

Cullipher hopes to see NY-Bred Wisdom Tree blossom in Nadia Lobell

- by Ken Weingartner, USTA Media Relations Manager

Hightstown, NJ --- Jeff Cullipher and Tom Pollack entered this season with high hopes for 3-year-old female pacer Wisdom Tree, and so far the filly has done little to disappoint them. Wisdom Tree has six wins and a second in her past seven races as she prepares for the first open stakes test of her career in Friday's (July 6) Nadia Lobell at Hoosier Park.

The \$142,000 Nadia Lobell Stakes features eight 3-year-old female pacers. Joining Wisdom Tree is the Ron Burke-trained trio of Double A Mint, Majorsspeciallady and Strong Opinion, the Shane Bowermaster-trained duo of Always Woggy and McVenus, the Trent Stohler-trained Cult Icon and the Nifty Norman-trained Reign On Me.

Wisdom Tree will start from post No. 3. Sam Widger is listed to drive.

"I really think she will handle it well," said Cullipher, who owns Wisdom Tree with Pollack and shares training duties with Ed Hart. "We're going to give her a chance."



Wisdom Tree has spent the majority of her career on the New York Sire Stakes circuit, where she is stabled with Hart, while Cullipher, who tied for last year's training title at Hoosier Park and is this year's leader, trains the filly in the Midwest. Hart also has a 2-year-old male trotter, Horns For Three, for Cullipher and Pollack. That gelding won his career debut last week at Buffalo Raceway in a NYSS event.

Steve Roth photo

This year, Wisdom Tree has won six of eight races, including three on the NYSS circuit, and earned \$110,566.

"I like to consider us as a team," Cullipher said. "We work good together. Ed has done a great job with (Wisdom Tree) when he's had her."

Cullipher and Pollack purchased Wisdom Tree, a daughter of [Betterthancheddar](#) out of Wisdom, for \$28,000 at the 2016 Lexington Selected Sale. Pollack co-owned Wisdom Tree's half-brother Rich Wisdom, who was a stakes winner, and her family also includes stakes-winner Allamerican Captor.

"Our main spot is in Indiana, but we try to spread out a little bit," Cullipher said about buying the New York-sired Wisdom Tree. "Tom really liked (Rich Wisdom) and we looked at Wisdom Tree and liked the way she looked, and she wasn't crazy expensive."

"We thought early on that we had something that was OK, but she was very immature and had to be nursed around the small tracks (in New York) a bit. I don't think she had the year that we thought she had the potential to have, but we put her away the right way and brought her back with a little bit higher hopes for her 3-year-old year. So far so good."

Wisdom Tree went off stride in four races last year, including the New York Sire Stakes championship, but in her remaining seven starts posted three wins and two seconds. She earned \$60,094. This year, she has won six of eight races, including three on the NYSS circuit, and earned \$110,566.

"She grew up so much from a 2- to a 3-year-old," Cullipher said. "She's a lot handier. I like that she can leave or she can come from behind. She pretty much does nothing wrong."

Wisdom Tree has raced at Hoosier Park four times in her career, winning three.

In addition to the Nadia Lobell, she is staked to the Mistletoe Shalee at the Meadowlands, Circle City and USS Indianapolis at Hoosier, and Matron at Dover.

"We'll keep our fingers crossed," Cullipher said.

Following is the field for Friday's \$142,000 Nadia Lobell Stakes. Racing begins at 6:30 p.m. (EDT) and the Nadia Lobell is race No. 5 on the 14-race card.

PP-Horse-Driver-Trainer

- 1-Double A Mint-Matt Kakaley-Ron Burke
- 2-Reign On Me-Peter Wrenn-R. Nifty Norman
- 3-Wisdom Tree-Sam Widger-Jeff Cullipher
- 4-Mcvenus-Trace Tetrick-Shane Bowermaster
- 5-Strong Opinion-Ricky Macomber Jr.-Ron Burke
- 6-Cult Icon-Brandon Bates-Trent Stohler
- 7-Always Woggy-Peter Wrenn-Shane Bowermaster
- 8-Majorsspeciallady-Sam Widger-Ron Burke