

## "SHARE OF SIRE STAKES WINNER BEING AUCTIONED OFF"

By Mike Sardella

It was an intriguing proposition when the week began. The idea of auctioning off part of a proven two yr old race horse to benefit Saratoga Hospital. A unique idea that became an interesting proposition after the two yr old, Classical Art, won his first New York Sire Stakes race on Friday night at Saratoga. Owner Tom McTygue, a longtime Saratoga resident, came up with the idea of auctioning off 25% of his freshman pacing colt as a way to raise money for the Saratoga Hospital Charity benefit to give back to the city that has done so much for him and the city he calls home. Longtime Public Works Commissioner of Saratoga, McTygue has been a horse owner for years and currently owns Classical Art by himself. A two yr old son of Art Major, Classical Art headed into his first Sire Stakes race on Friday after hitting the board in all three of his lifetime starts, preps for stakes if you will. It appears that all the moves the connections of Classical Art have made have been good ones as not only did he head into the race well but by the time Friday's eleventh race was over, he would own the title of Sire Stakes winner.



Classical Art went from seventh to first in the final half to score the victory in the \$37,067 Sire Stake on Friday and has now earned over \$21,000 in just four starts to begin his promising career. Trainer Brian Cross was in the sulky for the 1:58.2 win for the local pacer. Though not the fastest of the six stakes winners on the night, Classical Art had to endure a tough trip while wielding three wide around the final turn before getting up by the slimmest of margins. 25% ownership will be auctioned off on July 30th

with online bidding already underway. The value of the horse continues to rise as not only is he proving himself to be a Sire Stakes force but with every successful race, gathers points towards the September final in which the top eight points earner will square off for stakes supremacy and their share of the \$150,000 purse. McTygue saw this not only as a way to support a good cause in the Saratoga Hospital but also as a way to expose some new people to the sport of harness racing while getting them to learn the owning end of horse racing. A great opportunity for a great cause as Classical Art will head into his second stakes race in a few weeks already with a win under his belt.

There were six different trainers and six different drivers who won the six NY Sire Stakes races on Friday, providing further evidence of the good balance of power amongst the state's talented young horses. Jim Morrill Jr has made the winners circle home with regularity throughout the summer stakes season and Friday was no different. Morrill was in the sulky for trainer Erv Miller as Spacehill powered away to an open length win in the night's opener, stopping the timer in 1:56.4. The time was about the norm for the freshman pacers for the night as three of the six winners clocked wins of under 1:57.



The fastest victory of the stakes horses came from Hay Goodlooking. Having never been beaten in either of his two qualifiers or his first win at Vernon Downs, Hay Goodlooking was again up to the task as trainer-driver Gates Brunet got his talented sidewheeler going early and rushed up from sixth to take over the lead approaching the half. Hay

Goodlooking sealed the deal with a :29 second final quarter to record the stakes victory in 1:56.2, the fastest of all the 2 yr olds on Friday night.

The other 1:56 win came from Mixed Media. Dan Cappello Jr, second in the driver standings at Saratoga, was in the sulky for trainer Bill MacKenzie as another Art Major colt recorded a stakes win, this one in 1:56.3. The other two stakes races on the night saw Stephane Bouchard and Ray Schnittker slug it out in great stretch drives. Bouchard had the rail in both races, piloting Brass Band and Tamayo for trainer Linda Toscano while Schnittker trainees Bull Rush and My Last Laugh would begin races five and six from post two. While Brass Band and Bouchard reeled in Schnittker and Bull Rush in the fifth, Schnittker got the best of Bouchard as My Last Laugh tracked down the favorite Tamayo in the night's sixth race. Though Brass Band recorded the slowest of the stakes winners (1:58.4), he had to sprint a final quarter of :28.1 to get the job done while My Last Laugh stopped the clock in 1:57. It is always good to see the young talent that NY racing has to offer and the freshman pacers did not disappoint on Friday. Of all the talented two yr olds on Friday, Hay Goodlooking was maybe the most impressive. Though it's way too early to call at this point, Hay Goodlooking may have established himself as the favorite to be the two yr old champion when things get decided in September. It should be another great summer of stakes action.

This week's harness handicapping hint talks about the late closer editions of the NY Sire Stakes that are scheduled for this Thursday. To read the program in a late closer race takes a little bit more precision. Watch for the horses that may not be having much success but that have squared off

against top stakes horses in their past couple of starts. Traditionally, even horses that haven't been doing as well in the big stakes races often succeed in late closers as opposed to horses that may show some success in non winners races or previous late closer events. Steal some value on horses dropping out of the big money stakes races on Thursday night and whenever the late closers come to town this summer.

Live harness racing will take place Wednesday through Saturday night this week with post times at 7:05pm. Starting next week, Tuesdays will be added to the schedule for the remainder of the summer. Until next week, I'm Mike Sardella wishing you the best of luck and we'll see YOU at the finish line!