

Art Official done for the year

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Freehold, NJ --- Meadowlands Pace champion Art Official will miss the remainder of the season after being diagnosed with a torn muscle in his left front leg, trainer Joe Seekman said Friday.



Lisa photo

Art Official won eight of his last nine races, with his only setback being a third-place finish in the Little Brown Jug final. For the year, the son of Art Major-Naughty Shady Lady won 13 of 20 starts and earned \$1.5 million. In addition to the \$1.1 million Meadowlands Pace, Art Official's victories included the \$500,000 Hoosier Cup, the \$392,850 Cane Pace, and divisions of the Tattersalls and Bluegrass stakes.

In one of the most memorable races in recent years, Art Official edged Somebeachsomewhere by a neck in the Meadowlands Pace final.

His final start was October 4 in the Tattersalls at Lexington's Red Mile. He won in 1:48.3.

Seekman, who trains Art Official for owners Jim and Joyce Jesk (Sawgrass Farms), hopes to bring the horse back next season as a 4-year-old. Art Official will be sidelined for four months and could resume training in February.

"The vet says once this heals it will be better than ever," Seekman said. "It's just one of those things. He didn't come out of Lexington a hundred percent. He should be OK with just rest."

Art Official's injury ended any hopes of a rematch between the colt and Somebeachsomewhere in the Breeders Crown in November. Art Official handed "The Beach" his only career loss in the Meadowlands Pace, winning by a neck in a then-world-record 1:47 mile.

"It's definitely disappointing to us," Seekman said.