off his sophomore season in May, setting a track record of 1:52.2 in Pennsylvania Sires Stakes at Harrhah's Philadelphia, and went three-for-three in PASS events. Stake wins for Pinkman prior to the Hambletonian included a \$157,250 division of the Stanley Dancer Memorial in 1:52.2 on July 18; a world record 1:51.3f mile in the \$500,000 Earl Beal, Jr. Memorial at Pocono Downs on July 4; and a 1:52 stakes record in the \$370,000 Zweig Memorial at Vernon His sole loss

## Pinkman

- prior to Hambletonian day was when he was second, beaten a half-length in his Beal elimination.
- He is the first gelding to win since Vivid Photo in 2005, and one of three in the Meadowlands era of the race- Shiaway St. Pat being the first in 1981, the year the race moved to the Meadowlands. Add Flirth (1973) and Greyhound (1935) for a total of just five altered sons winning trotting's ultimate prize. Surprisingly, he was also one of three geldings entered in the race this year.
  - The last two Hambos have been won by the sires who were one-two in the 2009 version of the race: Muscle Hill (Trixton) and Explosive Matter (Pinkman)
  - Hambo entrants Centurion ATM won last year's Peter Haughton Memorial while Mission Brief captured the Merrie Annabelle, both in world-record-equaling times. 2015 marks only the second time that the winners of the Meadowlands' top races for 2-year-old trotters have returned in the same year for the premier event for 3-year-olds. The first occurrence was in 1986 when filly Britelite Lobell and colt Express Ride finished third and fifth, respectively, in the Hambletonian.
  - Mission Brief bypassed the Oaks, which is restricted to 3-year-old filly trotters, to attempt to become the first female to beat the boys and win the Hambletonian since Continentalvictory in 1996. She is the 161st filly to start in the Hambletonian, but only the fourth since Continentalvictory's win in 1996. Pampered Princess, who finished seventh-placed-sixth in the 2007 final won by Donato Hanover, was the most recent.
  - Thirteen fillies have won the Hambletonian, but only Continentalvictory and Duenna (1983) have accomplished the feat since Kerry Way in 1966.
  - Mission Brief was the 2014 Dan Patch Award winner for best 2-year-old female trotter and has won 12 of 17 career races and earned \$791,417. She also holds the world record for the fastest time for any 2-year-old trotter in history, 1:50.3.
  - She comes by her speed naturally, as the daughter of 2009 Hambletonian winner Muscles Hill and Breeders Crown champion Southwind Serena, who was not only the first Crown champion for driver Yannick Gingras but also an offspring of the world's fastest trotter, Italian-bred Varenne, who set a world record of 1:51.1 at The Meadowlands in the 2001 Breeders Crown.
  - Mission Brief, trained by Ron Burke, has won three of four starts this year and 12 of 17 lifetime. Leading up to the Hambo, she won three of four races while dealing with back woes, which were treated by an equine chiropractor. Mission Brief enters the Hambletonian off a 1:51 4/5 win in the Zweig Memorial for 3-year-old filly trotters.
  - That victory was the clincher in making the decision to pass the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks for fillies to take on the boys. "Maybe financially it would have been better to go to the Hambletonian Oaks, but pride-wise and for the sport, it would be better to go to the Hambletonian," said Ron Burke, who trains and co-owns the filly with Our Horse Cents Stables, J&T Silva Stables, and the partnership of Mark Weaver and Mike Brusceci. "If we won the Hambletonian Oaks, we'd have been happy, but it's not going to change anybody's life. We've all done things like that before. We thought this for some of us would be a lifetime experience, so we said let's go.
  - Mission Brief won her elim and was second in the final.
