

Sassa Hanover smashes track record; Morrill sweeps NYSS at Batavia Downs **By Tim Bojarski for Batavia Downs**

Batavia, NY---There was a lot of action on Wednesday night (Aug. 27) at Batavia Downs and as the New York Sire Stakes headlined the racing, both man and beast were in top form.



The Ron Burke trained Sassa Hanover (Rock N Roll Heaven-Sayo Hanover) re-wrote the record books when she toured the facility in a blistering 1:54.2, erasing the old mark of 1:54.4 for a 2-year-old pacing filly set by Barefoot Beauty just last year. This was the fourth track record set at Batavia Downs in 2014.

Jim Morrill Jr. left the gate with Sassa Hanover from post five in the \$35,867 division and dropped in third behind the early leader Devil Child (Jimmy Whittemore) and the pocket sitting Yes You Can (Mike Whelan). But when they headed up the backside for the first time, Morrill quickly came out and overtook the leader by the quarter in :28.1 and at that point, the race was over.

Sassa Hanover got to the half in :57.1 and the three-quarters in 1:26.2 and from there her only adversary was the clock. Morrill popped the plugs past the last station and the slick-gaited filly paced her hips off down the lane in a :28 flat last quarter and the record breaking final time of 1:54.2. Sassa Hanover paid \$2.10 for the win.

Devil Child (American Ideal-Kattimon) was second and Yes You Can (If I Can Dream-Cantbuymehappiness) was third.

This was the fifth win in six starts for Sassa Hanover and it boosted her bank account to \$125,992 for owners Burke Racing Stable LLC, The Panhellenic Stable Corp, Weaver Brussemi LLC and Lawrence Karr.



In the first \$35,167 division, Mosquito Blue Chip (Bettor's Delight-Sandfly Hanover) made it two in a row for trainer Paul Jessop and driver Jim Morrill Jr. but not without a tenuous ending.

My Little Delight (Mark MacDonald) left swiftly in the four horse field and spearheaded fractions of :27.4, :58.2 and 1:28.4. But the action picked up at the three-quarters when Pop The Tags (Brent Holland) came with a rush to challenge the front running filly around the turn and down the stretch. However when the rail opened up as the group straightened out, Mosquito Blue Chip buzzed through the gap and nipped the leader at the wire by a half-length in 1:56.3. The heavy 2-5 favorite returned \$2.80 for the win.

My Little Delight (Bettor's Delight-My Little Dragon) was second and Pop The Tags (Bettor's Delight-Breathe) was third.

It was the second win in seven starts for Mosquito Blue Chip, pushing her annual income to \$101,302 for owners Our Three Sons Stable LLC, Donato Falchicchio and Paul Jessop.



The final \$35,867 division was as good as it could be for Bettor N Better (Bettor's Delight-Vanite Semalu) as she won easily in her preferred front-running style. This was the second NYSS win on the night for trainer Ron Burke and the third for driver Jim Morrill Jr.

Off the wings, One Hot Majorette (Mike Saftic) flew right to the front from post six and crossed over by the eighth pole. Jim Morrill Jr. played give-and-go with Bettor N Better off the rail and retook the front as soon as they straightened out up the backside. But Heavenly Bride (Mark MacDonald) was immediately at her again and established the third lead change as they passed the quarter in :29.

Morrill, not content to sit in second, once again pulled Bettor N Better at the top of the stretch and retook the lead once more before they hit the half in :58. From there the race was Bettor N Better's to be won. She took the group to the three-quarters in 1:27.4 before On Hot Majorette came back for one more challenge. That was quickly rebuffed and Bettor N Better paced away down the stretch to a length and a half victory in 1:56. The winner returned \$2.10.

Heavenly Bride (Rock N Roll Heaven-Native Bride) was second and Heavens Legacy (Rock N Roll Heaven-Unique Legacy) was third.

That was the fourth win in six starts for Bettor N Better and pushed her earnings to \$117,125 for owners Our Horse Sense Stable and Blue Chip Bloodstock Inc.

Jim Morrill Jr. put on a driving clinic, scoring five wins and three seconds on the night. He was employing incremental positioning in many races where he made several moves within the mile to improve his horse's location during the race and the strategy was paying off. Morrill is the leading NYSS driver this year and has been annually for some time. In 2014, horses he drove have won 41 NYSS races and earned in excess of \$1.6 million in those contests.

After the races, Morrill spoke glowingly of all his charges.

“Sassa Hanover is a very, very nice filly. She didn't really get over the track that well tonight but we got the job done anyway. She will definitely be one to beat in the final at Yonkers. Mosquito Blue Chip drew well and then had the race set up perfect for her. When the rail opened up, she sprinted to wire and got across. And Bettor N Better is just a sweet heart, but she is very professional too. We were on cruise control the entire mile.”

There were also three divisions of the Excelsior A series on the card that offered a total of \$36,000 in purses.

The first \$12,600 division was won by Moremercy Blue Chip (Rock N Roll Heaven-Mercy Mercy Mercy) who is trained by Julie Miller and was driven by Chris Lems. The winner paid \$4.70. Moremercy Blue Chip is owned by the Andy Miller Stable and the Pinske Stable.

The second \$12,600 leg was won by Rock My world (Rock N Roll Heaven-Love The Game) who is trained by Ed hart and was driven by Jim Morrill Jr. She returned \$4.20 for the win. Rock My world is owned by Jeffrey Snyder.

The third \$12,700 split went to Hey Kobe (Bettor's Delight-American West) who is trained by Jean Drolet and was driven by John Plutino. The victor returned \$8.10. Hey Kobe is owned by Stephen Schneider, William Siegel and Marthe Drolet.

Racing resumes at Batavia Downs on Friday night (Aug. 29) with post time set at 6:35.