Minor Has Major Hopes For Shoshie Deo

The 2017 Grand Circuit meet at The Red Mile kicks off on Thursday with five divisions of the $366,000 Bluegrass for 2-year-old male trotters on the 10-race card that gets underway at 7 p.m. Grand Circuit racing continues at the same time on Friday and Saturday night before switching to a 1 p.m. post on Sunday, with 1 p.m. posts all four days during week two.

Included among the 41 first-year trotters entered in the Bluegrass is $360,650 Peter Haughton Memorial winner You Know You Do. One of four entries by trainer Jimmy Takter, You Know You Do comes into Thursday’s race (first $73,000 division, Race 1, post 1 with Yannick Gingras driving) off a second-place finish in the $328,000 William Wellwood Memorial on Sept. 18 at Mohawk. A $350,000 yearling purchase by Howard Taylor, Order By Stable, Bud Hatfield, Marvin Katz, Al Libfeld and Sam Goldband, You Know You Do is the richest freshman colt trotter in 2017 with $326,074.

On the other end of the price spectrum, Bluegrass starter Shoshie Deo was just a $10,000 yearling purchase by Annemette Minor from breeder Deo Volente Farms. After being driven in all seven of his career starts by trainer Dewayne Minor, David Miller will get the call on Thursday, starting from post 3 in the fourth $73,000 division (Race 6).

Shoshie Deo comes into the race with three wins and three seconds, with his victories including a career-best 1:58 in the Ralph Wilfong Memorial at the Indiana State Fair on Aug. 9 and the $15,000 Harold Dancer last time out on Sept. 22 at Freehold. In the Dancer, Shoshie Deo won by 54 ¼ lengths. Yes, by 54 ¼ lengths!

Backtracking, Shoshie Deo is a son of Wishing Stone, who Minor trained to victory in the 2010 Kentucky Futurity at The Red Mile. Standing his first season at stud at Deo Volente Farm in New Jersey (he now stands at Sugar Valley Farm in Ohio), Wishing Stone was bred to just 28 mares, which produced six registered colts. Shoshie Deo is one of the colts.

Out of the unraced mare Fortune Dream (by French stallion Daguet Rapide), Shoshie Deo’s maternal family includes multiple stakes winners Sir Perseverance, My Starlet, Lady Starlet, Crown Scarlet and the 2003 Two-Year-Old Filly Trotter of the Year Forever Starlet.

Minor said while the price his ex-wife paid for Shoshie Deo appears now to be a bargain, he wasn’t totally surprised at the time.

“This was Wishing Stone’s first crop and people can be skeptics about first crops,” Minor said on Tuesday morning, Sept. 26, at his barn at The Red Mile. “And he was a little horse. But you can’t measure heart and you can’t measure ability.”

Minor said he was winter training at Sunshine Meadows in Florida when he received a call for some help from his ex-wife, who was wintering at South Florida Trotting Center.

“Annemette trained him down with a friend, and then I took over the horse when he got down to 2:25,” remembered Minor. “But they had called me to come train the horse because they were having a little problem. So I went and trained him and told them, ‘You have a nice horse.’”

When it was time to embark on their racing careers, Shoshie Deo and the Wishing Stone-sired U Need Stones found themselves battling in New Jersey Sires Stakes

“lt’s always a dream to train a horse that you had some success with and then have one of his offspring also do well.”

–Dewayne Minor

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(NJSS) at the Meadowlands. U Need Stones and Shoshie Deo finished one-two in both NJSS preliminaries and the $100,000 final. They then went their separate ways for a couple of starts until meeting again for the Dancer.

The Dancer ended up a match race as the two trotters were the only entries. Shoshie Deo held the lead through three-quarters when U Need Stones made a break, which led to the three-iron-long gap under the wire.

“It was fun racing against him as both are out of the same stallion, but I knew one day the table would turn,” Minor remarked about the Dancer victory.