  - Centurion ATM, who won the 2014 Peter Haughton by 3-3/4 lengths over Uncle Lasse in a world-record-equaling and stakes-record 1:53.2, will try to join Donato Hanover (2007) and Muscle Hill (2009) as the only Peter Haughton winners to also win the Hambletonian. He is trained by Ake Svandstedt.
  - Centurion ATM finished eighth in his elim, failing to advance to the final.
  - Starter Muscle Diamond was owned and trained by a family with a rich Hambletonian heritage. Charlie Keller III, a recent Hall of Fame nominee, helped guide the fortunes of Yankeeland Farm, a breeding operation in Maryland begun by his father in 1955. Though the farm has closed operations, Keller III couldn't resist the colt with a double Hambletonian-Yankeeland pedigree on both the sire and dam side.
  - Sired by 2009 Hambo winner Muscle Hill (son of Yankeeland stallion and 1998 Hambo winner Muscles Yankee) from the 2002 Hambletonian Oaks winning dam Windylane Hanover, Muscles Diamond was a \$40,000 yearling. Yankee Blondie, a daughter of Yankee Bambi is the dam of Muscle Hill. Yankee Bambi was a sister to Yankee Bambino, runner-up to Bonefish in the four-heat 1975 Hambletonian at DuQuoin. Yankee Bambino was named after the legendary Babe Ruth. Yankee Duchess, the dam of Yankee Bambi was a foundation mare for the Yankeeland Farms producing for more than 20 years.
  - A runner-up to Pinkman in last year's Breeders Crown, Muscle Diamond was expected to be among the elite three-year-olds in North America this year, but instead has hampered by setbacks and minor injuries. An ill-timed break in his elimination ended the chances for another Keller-connected Hambletonian victory.
  - Hall of Fame driver John Campbell was on the sidelines for the Hambletonian for the first time since 1982, ending his record streak of 32 consecutive years of participation in harness racing's top race for 3-year-old trotters. Campbell was the regular driver of Muscle Diamond, but injured his wrist in an accident at qualifiers the week before the Hambletonian. He was also the regular driver of Oaks winner Wild Honey.
  - Trainer George Ducharme won the 2013 Hambletonian with Royalty For Life, driven by Brian Sears. This year, he sent out Wings Of Royalty for much the same owner connections, and the homebred colt finished fifth in his elim to advance to the final. Sears opted to go with eventual winner Pinkman, and Tim Tetrick drove Wings Of Royalty, who was tenth in the final.
  - Both Pinkman and Mission Brief were divisional winners last season. Pinkman was the first Dan Patch honoree since Muscle Hill in 2009 to capture the Hambletonian. He also captured the Kentucky Futurity, the third leg of the Trotting Triple Crown but in the second leg, the Yonkers Trot, a race marred by breakers, Pinkman was second to Habitat but eventually placed fifth.
  - Dan Patch Trotter of the Year went to Pinkman, for his 11 sophomore victories and \$1.89 million in earnings. He also was voted the best trotter in his division. Pinkman received 85 votes for Trotter of the Year. Hambo runner-up Mission Brief, a 3-year-old filly, finished second with 18 votes, followed by 2-year-old colt Southwind Frank with 14, 5-year-old mare Bee A Magician with 13, 4-year-old gelding JL Cruze with five and 3-year-old filly Barn Doll with one.
  - The Hambletonian Oaks, solely for 3-year-old filly trotters, began in 1971. The 2015 version, with a purse of \$500,000, turned into a wide-open affair with Mission Brief headed to the Hambletonian.
  - The elimination heats were held the prior weekend with one of those winners, Lock Down Lindy, getting the rail as the 3-1 second choice. Tragically, Spirit To Win, the other elim winner, suffered a fatal training injury Monday morning.
  - Wild Honey, owned by many of the same members of the Pinkman team, won giving trainer Takter a fifth Oaks. (1994: Gleam, 2003: Southwind Allaire, 2006: Passionate Glide, 2014: Lifetime Pursuit and 2015 Wild Honey.)
  - "This little filly overcame her size," Takter said. "She's not a very big filly but she's got a big heart. She gives her all every time."

