

Favorites Flourish In Commonwealth Finals

By Ray Cotolo, for The Red Mile

LEXINGTON, KY—The Monday (Sept. 21) card at The Red Mile featured eight \$50,000 finals of the Kentucky Commonwealth Stakes—a division for freshmen and sophomores of each sex and gait. Of the eight finals, the betting favorites managed to deliver in all but one.

Trainer-driver Verlin Yoder vaulted Miss Vet Hanover out of the pocket into the stretch to post the lone upset in the final of the afternoon's Commonwealth events, the Two-Year-Old Filly Trot.

At the start, 9-5 favorite Hey There Delilah broke stride with 3-1 second-choice Adirondack soon going into a gallop as the field entered the first turn. Princessa pushed to lead the field by the quarter in :28.3 with Miss Vet Hanover situated in the pocket. The field rolled in line to a :57.1 half and towards three-quarters in 1:26.2, setting up for a stretch-drive sprint.

Yoder angled Miss Vet Hanover from the pocket and inched towards Princessa through the stretch as Argyle gained ground to the center of the track and Shape Of Beauty surged through a seam at the pylons. Miss Vet Hanover continued to dig into Princessa, who then gave way in the final strides of a 1:54.1 mile. Shape Of Beauty finished third with Argyle taking fourth.

Returning \$15.40 to win, Miss Vet Hanover has now banked \$35,960 for owner Verlin Yoder following her maiden-breaking score. Hanover Shoe Farms Inc. bred the Yankee Glide filly.

Driver Andrew McCarthy set sail with Sail By, motoring to the front early and crushing her rivals to win the Three-Year-Old Filly Pace in 1:50.4 while giving trainer Tony Alagna his first of three victories in the Commonwealth finals.

Sent the 2-5 favorite, Sail By bolted to the lead from post 6, clearing Alleyesonme As to a :26.2. She kept her competition chasing while strolling through middle fractions of :54.1 and 1:22.2 before opening her lead into the stretch. Pristine Beauty circled Alleyesonme As as they tired to the inside and chased the winner Sail By to finish second, seven-and-a-quarter lengths behind. Pure Decadence rallied for third.

Bred and owned by Brittany Farms LLC, Sail By won her fifth race from eight starts this season and her seventh from 18 overall, earning \$87,680. The Captaintreacherous filly paid \$2.60 to win.

Scott Zeron later steered Captain Video, taking the Three-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Pace with the Tony Alagna trainee in 1:49.4.

Floating to the lead after a :28 first quarter, Captain Video pocketed stablemate Major Risky moving for the backstretch and maintained his speed towards a :55.4 half. Starship edged first over from third circling the final turn with Mancrush in tow towards three-quarters in 1:23.1. Mancrush kicked off his cover into the stretch and stormed after Captain Video, who then

repelled the late challenger to win by a neck. Major Risky finished third with Lottery Winner closing for fourth.

Bred by Riverview Breeding LLC, Visionary Breeders LLC and Joseph Di Scala Jr., Captain Video competes for owners Riverview Racing LLC, Alagna Racing LLC and Joseph Di Scala Jr. The Captaintreacherous colt scored his fifth win from six starts this season and his seventh from 13 overall, pushing his bankroll to \$49,700. He paid \$3.00 to win.

Driver Joe Bongiorno protected the lead with 1-5 favorite Lady Midnight to score a decisive victory in the Two-Year-Old Filly Pace and complete Alagna's afternoon hat trick.

Circling by early leader Classicist after a :28 opening quarter, Lady Midnight kept her speed going to a :55.4 half as Beachblanketlindy mounted a first-over bid moving to the far turn. Beachblanketlady cruised closer to Lady Midnight as she decelerated to three-quarters in 1:24.1 but began spinning her wheels into the stretch as Lady Midnight sprinted away. The Captaintreacherous filly widened her lead in progress to a 1:51.4 score over stablemate Odds On Roxette rallying for second. Odds On Badd Bunny closed down the center of the track for third.

Now a four-time winner from seven starts, Lady Midnight has banked \$58,715 for owners and breeders Brittany Farms LLC and Marvin Katz along with co-owner Lynn Katz. She paid \$2.40 to win.

