



Harness Racing

LEXINGTON PREVIEW

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

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Marion Marauder To Supplement To KY Futurity; Takes Aim At Triple Crown

Maybe there will be a trotting Triple Crown winner this year after all. Doing an about face from statements made following Marion Marauder's wins in the Hambletonian and Yonkers Trot, the connections have announced they will be supplementing the colt to the Oct. 9 Kentucky Futurity at The Red Mile.

With two legs of the Triple Crown in his pocket, a Futurity win would make Marion Marauder the ninth winner of trotting's Triple Crown, and the first since Glidemaster in 2006.

"It's history, and you don't get many chances to make history in this world!"

—Mike Keeling about Marion Marauder's chances to win trotting's Triple Crown

"To those outside our business it maybe doesn't have as much bearing as the Thoroughbred one, mostly because there isn't as much publicity, but I think it means a lot," said Mike Keeling, who trains Marion Marauder in tandem with his wife, Paula Wellwood, on Wednesday morning. "It

means a lot to the horse and I think it means a lot to the people to see a horse accomplish that. It's history, and you don't get many chances to make history in this world."

Marion Marauder won the Hambletonian on Aug. 6 at the Meadowlands and then, after finishing second to Southwind Frank in his next start, the Aug. 20 Colonial, he won his elim and final of the Yonkers Trot. After capturing his Canadian Trotting Classic (CTC) elimination at Mohawk, Marion Marauder finished second in the final to Bar Hopping.

"The track was heavy and not a front-end speed night," Keeling explained of the CTC runner-up finish. "We ended up in front because we were 3-5. He had gone five long weeks, and the horse got a little bit tired and he had a right to get tired. He's tremendous this week and as I said, he's climbing the walls. So we're all systems go."

Keeling and Wellwood were adamant after the Hambletonian that no matter the Yonkers Trot finish, they would not be supplementing Marion Marauder to the Kentucky Futurity. They seemed to hedge their bets following the Yonkers Trot victory, and Keeling said after learning from the race office at The Red Mile that the supplemental payment would be \$47,026, and conferring with owners Jean Wellwood and Devin Keeling (Mike and Paula's son), the decision was made to head to Lexington.

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"We got information to what it would cost, and with the horse climbing the walls, we had to do something with him," said Keeling.

Thirteen entries will split the Futurity into eliminations and a final, and Keeling admits he is hoping that there won't be enough entries to go heats.

"The only issue we have is a concern about possibly two heats; that's the only concern," he said. "I think he can handle it, but you don't want to have to do it."

Keeling said depending on the weather, he'll either train Marion Marauder at his farm in Ontario or ship down to Lexington. When Marion Marauder arrives, he'll do so as the richest trotter in 2016 with \$1,257,782 in earnings.—By Gordon Waterstone

Southwind Frank Set For Friday Qualifier At Red Mile

A Kentucky Futurity start is on the line for Southwind Frank on Friday morning at The Red Mile, with the reigning divisional champ scheduled to line up in post 1 in the first of two qualifiers.

"After the qualifier I'll know," trainer Ron Burke told The Horseman earlier this week. "If he's right in the qualifier then we'll go on to the Futurity. If he's not right he's not

"If he's right in the qualifier then we'll go on to the Futurity!"

—Ron Burke

going to race." After posting 11 wins in 12 starts last year at two and earning divisional honors in both the U.S. and Canada, Southwind Frank has six wins and four seconds in 11 starts

this year. Despite his resume that has resulted in \$941,218 in earnings for owner Southwind Frank Partners, Southwind Frank has shown vulnerability in several starts.

Southwind Frank's wins in 2016 include the \$500,000 Earl Beal Jr. Memorial and \$500,000 Colonial at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono, as well as a \$153,250 Stanley Dancer Memorial division at the Meadowlands. He also finished second by a nose to Marion Marauder in the \$1 million Hambletonian final. Still, driver Yannick Gingras has had to steady the colt to keep him from making a break on a couple of occasions.

When Southwind Frank finished a non-factor fifth last time out in the \$522,120 Canadian Trotting Classic on Sept. 17 at Mohawk, Burke went back to the drawing board and sent the colt to be examined by veterinarian Dr. Keith Brown.

"Something is not right," said Burke, who is bypassing Sunday's Bluegrass with Southwind Frank in lieu of the qualifier. "We can't find a major thing but we did find some minor things, and maybe the minor things have added up to a little bit of disappointment.

"I don't want him really stressed and I want to make sure everything is all right with him. He seems better, but you can never tell with him until you go full speed. I just don't want to send him out there not knowing if he's right." —By Gordon Waterstone



Southwind Frank

Melissa Simser-Iovino Photo



THIS WEEKEND'S FEATURED RACES

Thursday, September 29

All times listed are local.