Minor said while the Dancer turned into a rout, he didn’t want to ease up too much over the final quarter, which the colt trotted in :30.2.

“You want to keep them up at a speed but you don’t have to kill them,” said Minor, “especially since I knew he had the race back here in six days. So you want to protect him a little bit.”

While Wishing Stone went on to finish his career with $2.35 million in earnings, Shoshie Deo is currently at $63,490. Minor is encouraged by what the future may hold.

“It’s always a dream to train a horse that you had some success with and done well, and then have one of his offspring also do well,” he said.

U Need Stones will also start in the Bluegrass, leaving from post 2 in the second $73,000 division (Race 4) with Yannick Gingras driving for trainer Ron Burke.—By Gordon Waterstone
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Campbell Brings Four To Bluegrass 2CT

Trainer Jim Campbell has starters in four of the five divisions of the $366,000 Bluegrass on Thursday night at The Red Mile, including recent $252,000 Pennsylvania Sires Stakes (PASS) champion Fashionwoodchopper, who lit up the board in that Sept. 4 contest at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono, at odds of 38-1.

All four of Campbell’s starters are owned by Jules Siegel’s Fashion Farms, but none of them are homebreds. Just announced as an electee into harness racing’s Hall of Fame, Siegel purchased three at the 2016 Harrisburg yearling sale, while the fourth was a private buy.

Fashionwoodchopper will start from post 8 with driver David Miller in the third $73,000 division (Race 5), continuing a run of outside posts for the son of Donato Hanover. After finishing fourth in his career debut on July 2 at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono, Fashionwoodchopper has not drawn inside post 6 in five consecutive starts. Despite the poor starting spots, Fashionwoodchopper comes into the Bluegrass riding a three-race win streak, with the PASS final sandwiched by a PASS prelim and a Kindergarten split.

“He hasn’t been too lucky on the draws, that’s for sure,” Campbell said with a laugh. “He can race either way but he likes to come from behind.”

Campbell said the 1:57 PASS championship upset victory didn’t surprise him.

“I wasn’t surprised because he trained down like one of our better colts; he just didn’t get off on the right foot when he got started,” said Campbell about the $100,000 yearling purchase. “It was more about growing issues than anything else, but he had shown us a lot of potential training down. Everything worked out good for him that night. He’s a horse

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Miller will drive the Campbell-trained Muscle Fashion in the first $73,000 Bluegrass division (Race 2) from post 5. The son of Muscle Hill, a $65,000 yearling purchase and a half-brother to the stakes-winning Senor Glide, has just one win in five starts.

“We brought him down to give him a try there,” said Campbell. “He didn’t get a good trip but he really didn’t race that good his last start (seventh in a Kindergarten division at the Meadowlands) but he has shown us some flashes where he might step it up. We are hoping The Red Mile might step him up a little bit and we can get a little more read on him.”

Miller will be in the sulky behind Campbell’s Patent Leather in the second $73,000 split, starting from post 1. The son of Broadway Hall has two wins and two seconds in five starts, including a career-best 1:54.2 in a PASS leg and a 1:56.2 effort last time out in a Kindergarten split, closing out his mile with a final quarter of :27 flat.

“He’s a real gutsy colt,” said Campbell. “Last week at the Meadowlands (in the Kindergarten), Yannick Gingras had just as much hold on him finishing as he did in any part of the mile....”

—Jim Campbell about Crystal Fashion in the Kindergarten

The last of Campbell’s Bluegrass quartet is Crystal Fashion, who starts from post 4 with driver Tim Tetrick in the fourth $73,000 division. A $100,000 yearling purchase, the son of Cantab Hall has a 2-2-3 slate in eight starts, with both his wins coming in PASS legs. A full brother to the $1 million winner Lolique, Crystal Fashion comes into the race off a late-closing third-place finish in a Kindergarten division.