## *Pinkman*

- Gingras put Wild Honey on the lead midway down the backstretch and she took it from there, securing a 1 ¾ length victory over Rules of the Road with Bright Baby Blues third. She paid \$4.60 to win. The time was 1:52 2/5.
- It was one of five wins on the afternoon for Gingras.
- Wild Honey ended her year with a slate of 13 wins in 19 starts for Christina Takter, the Fielding brothers and Herb Liverman. She lost divisional honors to the spectacular Mission Brief, despite besting her in the season-ending championship of the Breeders Crown and having the edge in money earnings.
- Hambletonian day 2015 also marked the first time the Cane Pace was raced at the Meadowlands and the first time any Triple Crown pacing event was contested over a mile track. It's also the first time two Triple Crown events were held on the same day at The Meadowlands.
- The switch to the mile track provided the opportunity to set up the fastest ever Triple Crown race in history in 453 editions of those vents. The record was 1:48.4 set by Dynamic Youth in the Cane Pace at Tioga Downs. A supplement by speedball Wiggle It Jiggleit increased the odds, but a battle to the half in 52.1 with In The Arsenal catapulted Dealt A winner to the finish line in 1:47.3, a new Triple Crown speed record.
- The Meadowlands is the 5th location for the Cane Pace. It has been races at Yonkers Raceway, NY; Freehold Raceway, NJ; Tioga Downs, NY; Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs, PA; and now the Meadowlands, NJ.
- Attendance on the day was 21,968. Total handle was \$7.89 million. On-track handle gained slightly at \$1,320,325 compared to \$1,280,854 last year. This marked the first time since 2005 that the on-track handle showed a year-over-year increase.



# 2014

## The Meadowlands • August 2, 2014 • Purse \$1,006,125

### 89th Hambletonian An Unexpected Takter Triumph

Filed by Horseman & Fair World

In the midst of the winner's circle celebration following Trixton's upset victory in the 89th Hambletonian on Saturday afternoon, Aug. 2, at the Meadowlands, co-owner Christina Takter mentioned the shock she felt when the 2-5 favorite Father Patrick—who she also co-owns—made a break at the start of the \$1,006,125 race and lost all chance.

"When Father Patrick made a break I almost fell down on my knees," said Takter, who has stood in winner's circles over the years but never before as the owner of a Hambletonian champion. "Then I tried to sort it out and see what happens."

What happened was that Takter watched as her husband, Jimmy, drove second-choice Trixton to a career-best 1:50.3 victory, edging stablemate and third favorite Nuncio by a half length. It was a distant 10 3/4 lengths back to third-place finisher Harper Blue Chip.

Early forecasts for steady daylong rain never came to fruition as the showers subsided by the time the track gates opened at 10 a.m. Instead, the program was raced mostly under overcast skies, although by the time the Hambletonian went off at 5:15 p.m., the sun had broken through the clouds.

In the single-heat, 11-horse Hambletonian, Nuncio, with six-time Hambletonian winner John Campbell driving, left fastest from post five and secured the lead with no trouble. Takter floated out of the gate from post seven and looked for position, which he found on the outside behind Royal Ice and driver Ron Pierce, who were caught first-over when no hole opened up on the inside.

When Royal Ice began to tire in the final turn, Takter moved Trixton wide and charged toward Nuncio. In deep stretch Trixton edged clear for the victory.

While Takter has won two Hambletonians—Malabar Man and Muscle Massive—they both came as trainer. This was his first win as a driver, although he came close in 2012 when he steered Guccio to a second-place finish, just a neck behind Market Share.

"This is my moment," Takter said when he returned to the jubilant winner's circle. "I don't drive that much and normally when I have a top contender I put the best possible driver on to have a shot. I thought that this was my shot and if I was going to do it, I'd do it today, otherwise it wouldn't happen."

Takter said he came into the race confident in his three horses, but understood the pressure on Yannick Gingras with overwhelming favorite Father Patrick.

"Horses win and lose, and hey, I know how it is," said Takter. "Yannick had a lot of pressure on him and that's the way it is. Me, what kind of pressure on me? I have the three best horses in the field. If I finished third, everybody is happy. If I win, it's great."

