

Eight NYSS County Fair Finals on tap Tuesday at Monticello

by John Manzi, publicity director, Monticello Raceway

Monticello, NY --- Everyone knows that harness racing was weaned on the half-mile tracks and many a young driver learned the ropes while competing in the races at the nation's county fairs. Now, with those states who have sire stakes programs the events not only have helped preserve county fair racing but the added purse monies made available has spawned groups of horsemen who race primarily on the county fair circuits. New York State has a good program for those who prefer to race at that level, and many do.

At summers end, those who raced the New York Sire Stakes County Fair circuit this year will convene at Monticello Raceway on Tuesday afternoon, September 2 with their colts and fillies who earned the right to compete in the series \$10,000 finales which are available for the eight colt and filly pacing and trotting divisions.

Besides having earned enough points to qualify for the finals, still there's a condition with the amount of county fair starts that are also needed.

Among the trainer/drivers who are the stalwarts on the NYSS County Fair circuit are Harold "Joe" Smith and Doug Ackley. Year in and year out these very talented horsemen develop colts and fillies that are standouts in their divisions.

And this year is no exception.

Ackley, 70, developed three that will be racing on the card and he'll be on the driver's seat behind each of them. Of the three, J A TO, a freshman trotting colt by Big Apple Deli, has most impressive credentials with eight wins in nine county fair starts and nearly \$11,000 in purse money. His fastest victory was clocked in 2:07.

Ackley's Amma [Crazed](#), a 2 -year-old daughter of [Crazed](#) which he drives regularly, has three wins and has been on the board in all 11 of her starts. She bankrolled nearly \$11,000 for Ackley who co-owns the filly with Tyra Joanne Ackley.

Over the years Ackley, from Gowanda, NY, has earned nearly \$2 million racing at the New York Fairs and has won 793 races rarely driving over 100 times a season.

Harold "Joe" Smith, from Malone NY, at 80 years of age is having one of his best years in the sulky with 26 wins in 67 starts with a UDR of .580. In his career Smith has driven 953 winners and his mounts—mostly his own—have earned \$1.24 million.

He qualified four youngsters for the finals with his own Sterling Cadet, the favorite to win the 3-year-old colt and gelding trot. This altered son of [Conway Hall](#) has 10 wins and seven seconds in 19 starts and purses of \$32,380 this year with a 1:58.3 record taken at Saratoga Raceway.

And Smith's Olivia's Z Tam, a sophomore Bettor's Delight pacing filly has seven wins, four seconds and \$16,343 in 19 seasonal outings. Although Smith did all the driving at the fairs he'll had the lines in the \$10,000 finals to Jimmy Devaux. Now well-seasoned after a summer racing at the New York fairs and at a few pari-mutuel tracks along the way, the entered youngsters will surely open the eyes of the railbirds who perhaps feel that because of where they raced, they may not be worthy of attention. But

put that notion to rest because all the entrants in the eight NYSS County Fair Finals will make their sires and dams proud and make good showings, win or lose.

There will be no live races at the Mighty M on Labor Day but on Tuesday, September 2 the NYSS County Fair Finals will be joined by six overnight events on the 14- race card which will have a 12:50 pm post time.