“I’ve been really happy with him all year,” said Campbell. “He got shuffled back in the PA Sires Stakes final and had lots of trot finishing. He got out late (and finished fourth). Two weeks ago he raced great at the Meadowlands and was flying down by the wire, trotting his last quarter in 27 seconds. He’s just a real, nice colt who gets over the ground good and is good gaited.” — By Gordon Waterstone
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Little Brown Jug
Maple Leaf Trot
McKee Memorial
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Dog Days Of Summer

It may be early fall but it sure still feels like the dog days of summer here in Lexington on a hot Wednesday. We just missed 90 yesterday and it’s going to be close again today. It’s supposed to cool off starting tonight and by the time we hit Saturday it won’t even reach the 70s. But the long-range forecast is to warm back up to the low 80s for the second week of racing at The Red Mile.

I checked out the Tree of Knowledge and that’s where I saw Joe Holloway’s assistant Cynthia Grace there with her three dogs: Julia (the little one), Lexi (the medium one) and Gin (the big one). The dogs obviously are smart enough to know where to find shade in the heat: Under the Tree of Knowledge.

I chatted briefly with Dan Coon and Nick Salvi and as we were doing so there was a boom. I guess I hadn’t paid attention before as Dan said it was a nearby blasting company and they were blasting underground, thus the boom, and it happens often. I then hiked up the road to check on things with trainer Linda Toscano and the possibility of a Walner sighting. Linda wasn’t there but her husband, Brad McNinch was, telling me they arrived in Lexington last night. Brad said that their 3-year-old colt trotter Walner did not make the trip with them as he continues to work through a soft-tissue injury. What a shame as we’ve only had the chance to see Walner race twice this year. By the way, make sure you check out Boss Kathy’s story about soft-tissue injuries and methods of treatment in this week’s Horseman And Fair World (it’s the one with Little Brown Jug winner Filibuster Hanover on the cover).

Speaking of the Jug, I walked over to see trainer Brian Brown, whose two Jug favorites Fear The Dragon and Downbytheseside came up short. As gracious as Brian is in pre-race talks, he was even more gracious to me in defeat when I saw him after the Jug last Thursday. But my main purpose today was to wish Brian a big “Happy Birthday!” But alas, I learned Brian was going to head down I-75 later today from his home base in Delaware. I think he wasn’t there yet because he was recovering from attending what I heard was a wild and wooly anniversary party for Amy and Buck Hollar. Happy 25th to the Hollars!

Julie and Andy Miller were coming off the track and both said hello. I asked Andy if there is ever a moment he and Julie weren’t together, and he said he can’t remember too many occasions. I then headed over to see Marcus Jo-

hansson. I actually wanted to check on Marcus because yesterday we talked how he was in Lexington alone as Nancy was back in New Jersey and wasn’t coming until this afternoon. Hey Nancy: Marcus is fine and staying out of trouble! Shh…I won’t tell Marcus you texted me to go check on him…..just kidding.

Speaking of Marcus, I saw his father-in-law (who you know as Jimmy Takter) so I walked over and as he was getting ready to take a horse onto the track. We chatted a few minutes about Manchego, his undefeated 2-year-old filly trotter, who is looking to go nine-for-nine on Friday night in a Bluegrass division here. In a shameless plug, you are going to have to read about that conversation in Friday’s HarnessRacing Weekend Preview.

And in staying with the Takter family, I also saw Perry Soderberg, who is a main component of the stable’s success with his keen eye for picking out eventual stars at the yearling sales. I asked Perry if he had found any good ones yet, and then I corrected myself and asked if he had found any great ones yet. Perry said he’d have to kill me if he told me any of the hip numbers he had circled.

Joe Holloway texted me last night about having dinner with him tonight, and as he went by he yelled over what time to meet him. Because of security and paparazzi concern I can’t divulge the time or location, but I am looking forward to dinner. We can pick up our conversation from yesterday about the merits of the Yankees’ Aaron Judge being voted AL Rookie of the Year.