For the first time ever, the Hambletonian was raced without heats or eliminations. Without elims and the conditions that provide the winners pick their posts for the final, all 11 entries went into an open draw. While the prohibitive favorite was going to be Father Patrick, who was five-for-five this year and riding a 15-race win streak dating back to last year, he drew the outside post 10.

Father Patrick became the shortest-priced horse to not capture the trotting classic when he went offstride for the first time in his 17-start career. Gingras said comments he made immediately afterward that gave the impression he hit Father Patrick with the whip to rev him up were misinterpreted.

"People took it the wrong way and that I was blasting him to a :24 quarter, and that's not what I was trying to do," Gingras said two days afterward, with disappointment still in his voice. "I literally just laid the whip on his tail. I didn't hit him, I just laid the tip on his tail. The gate had just opened and I had a good hold on him. It scared him and it

was an unfortunate mistake at the worst time ever. I was in shock."

Although Father Patrick's break at the start led to a loud gasp heard through the Meadowlands grandstand, Takter said he was unaware of what transpired.

"I started looking behind me at the half and I didn't see him, so I knew something must have happened," said Takter. "I thought Patrick would have come up behind me and been right there."

Takter won with Trixton despite being parked every step of the mile. He said he was fortunate he found live cover in Royal Ice and Ron Pierce.

"I said I had to follow Ronnie, because I know Ronnie would try to get something really hard," Takter said of Pierce, who has won three Hambletonians, including Muscle Massive. "When I saw Ronnie had left and I got behind him, I was very fortunate Ronnie didn't get in as he really tried to get in the hole behind Nuncio. That would have changed things."

"I thought in the middle of the last turn my horse felt really strong. I knew Ronnie would come back to me. I figured Nuncio had to be a little bit taken by the pace and I thought I might have a shot at it."

While Takter was poised to make history if his trio of horses would have finished one-two-three in the Hambletonian, he had to settle for a share of the record books with his one-two finish, duplicating his effort in 1997 when he finished first and second respectively with Malabar Man (driven by Mal Burroughs) and Take Chances (Wally Hennessey).

Takter said he would have been happy no matter the finish order of his horses.

"If Nuncio had won, I didn't care," he said. "But of course I wanted to win it. I'm 53 years old and you see how the sport is today, with all these great drivers. "Nuncio is not the easiest horse. He raced his heart out. He raced a heck of a race and he was tough to get by. John (Campbell) wanted this race so bad. He congratulated me after the race but I saw (the disappointment)."

Takter said he wasn't bothered by not sweeping the trifecta.

"I finished first and second in the Hambletonian, how sweet is that?" said Takter, who was inducted into the sport's Hall of Fame in 2012. "I know that if Patrick had stayed flat he would have come up behind me and he would have blown by both of us in the stretch. And we would have been first, second and third. But things don't always work out the way you hope for. Don't take me wrong, I'm on cloud nine right now."

Jimmy Takter said he believes nothing should be read into Father Patrick's miscue. "It's not like this was his last race. It's horse racing," he said.

Gingras agreed. "I was very happy for Jimmy as I knew how much it meant to him to win," said Gingras. "But I still think Patrick is the best horse and he'll prove it the rest of the year."





## Trixton

**TRIXTON**, bay colt, 3, by Muscle Hill-Emilie Cas El, by Garland Lobell  
 Driver: Jimmy Takter  
 Trainer: Jimmy Takter  
 Owners: Brixton Medical AB [Bengt Agerup] & Christina Takter

**NUNCIO**, bay colt, 3, by Andover Hall-Nicole Isabel, by Lindy Lane  
 Driver: John Campbell  
 Trainer: Jimmy Takter  
 Owners: Stall TZ Inc [Stefan Melander]  
 Breeder: Russell Williams

**HARPER BLUE CHIP**, bay colt, 3, by Majestic Son-Winning Jonlin, by Muscles Yankee  
 Driver: Brian Sears  
 Trainer: Mark Steacy  
 Owners: Landmark 6 Racing Stb [Howard Pearce], David K Reid, David MacDonald & George Judson  
 Breeder: Blue Chip Bloodstock [Thomas Grossman, Michael Kimelman & Ryamond Schnittker]

