



Warrawee Xenia (Walner-Endless Flirt-Andover Hall)

After racing on the inside in seventh for the first three-quarters of the mile, Warrawee Xenia angled out in the lane, squeezed by a breaking Delilah Hanover, and rallied with a 26.4 final panel to win the second Hambletonian Oaks elimination on Saturday night in a lifetime-best clocking of 1:52.2.

Warrawee Xenia won just one of her five starts at age 2 but has blossomed as a sophomore and comes into the Hambletonian Oaks final riding a seven-race win streak. She has career earnings of \$74,515 to go with her eight triumphs from 13 appearances.

Quotes

Trainer Mark Steacy (TV winner's circle interview):

What led to entering Hambletonian Oaks: "This horse, even last year, showed lots of talent, she just ran into a few problems. Coming back this year, those problems seemed to be gone. The speed was there, and we raced this horse right. She started in non-winners of two and she got really confident. Bob has done a fantastic job with this filly, taking his time every race with her and showing patience. She was trotting home in 27 seconds every week up there [in Canada] and doing it with the earplugs in every time."

Why that path: "She didn't make any money last year, so it was pretty tough to pay some of those early stakes payments. But, like I said, we thought we had a nice filly, but we were gearing up for the last half of the season."

Preparing for the final: "It will pretty much be all the same. We'll just make sure she's healthy. She will stay down [in New Jersey] this week and hopefully she has a good week."

Driver Bob McClure (TV winner's circle interview):

On having won the Hambletonian and trying to add the Oaks: "It's an exciting feeling. I'm looking forward to it for sure."

On finishing so strongly: "That actually wasn't this filly at her best. She struggled a little bit in the turns, and she usually does that when she's got a little bit of a muscle issue. Mark is pretty good at fixing her up and usually the next week she's dynamite. So, I think you'll see an even better version next week."

Difference racing at Mohawk and Meadowlands: "There is definitely a speed difference. This track is a couple seconds faster; you see that with every horse that transitions here. But I think what's lost on her lines is that she was racing 3- and 4-year-old boys up north and beating them very handily. Like Mark said, she hasn't been stressed at all, so she's probably as fresh as anybody coming in here."

On whether content to race from off the pace again in final: "I was very cautious with her [Saturday], but after [Saturday] I'm pretty sure I can show a little more confidence in her and she will be better spotted for sure."

Breeding Notes

Warrawee Xenia is from the sparkling first crop of Walner and is one of three finalists in the Hambletonian Oaks for him, joining Venerable and Fashion Schooner. Her dam, the Andover Hall mare Endless Flirt, didn't make a pari-mutuel start in her career but is a half-sister to 2007 Hambletonian finalist Flirtin Man and a pair of Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Filly Trot champions in Flirtin Miss and Pick Me Up.

Bred by Rockwood, Ontario's Warrawee Farm, Warrawee Xenia was a \$50,000 purchase at the 2020 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale as HIP 256. Warrawee Farm, which was honored as Canada's top breeder at the O'Brien Awards in 2011, has not bred a Hambletonian or Hambletonian Oaks champion so far.

Driver Bio

BOB McCLURE

Born: 9/26/1990 – Birthplace: Orangeville, Ontario – Resides: Rockwood, Ontario

O'Brien Award Driver of the Year: 2020.

Hambletonian wins (1): Forbidden Trade, 2019.

Bob McClure won the Hambletonian in his only try to date, guiding Forbidden Trade to victory for trainer Luc Blais in 2019. Forbidden Trade went on to be named Canada's Horse of the Year.

McClure finished No. 1 in purses in Canada in 2020 with \$6.67 million and was named Canada's Driver of the Year. He has been no worse than eighth in purses in Canada each of the past six years, including second in 2018 and third in 2019.

He led Canada in wins in 2017 and 2016 and was third in 2018 and 2015. He raced primarily at Canada's "B" tracks before moving to the main stage of the Woodbine-Mohawk circuit in December 2017.

McClure got career win 3,000 on June 25 at Woodbine Mohawk Park. He has earned more than C\$36 million in purses lifetime.

Trainer Bio

MARK STEACY

Born: 7/15/1961 – Birthplace: Kingston, Ontario – Resides: Lansdowne, Ontario

Mark Steacy finished third with Harper Blue Chip in the 2014 Hambletonian final. It was his debut in the race.

Steacy started Just Dandy in the 2007 Hambletonian Oaks eliminations. She finished sixth and did not advance to the final.

Among Steacy's past stars was male trotter Majestic Son, who was Canada's Horse of the Year in 2006 at the age of 3.

In 2007, Steacy received the O'Brien Award of Horsemanship in Canada. In 2016, he won the first of his three consecutive Johnston Cups as the top trainer in the Ontario Sire Stakes program. His son, Shawn, captured his first Johnston Cup in 2020.

For his career, Steacy has won nearly 1,400 races and \$21 million. His son Shawn took over the majority of the stable's responsibilities in 2019.

Steacy's father worked in the restaurant trade and had horses as a hobby. Steacy tried the restaurant business briefly, but turned to harness racing, which had hooked him as an early child when he sat in a jog cart for the first time.

Owners

Mark Steacy, Lansdowne-David R McDonald, Cornwall, ON-Dale E Larson, Kent City, MI-Diane Bertrand, Edmonton, AB

Warrawee Xenia would be the first Hambletonian or Hambletonian Oaks winner for her ownership group.