

YONKERS HOSTS THURSDAY NIGHT'S \$155,300 NYSS JIM MEAGHER PACE
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Thursday, June 20, 2019—New York Sire Stakes returned downstate Thursday night (June 20th), with Yonkers Raceway hosting the moist \$155,300 Jim Meagher Pace for 2-year-old colts and geldings.

Three divisions—at \$38,650 each—and a finale—at \$39,350—comprised the event, which once again honored the memory of the Raceway's long-tome corporate controller and which saw all frosh making their purse debuts.

The first raced served as the first division, and odds-on Cake Daddy (Brent Holland, \$3.70) served notice.

He went the distance (:29.1, :59.1, 1:28.4, 1:56.3), using that :27.4 kicker to spurt away from an early pocket pull of Hurrikanekingjames (Dan Dube). The latter faltered late, as Always on the Hunt (Mark MacDonald) closed for second...beaten 4³/₄ lengths.

Hurrikanekingjames, Tomas (Jason Bartlett) and Major on the Beach (Matt Kakaley) grabbed the minors.

Cake Daddy is an American Ideal colt co-owned by (trainer) Homer & Connie Hochstetler and Dan Plesac. The exacta paid \$21.60, the triple returned \$133.50 and the superfecta paid \$385.

Without question, the happiest person in the joint was Plesac, the former standout big-league pitcher who said Cake Daddy “is the first horse I've owned in forever, at least 10 or 11 years.”

Plesac, who at one time had a stable of about 25 on both sides of the border, “took a trip to Pinehurst (NC) and the itch came back. I've known the Hochstetlers and their son, Jay, for about 25 years, and decided to get back in. I'd resettled in New Jersey, and the timing was right.

“Jay said the family had one they thought would be perfect.”

The \$30,000 yearling “is staked to everything. I was so nervous before the race, and you do not want to be disappointed. Tonight, he proved everything we thought about him.”

The second division saw second choice Sandy's Bolt (Bartlett, \$8.20) as the first one to the lead and the first one to the wire.

From post position No. 4, he watched as 3-10 fave Splash Brother (MacDonald)—gingerly-handled at the start—move to the lead

Splash Brother led the gang though intervals of :28.3, :59.2 and 1:28.4, taking a length-and-a-half into the lane.

Sandy's Bolt then found a path inside, ducking left with the aptitude of a pro. He edged away, whipping Splash Brother by three-quarters of a length in 1:56.4. Level Up (Jordan Stratton), So So De Vie (Kakaley) and a recovering Darby's Ideal (Tyler Buter) picked off the remainder.

Sandy's Bolt, a son of Bolt the Duer co-owned by Blindswitch Racing Stable, Doine Farm Services, Gary Axelrod & Denise Dennis and trained by Jose Godinez. The exacta paid \$15.80, the triple returned \$55 and the superfecta paid \$235.

The evening's third grouping had short-priced number Cigars and Port (MacDonald, \$2.80) fool very few. From post No. 5, he had nary an anxious moment (:29.1, :59.4, 1:28.3, 1:56.3). The margin, a length-and-a-half in and out of the final turn, was 3¼ lengths at the wire.

Second went to a first-over Oreo Dream Xtreme (Corey Callahan), with Come on Raags (Scott Zeron) a loose-pocket third. Ideal Artillery (Holland) and American Rebel (Stratton) came away with the minors.

Cigars and Port is a So Surreal lad co-owned by (trainer) Ray Schnittker, Nolamaura Racing, Ted Gewertz and Steven Arnold. The exacta paid \$9, the triple returned \$13, and the superfecta paid \$79.50.

"Young, but a smart horse," MacDonald said.

The final statebred event had third choice Groovy Joe (Callahan, \$12.60) defeat a drifting Save Me a Dance (Bartlett) by a length-and-a-quarter in 1:56. After Steuben Moose (Mike Merton) looped a few making the lead, Groovy Joe—from post No. 2—took over and finished it off (:28.2, :59.1, 1:27).

Steuben Moose, Teton Sunset (Stratton) and R Maddy Blue Chip (Kakaley) settled for the small change.

"I took advantage of (The Mystic) making a break, but my horse was good," Callahan said. The Mystic (MacDonald), part of a 3-5 favored entry, made a nasty, first-turn fumble and wound up a 'distanced' last.

Groovy Joe is a homebred Roll with Joe colt owned by Winbak Farm and trained by Blake MacIntosh. The exacta paid \$108, the triple paid \$666 and the superfeccta paid \$1,877

New York Sire Stakes returns downstate Tuesday night (June 25th), with the \$165,499 Dick McGuire for 3-year-old colts and geldings. Total purses for the 2019 New York-bred program are estimated at \$14 million. For more information, please visit www.nysirestakes.com.