

By John Manzi

When you're hot, you're hot--- and Bruce Aldrich, Jr. is and has been hot. The former New Englander reined four more winners on the March 11<sup>th</sup> card at Monticello Raceway and now has 78 for the meeting



He began the afternoon with a one- win lead over Billy Dobson and after he reined the four horses to victory on the matinee card today Aldrich opened some breathing room between him and Dobson, who got skunked. Aldrich now has command of the leaderboard, 78-73.

He started the day winning both halves of the early double. In the first race he scored a 2:03:2 triumph with David Knightes' trotting mare, Spiteful Peg and then came back to win the second behind Sam Rice's Wishwell Sugarbaby in 2:01:2.

Aldrich's next triumph was with Dr. Scott Woogen and Brenda Messenger's, trotter, Beach Vacation, in a time of 2:03:1 and win number four came behind Jennifer Lappe's trotter, Supercat Begonia in a 2:02:1 clocking. For Supercat Begonia it marked the trotter's third consecutive triumph and fifth in his last six starts. It also was the second training victory for Lady Godiva Pace winner, Jennifer Lappe, who also harnessed Wishwell Superbaby in the second race.

Another event of note on Thursday's card was that Greg Merton, currently in third in driving victories with 52, reined two more winners as he closes in on 3000 career wins. At day's end Merton needs just 15 more to reach that personal milestone.

Photo credit: *Geri Schwarz*