7:57p	Lex4	Bluegrass 2CT div.	Trackmaster PPs
8:16p	Lex5	Bluegrass 2CT div.	Trackmaster PPs
8:35p	Lex6	Bluegrass 2CT div.	Trackmaster PPs
9:13p	Lex8	Bluegrass 2CT div.	Trackmaster PPs
9:51p	Lex10	Bluegrass 2CT div.	Trackmaster PPs
10:10p	Lex11	Bluegrass 2CT div.	Trackmaster PPs

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HarnessRacing Weekend Preview

Kathy Parker

kparker@harnessracing.com

Editor/ General Manager

Lynne Myers

lm Myers@harnessracing.com

Advertising Manager

Gordon Waterstone

gwaterstone@harnessracing.com

Associate Editor

Suzanne Starbuck

sstarbuck@harnessracing.com

Production Manager

Heather Kemper

hkemper@harnessracing.com

Editorial Production

Vanessa Flannery

vflannery@harnessracing.com

Accounting & Circulation

For mail sent via U.S. Postal Service, either P.O. Box 8480, Lexington, KY 40533, or 1910 Harrodsburg Rd., Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503. (859) 276-4026

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Ducharme Looks For Late-Night Specials In Bluegrass 2CT

Trainer George Ducharme will start two in Thursday's Bluegrass divisions for 2-year-old colt and gelding trotters at The Red Mile, but you'll have to wait until late in the card to see them. Ducharme will send out Muscles Jared in the fifth \$56,250 Bluegrass division (Race 10) and Patton in the sixth \$56,250 split (Race 11).

Muscles Jared will start from post 3 as the 5-2 second choice (behind Peter Haughton Memorial winner What The Hill) with John Campbell driving. Patton, who starts from post 4 with newly-elected Hall of Famer Brian Sears, is a 10-1 outsider.



"He trained good all winter and he's overachieved a little bit to what I thought he would be."

-George Ducharme about Muscles Jared

Muscles Jared made breaks his first two starts but then Ducharme added trotting hobbles. Since that time the gelding has done nothing but flex his muscles as he put together a four-race win streak that was snapped last time out on Sept. 11 when he finished fourth in the \$252,000 Pennsylvania Sires Stakes (PASS) championship at Harrah's Philadelphia.

"The trotting hobbles seemed to balance him out," said Ducharme. "He would just over-trot himself as he tried to make

too much speed."

A gelded son of Muscle Massive, Muscles Jared is out of the Kadabra mare Tetiana. Owner Alfred Ross purchased Tetiana for \$8,000 at the 2013 mixed sale at Harrisburg in foal to Muscle Massive, who turned out to be Muscles Jared, named for a man who works at his farm in Massachusetts.

Three of Muscles Jared's wins came in PASS legs, including a career-best 1:55.2 score on Sept. 1 at Harrah's Philadelphia. His victories have come in various forms, which pleases Ducharme.

"John (Campbell) has raced him both ways; whatever way he felt the colt was most comfortable with," said Ducharme. "The colt is pretty handy that way.

"He trained good all winter and he's overachieved a little bit to what I thought he would be," he added. "He came up a little bit sick in the (PASS) final; I think it just caught up with him with the feed and the shipping every week. We rested him up a little and I think he'll be good Thursday, hopefully."

Ducharme and Ross share ownership of Patton with Paul Fontaine. A son of Conway Hall, Patton is out of the Dream Vacation mare Penny Dream, who Ducharme trained. He also trained Patton's full sister A Penny Earned, a winner of

nearly \$400,000 who finished second in the New York Sires Stakes championship for 3-year-old filly trotters in 2012.

"This one I've had the family, including racing the mare about 100 years ago," said Ducharme, who purchased Patton as yearling for \$47,000.

Patton has three wins, all in overnights at Vernon Downs as the betting favorite. In a Champlain division on Sept. 2 at Mohawk—his lone stakes appearance heading into the Bluegrass—Patton finished sixth. Ducharme then qualified the colt on Sept. 23 at The Red Mile, closing from fifth to third in the stretch with a last quarter of :26.4.

"This colt acts like he's got a lot of ability but he really struggled on a half," said Ducharme. "So we took him to Canada to get him a race over Mohawk before the Champlain. He came a good last half and we were happy with him, and when we raced him in the Champlain he came up sick. So we gave him a few weeks off and qualified him down here. He qualified good and finished up good, so hopefully he can show me what I think his ability is in this race."

Ducharme said both trotters are eligible for next week's International Stallion, and then he'll make a decision regarding the Breeders Crown at the end of October at the Meadowlands.

