

By Jim Moran

VERNON, NY—Biggest Big Bertha, a recent ship-in from California, collected her 55th career victory after a 1:52.3 performance in Friday night's \$11,000 featured sixth race at Vernon Downs.

Trainer Rick Plano was in the racing bike as Biggest Big Bertha rallied three wide from fourth in the final turn and then closed from third in the final furlong to earn a two-length tally in the weekend's top contest for female pacers.

It marked the first local win, but seventh season's score for the 9-year-old daughter of Little Steven-Ripreza Hanover, who is owned by Marilee Keene. The career winner of \$324,281 paid \$26.20, \$9.20 and \$7.90 across the board.



Plano, a native of Frankfort who began his harness career at Vernon before achieving success at Ohio's Northfield Park and on the California circuit, also finished first with the trotter Mr. Friendly (1:58.3) to record his initial double of 2010 at the Downs.

Leading reinsman Josh Marks, runner-up Jimmy Whittemore and veteran Chuck Connor, Jr. each chalked up a pair of wins during Friday's 10-race card.

DOWNS DOINGS—Marks, who has posted 80 wins in 30 Vernon programs, leads in driving doubles with nine. Whittemore, the track's defending driving champion, has seven...Top provisional driver Leon Bailey garnered his 15th victory behind the trotter My Irish Molly in Friday's third event...Saturday 10-race program, which includes the weekend's top trotting test, will begin at 6:55 p.m...The Downs will also present a 10-race matinee card on Monday, July 5 that will begin at 1:15 p.m...Additional information regarding the track's 57th season and its casino can be obtained at www.vernondowns.com.

Photo: Fotowon