I saw Casie Coleman and her husband Mark Herlihy, and we talked about border snafus, like the one that has led to a late change in the announcer’s booth for the Grand Circuit meet. Mark McKelvie, the back-up announcer at Mohawk/Woodbine and also the communications director for the harness meets, had been hired to announce at The Red Mile but a delay in paperwork has led to regular Red Mile announcer Gabe Prewitt staying in the booth. The Red Mile and Mark didn’t learn until very recently of the paperwork snafu and it was too late. Casie said as a dual-citizen she doesn’t have problems crossing back and forth from Canada to the U.S. but Down Under, Mark has had a couple of instances but quickly resolved.

Casie told me a funny story about how she was trying to fly once with an O’Brien Award packed in her suitcase, and that when the bag went through the x-ray machine the entire TSA team had a look. Casie said they made her take the O’Brien trophy out to show them that the head they saw on the x-ray was indeed part of the trophy and not some sort of witchcraft thing.

Hey, gas across the street from The Red Mile was $2.38 today, so I expect that $2.47 station down Broadway a bit to probably drop pretty soon. I’m still at half a tank so I’m good for a few days still. Be back tomorrow, y’all.— By Gordon Waterstone
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Harness Racing Weekend Preview, 9 of 9
September 28, 2017

Team Erv/Marcus Miller Have 3 In Bluegrass

Marcus Miller enjoys driving at Lexington’s Red Mile. It is not all related to the success he enjoyed there a year ago, but that probably doesn’t hurt.

Last year, Miller won three divisions of the International Stallion Stakes and a division of the Bluegrass. He also finished second in three divisions of the Bluegrass and in a division of the Glen Garnsey. For the track’s entire Grand Circuit meet, Miller hit the board in 12 of 23 starts for a .338 driver rating.

Miller hopes to continue the fun when this year’s Grand Circuit meet at The Red Mile begins Thursday with five divisions of the Bluegrass Stakes for 2-year-old male trotters. Miller will drive in three of the divisions with horses trained by his father, Erv. None of the three colts are at odds longer than 6-1 on the morning line.

Leading the way for the Millers is Keystone Apache, who won last week’s Standardbred Stakes for 2-year-old male trotters on Little Brown Jug Day at the Delaware County Fairgrounds in Ohio. Keystone Apache raced on the outside the entire mile and went three wide heading to the final turn to win by a neck over Can’t Afford It in 1:56.2.

For the year, the son of Explosive Matter-Found An Angel has won three of nine races and $65,527. All three of his victories have come in his past four starts.

“If he can keep racing like he did on Jug day, I think he can go with a good bunch of them,” Miller said, adding with a laugh, “It wasn’t the trip I was planning on. But I did think he was the best horse in the race. He definitely performed as good as he could.

“(My dad) has always liked him and I think in the last few starts we’re really getting to see why. He’s really got a good attitude. I think he’s just gotten a lot more sure-footed. I think the attitude was always there, but now you’re able to use him a little bit without having to worry so much.”

Miller’s next Bluegrass drive will come with Farsetti Hanover in the fourth division. Farsetti Hanover has won two of nine races this year and $75,139. He has won two of his past three starts, including a division of the Reynolds Memorial, and finished third in the Haughton.

“He’s a really nice colt,” Miller said. “I think the last start at the Meadowlands (a fourth-place finish) I really didn’t want to be on the front. He came up a little bit empty late. But he’s a handy horse and good gaited. I like him. He’s really grown a lot right now and I think he’ll keep getting better also.”

In the fifth and final Bluegrass division, Miller will drive Tito. The last time Miller drove the colt was in August. He was driven most recently by Miller’s uncle, Andy, on the New York Sire Stakes circuit and heads to the Bluegrass with two wins in his past three starts.

Overall, Tito, a son of Muscle Mass-Stonebridge Encore, has won two of nine races and $77,173.

All three of the Millers’ horses are eligible to the Breeders Crown in October.

(HRC)

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