"It's possible; they'll tell us after these two starts," he said. "We'll give it a shot, that's why we're down here." — *By Gordon Waterstone*

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Long Tom Looks To Step Up In Bluegrass

Long Tom might be short on experience, but trainer Marcus Melander believes the 2-year-old colt trotter can stand tall when it comes to racing on the Grand Circuit. The colt, who spent time in Sweden after being purchased for \$60,000 at last year's Standardbred Horse Sale, starts from post 1 in the first of six Bluegrass divisions (Race 4) with driver Tim Tetrick.

"He feels like the right horse, but there are some good horses out there as well, so it's not so easy," Melander said about Long Tom, who heads to Lexington with two wins and a second in three career races and \$19,250 in earnings. "He started out good and we'll see how he does against the best ones out here. I definitely think he can be on the Grand Circuit.

"He feels like a good horse and I think he'll get better and better with every race he can have. We'll see after Lexington how we do. But so far he's been very good."

"He wants to be a racehorse; he wants to win."

—Marcus Melander

Long Tom is a son of Muscle Hill out of the mare Iliia. He is a half-brother to Tight Lines, who last week finished third in the Old Oaken Bucket at the Delaware

County Fairgrounds in Ohio. Signed for by Swedish trainer Reijo Liljendahl, the horse is owned by the Finland-based AMG Stable Oy.

Following the Harrisburg sale, Long Tom traveled to Sweden, where he was in Liljendahl's stable.

"We talked in February and Reijo told me he had a good horse he wanted to send over," Melander said. "I liked him already at the sale, so when Reijo told me the name of the horse I was happy. He was a good-looking horse. He came to me at the end of March."

Because of his travels, Long Tom wasn't ready to see action when qualifiers for 2 year olds began in mid-June at the Meadowlands. But when Melander brought the colt to qualifiers a month later, he was pleased.

On Aug. 9, Long Tom made his racing debut in a conditioned race at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono and won by 1 1/2 lengths in 1:59.1. Four weeks later, he finished second to New Jersey Viking in the Harold Dancer Memorial Trot and followed that effort with a 1:56.1 victory in a conditioned race at the Meadowlands.

Long Tom is a horse that tends to get complacent when he reaches the front, but Melander is impressed with the colt's desire to win.

"He's not like a monster in training; he's very lazy," Melander said. "He's like an older horse that's been doing this for a while. He's never grabby. He's almost too lazy sometimes. Last week when he won at the Meadowlands he had plenty left. He's just so lazy you need to get him going to hold his speed otherwise he waits for the other horses.

"But you can feel in a horse when they want to be first. He's nice gaited, but what I like most is his head. He wants to be a racehorse; he wants to win." (with files from HRC)

Fly On Flying High For Team Miller

The 2016 Grand Circuit meet at The Red Mile kicks off Thursday night, with six divisions of the \$334,500 Bluegrass for 2-year-old colt and gelding trotters. The 11-race card gets underway at 7 p.m., with the Bluegrass divisions slated as races 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11.

Despite the presence of Peter Haughton Memorial champ What The Hill and Champlain winner Signal Hill in the Bluegrass, the horse assigned the lowest odds by track handicapper Gabe Prewitt is Fly On, who is 7-5 in the fourth \$56,250 split (Race 8). Fly On will start from post 4 for driver

Andy Miller and trainer Julie Miller.

The son of Muscle Hill has five wins and four thirds in nine starts this year for Team Miller.

"He's been very good all year, and hopefully he'll be good here," Andy Miller said Wednesday morning at his barn at The Red Mile.

"He's been very good all year, and hopefully he'll be good here!"

—Andy Miller

Fly On's five wins include a Tompkins division at Tioga Downs and a leg of the New Jersey Sires Stakes. His other three wins have come in the Kindergarten Series, where he is the runaway point leader for the division. Two of those victories were career-best 1:55.3 efforts, on July 22 at the Meadowlands and Aug. 18 at Vernon Downs, respectively.

The only blemish on Fly On's resume is a break at the three-quarters in the Helen Dancer on Sept. 2 at Freehold. Fly On quickly recovered to salvage third.

"He didn't like Freehold," explained Miller. "He wasn't that good that day. Normally he doesn't make breaks, he just didn't get around Freehold too good."

As for being the strong morning-line choice, Miller said, "I like being the favorite; it means I fit in the race pretty good."

A \$55,000 yearling purchase by Andy Miller Stables, Arden Homestead Stable and Gty Stable, Fly On has returned \$60,622. Miller said Fly On's remaining freshman starts include next week's International Stallion and the Breeders Crown and Kindergarten final at the Meadowlands. — By Gordon Waterstone



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