

By Jeff Rizzo

Batavia, NY --- The Western New York harness racing circuit returned to Batavia Downs Casino on Monday evening, July 26, marking the beginning of the 64th season of live racing. Race fans lined the apron, filled the grandstand and dined in the historic Clubhouse and Rail Bar to catch all of the action from America's Oldest Lighted Harness Track. The 3-year-old New York Bred Late Closing colt and gelding trotters enhanced the first program of the meet with two contests, the second and the fourth races, each with a purse of \$13,100.

Racing to victory in the first Late Closer was Cider With Ice with driver-trainer Dan Daley in the sulky, trotting the mile in a swift 1.59.1. The quarter times for the field were :27.4, :57.4, and 1:28.1, respectively. Finishing 2-1/2 lengths behind for the place was Womanizer with Gareth Dowse at the lines. Azad Boko with red hot Jack Flanigen in the driver's seat came in for the show.

The mile began with Womanizer getting the top, but quickly lost the lead to Cider With Ice after the quarter pole and the 3-year-old colt by Credit Winner was never in any real jeopardy from that point. Ann-Mari Daley, Richard Lombardo, and Albert Crawford own Cider With Ice, now unbeaten with the addition of trotting hobbles. He returned \$4.30 to win.

Taking honors for the second stakes race of the evening was Black Licorice with Brian Mattison at the lines, trotting the mile in 2:02.2. Jack Flanigen and Headingforaruckus were close behind for the place, while MC Thunderstruck with Dan Daley showed up third. The quarter times were :30.1, 1:00.4, and 1:31.4, respectively.

Black Licorice took the early lead but was passed by Headingforaruckus shortly after the quarter pole. Flanigen kept the lead until midstretch when Mattison and Black Licorice squeezed in along the passing lane and charged to the win by two lengths. Black Licorice is a 3-year-old gelding by Credit Winner. He is trained by Paul Kelley and owned by East Pond Stable. The winning mutuel price was \$17.40.

Live racing will continue this Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at America's Oldest Lighted Harness Track, with our new post time of 6:40 p.m.

The Clubhouse and Rail Bar is now open all race nights serving fine fare, most notably the all you can eat buffet, complete with prime rib, shrimp and crab legs each Friday and Saturday night! To make a reservation please call 585-343-3750.

Saturday, July 31 marks the first promotion of the season at Batavia Downs Casino: A Glass Giveaway, co-sponsored by Batavia Downs Casino and the New York Sire Stakes. The first 750 patrons to swipe their Player's Club cards beginning at 5 PM will receive a ticket that may be redeemed for a glass in the Paddock Room following the 7th race.