

By John Manzi

An old proverb says “the best laid plans of mice and men sometimes go awry” and that would be a good way to describe Monticello Raceway’s Godfather Pace which was won for the second consecutive season by Jimmy Marohn.

Though the race was the eighth and final leg of Monticello Raceway’s Heritage Drivers Series for reinsmen of Italian extraction, it also carried a sub-title of ‘the pros against the amateurs’ since initially there were four professionals and four amateurs. But with a late scratch of a horse that amateur driver Joe Faraldo was to handle and then a late driver change from Jimmy Marohn, Jr., who was hurting from a bout with a fractious horse, to amateur reinsman Randy Ingrassia the equal balance was upset. And when the pacers went to post there were four amateur drivers and three professionals and not surprisingly the pros dominated.



When the gate sprung Kyle DiBenedetto and Four Starz Esquire took command on the first turn but they yielded the front-end to Mike Forte and We Shall See N who then led the field to the half. But before they reached that point Marohn was out and going with Jus Trouble and they ranged alongside We Shall See N and the two raced

as a team around the clubhouse turn and when they straightened away in the backstretch Jus Trouble and Marohn began to draw off and they went on to an easy victory. At the wire Jus Trouble was a six-length winner in a time of 1:59 and Four Starz Esquire rallied to be second for DiBenedetto. Only George Casale’s third place finish with Artristocracy saved face for the amateur movement.

We Shall See N and Forte finished fourth with the last three slots held down by the amateur drivers. So, if a series of pros against the amateurs comes to fruition next season the gentlemen drivers will certainly have their work cut out for them.

The race winner, Jus Trouble, owned by Jose Godinez, scored his second seasonal victory and paid \$4.90 for win.

Marohn, who copped this event last year with Flying Aftermidnite in 2:01:1, will now carry the hopes of Italian-Americans when he and all the other ethnic leg winners convene here at the Mighty M on Monday, October 11 to compete in the All America Cup which will be the finale of the Heritage Drivers Series.

Though it wasn’t an equal opportunity for all, a sidebar to the Godfather Pace was that amateurs were racing against the professionals.

“I really don’t think that this race would be a good way to judge amateurs against the pros’ driving contest,” said Alan Schwartz, the president of the Monticello Harness Horsemen’s Association who is an amateur driver himself and one who competes regularly against the pros. “It was just one race and the main premise was to have drivers of Italian descent do the driving and it was just a coincidence that four amateurs drivers got a chance to compete. I do believe that a Pro-Am tourney could be met with great success over a series of races.”

Photo: [Geri Schwarz](#)