

NY-Bred Dee's Rocketman upsets in Monteleone Memorial final

by John Berry, for Pompano Park

Pompano Beach, FL --- Dee's Rocketman, smartly driven by Andy Santeramo, pulled off a 13-1 upset victory in the \$30,000 final of the Fred Monteleone Memorial, held at Pompano Park on Sunday night (March 11).



Skip Smith photo

Dee's Rocketman captured the \$30,000 Fred Monteleone Memorial final on Sunday night.

"poorest" one coming in with \$143,997.

The 6-year-old ridgling son of [Rock N Roll Heaven](#) covered the extended distance in 2:21.3, pinning a defeat measuring 3-1/4 lengths on track record holder Panocchio, handled by Wally Hennessey. Doo Wop Hanover, with Tony Kerwood in the bike, finished third while Hollywood Sign A finished fourth. Drachan Hanover was fifth while earning the final award in the very classy octet.

The task appeared to be a steep one for Dee's Rocketman going in because, first, the draw put him in the outside post position in a field of stellar performers whose career bankrolls exceeded \$3 million and, second, Dee's Rocketman was the

That didn't matter to the confident Santeramo, who came into the action as the second leading winning percentage driver at Pompano Park with 54 wins in 227 starts. As he said prior to the race, "You never know, in this game, what is going to transpire on the track. When that gate opens, you have to make decisions and, with the outside post, my decision will depend on what the others do. I'm certainly not going to bang heads early with them in a longer race. So, we'll see what happens."

From the opening bell, the action was swift as Rocky's Z Tam left alertly from the rail, Hollywood Sign was on the engine from post five and Uncomprming Z Tam was eager leaving as well, with favored Panocchio fourth -- but not for long. After an opening panel in :27.3, Panocchio went in search of the top spot and after a half in :57.1 he secured it, but not for long. The pace quickened on the backside as Hollywood Sign A went on a second speed binge, taking command past the third station in a picked up 1:24.4.

Through all of this, Santeramo played the waiting game early before catching live cover, first third-over, then second-over around the final bend with the mile timed in 1:52.2. Tipping three wide turning for home, Dee's Rocketman was in the highest of gears, mowing down his foes one-by-one and then drawing clear in the final stages.

After the race, Santeramo said, "Like I said, you never know what is going to happen on the track. They were all banging heads early, I caught live cover, the flow brought us into contention and because Mickey (trainer McNichol) has this horse so sharp, he saved the best for last. When I tipped him, he responded and I thought to myself, 'it's all over.' That's how strong he felt when I tipped him. To beat a field like this is, well, it's unbelievable, because this was a very classy group."

For Dee's Rocketman, it was his sixth win in nine starts this year, good for \$39,735. And although he's still the "poorest" of his group in lifetime earnings -- now at \$158,997 -- he's the richest of the group this semester for owner Joseph Martinelli Sr. Off as fifth choice in the wagering, Dee's Rocketman paid \$29.40 to win.

The \$15,000 Open II, carded at the same distance of 1-1/4 miles, went to The Onlyest One, driven by Wally Hennessey, in 2:22.3. American Hustle, teamed up with Bryce Fenn. was second, three-parts of a length away, while Rebellious, driven by Scott Zeron, was next after a sweeping move from sixth to the lead during the mid-portion of the race. Dakota Jack and Bestinthebusiness earned the minors.

Racing continues on Monday night with the Super Hi-5 jackpot ballooning to \$18,213. Post time is set for 7:20 p.m.