TIME BY QUARTERS	¼	½	¾	MILE
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>:54.0</b>	<b>1:23.0</b>	<b>1:50.3</b>

### FINAL PAYOFFS

TRIXTON	1	0.60	5.00	7.60
NUNCIO			4.20	7.20
HARPER BLUE CHIP				37.60



- Trixton is owned by Christina Takter and Bengt Agerup. Agerup also shared ownership in Hambletonian winner Muscle Massive in 2010. His 2014 appearance with the distinctive Revere bowl was an entirely different journey for the native Swede who now resides in Geneva, Switzerland.

- Agerup was one of a four part ownership group on Muscle Massive, who trainer Jimmy Takter and his yearling consultant, Perry Soderberg, had selected and purchased as a yearling. With Trixton, Agerup liked the horse's pedigree. Takter and Soderberg saw the colt (at the time named Monarch Kemp) a few weeks before the Lexington Selected Yearling Sale. Since the colt had a slightly boggy hock at the time, he didn't make the cut for their "A" list of yearlings.

- "If it wouldn't have been for me, we would not have bought this horse," said Agerup.

- Agerup has a large racing and breeding operation in Sweden and his young trainer there, Daniel Reden, also was key in selecting Monarch Kemp.

- Trixton was a \$360,000 yearling purchase from the Hunterton Farms consignment at the Lexington Selected Yearling Sale.

- Agerup, a scientist who discovered uses for non-animal stabilized hyaluronic acid and later sold his company to the dermatology giant Galderma SA, funded a university study to see if there is a gene that determines if a horse will trot. The study found that the gene is in 100 percent of American trotting bloodlines but not in French trotting bloodlines. So it's no surprise that Agerup keenly studies a trotter's gait. He believed he saw improvement in Trixton's gait with each race until the Reynolds Memorial Trot, when Takter tried racing the colt without shoes.

- Takter became only the second trainer to win the Hambletonian and the Oaks in one year, joining Jan Johnson who sweep both in 1988. In both instances, Takter won with his "other" horse. Father Pat-

rick, the 2-5 favorite, had won 15 straight for Takter, and looked like a lock heading into the Hambletonian. That blew up early when Father Patrick a break. Fortunately for Takter, he still had two solid chances, and finished one-two with Trixton and Nuncio. .

- Takter took the companion event for 3-year-old trotting fillies, the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks with Lifetime Pursuit, but his Del Miller Memorial winner Shake It Cerry was the favorite in the event. Instead, Lifetime Pursuit that delivered a 10-1 upset, beating Designed To Be by 2 1-2 lengths in a world record 1:50 4/5 performance. She had a little help from a friend. Shake It Cerry, starting in the second tier, worked her way to front to give Lifetime Pursuit an ideal pocket trip.

- Lifetime Pursuit is owned and bred by Brittany Farms. She is their third Oaks-owned champion and the fourth produced by the Lexington, Ky, nursery.

- Trixton earned \$503,062.50 for owners Brixton Medical A B and Christina Takter.

Trixton trotted the mile in 1:50 3/5, paying \$10.60 to win.

- The attendance was 20,764 for the first Hambletonian raced before the new, streamlined grandstand on an overcast afternoon following a rainy morning. They were treated to an extraordinary afternoon of racing that saw the meet leaders enjoy huge days.

- Yannick Gingras drove five winners, including four major stakes. He would be voted Driver of the Year.

- Father Patrick earned Dan Patch year-end honors for his division for the second year-He ended the year with a slate of 17-12-3-0 and \$1,693,081 in purse money, trotting in 1:50.2f for a season's mark. Father Patrick's connections planned on racing and breeding him in 2015.

- Shake It Cerry's year-end totals of 17- 15-0-1 and \$1,230,411 not only got her voted divisional Dan Patch honors but also Trotter of the