Almanac sat mid-pack through most of the mile before driver Andrew McCarthy let the A Rocknroll Dance colt loose and run down pacesetter Winner Is Coming to win the Two-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Pace.

Winner Is Coming cleared command from Beach Party by the quarter in :27.4 with Tarkio racing third and Almanac fourth. The field continued single file to the half in :56.3 and by three-quarters in 1:24.2, where McCarthy began to roll Alamanc. Through the stretch the Brian Brown trainee narrowed on Winner Is Coming's lead to land a head in front at the finish of a 1:51.2 mile. Beach Party gave chase in third with Red Right Hand taking fourth.

Bred and owned by Diamond Creek Racing, Almanac won his third race from six starts, earning \$46,123. He paid \$3.00 to win.

Odds-on favorite Molto Bene ranged towards the top, inherited control when the tempo setter lost stride and from there strode to a 1:53.2 victory in the Three-Year-Old Filly Trot.

Aperfectcrystal took control to a :27.3 first quarter, but yielded for the pocket up the backstretch when Graceful Winner rushed out of third to the front before a :56 half. Driver Dexter Dunn pulled Molto Bene from fourth rounding the final turn as Graceful Winner broke stride, leaving Aperfectcrystal back on the lead. By three-quarters in 1:25.4, Molto Bene matched strides with Aperfectcrystal, who then started to gallop straightening for the finish. Molto Bene cruised on the lead to the finish with Watayankee two-and-three-quarter lengths behind closing for second. Fortune Telln Lady, off a pocket trip, took third.

A Father Patrick filly bred by Melvin Hartman, David Mc Duffee and Marvin Katz, Molto Bene competes for owner Frederick Hertrich III. She collected her third win from nine starts this season and her fifth from 20 overall—earning \$73,419—and paid \$2.40 to win.

Even-money choice Media Mogul swept to the front approaching the half and cruised to a 1:54.4 victory in the Two-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Trot.

Positioned third to a :28.1 first quarter, driver Scott Zeron zipped Media Mogul off the pylons and to the lead heading to a :56.4 half. Pocket-sitter Six O’Clock News began to lose ground on the leader into the final turn, prompting Lockbox to pull first over nearing three-quarters in 1:25.3. But Media Mogul widened his lead to three lengths entering the stretch with Flemsteen rallying from fifth to finish second, three-and-three-quarter lengths behind the winner, in a photo with Lockbox.

Owned by W. Donovan, Thomas Dillon, Purnel & Libby LLC and Joe Sbrocco, Media Mogul won his second race from seven starts, earning \$68,044. The Muscle Hill colt—bred by Al Libfeld and Marvin Katz—paid \$4.00 to win.

Sermon emerged from a pocket trip and ripped to the finish to post a 1:53.4 victory in the Three-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Trot.

Cupid Hanover cruised to the lead from post 8 heading to a :28.1 quarter, but faced pressure into the backstretch when Awesomedabra marched uncovered from fourth to the front. Approaching a :55.1 half, Awesomedabra broke stride, sliding to the center of the course before regaining his gait into the final turn. Meanwhile Cupid Hanover raced unchallenged to three-quarters in 1:24.4 until Sermon tipped out for the drive to the finish. Driver Kasper Forget sent the Muscle Hill gelding after the lead at the head of the lane and drew clear to win by four-and-a-quarter lengths over Generous Pour rallying for second, with Cupid Hanover faltering to third.

Competing for owners Consus Racing Stable Inc. and Longbridge Trotting Inc., Sermon won his third race from 11 starts, earning \$50,545. Per Engblom trains the \$4.80 winner bred by Diamond Creek Farm LLC and Melvin Hartman.

The regular meet at The Red Mile concludes Tuesday (Sept. 22) with races scheduled to start at 1:00 p.m. (EDT). Racing will resume at The Red Mile on Friday (Oct. 2) to start the six-day Grand Circuit meet, culminating to Kentucky Futurity Day on Sunday (Oct. 11). Racing begins each day of the Grand Circuit meeting also at 1:00 p.m. (EDT).

PHOTOS: Winners of each division of the Kentucky Commonwealth (Amanda Stephens Photo)







