

Perfect Sting Stays Unbeaten with International Stallion Stakes Win

By Ray Cotolo, for The Red Mile

LEXINGTON, KY—Shifting tactics to race off the speed, Perfect Sting culled an anxious moment at headstretch with a powerful stretch rally to keep his perfect record while winning the second of three divisions for the \$299,100 Betting Line International Stallion Stake Two-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Pace—sponsored by the Betting Line Syndicate and Hanover Shoe Farm—on Saturday (Oct. 10) at The Red Mile.

Summa Cum Laude left for the lead but yielded command to Literl Lad Hanover by a :27.2 opening quarter. Summa Cum Laude soon popped pocket into the backstretch and retook the lead by a :55 half. Meanwhile driver David Miller had Perfect Sting positioned sixth, and angled the Always B Mike-Shebestingin colt first over into the far turn. He grabbed cover from Bayfield Beach to three-quarters in 1:22.4 but Summa Cum Laude had scooted away to a near-three-length lead.

Taking to the center of the track, Miller uncorked Perfect Sting straightening for the finish. The Joe Holloway trainee accelerated towards Summa Cum Laude with an eighth to go and reeled the leader in within the final strides, scoring the head decision at the beam of a 1:49.4 mile. Caviart Lotus closed for third with early breaker Abuckabett Hanover rallying for fourth.

“He makes me work,” David Miller said of his colt after the race. “He wanted it today—I was real proud of him; he wanted to put his head in front. When I got him off Dexter’s back [driving Bayfield Beach] and got him going it looked like Yannick had about four [lengths] on me—and I know how good that horse raced last week. I wasn’t sure I was going to track him down. So far he’s been racing really hard and getting the job done.”

Undefeated in eight starts, Perfect Sting has banked \$304,300 for owner-breeders Brittany Farms LLC and Val D’Or Farms. He paid \$3.40 to win.

Highlandbeachsbest grabbed the front early and never looked back in progress to a 1:50.2 score in the opening division of the Betting Line.

Pirate Hanover pushed for the lead to a :28.1 opening quarter with Highlandbeachsbest positioned second, but driver Tim Tetrick promptly vacated pocket with the Nancy Takter trainee to take the helm heading up the backstretch. By the half in :56.1, Highlandbeachsbest faced mild first-over pressure from Almanac circling the final turn and clipped three-quarters in 1:24. Almanac began to falter into the stretch while Pirate Hanover gave pursuit out of the pocket, making only a slight gain on Highlandbeachsbest to secure second well ahead of Emblaze Hanover in third. Beach Party took fourth.

A homebred for Highland Thoroughbred Farm, Highlandbeachsbest won his third race from 11 starts, earning \$124,002. The Somebeachsomewhere colt paid \$3.40 to win.

Odds-on choice Southwind Gendry stormed uncovered for the lead and kept all late challengers at bay to take the final division of the Betting Line in a 1:50 mile.

Positioned fifth to a :27.2 opening quarter, Southwind Gendry stayed put in midpack while Commanding Officer overtook early leader Always A Miki heading to a :54.4 half. Driver Yannick Gingras gave Southwind Gendry his cue moving into the far turn and rolled by a tiring leader after three-quarters in 1:22.3. Southwind Petyr, tracking the favorite's cover, swung off a helmet into the stretch and dug into Southwind Gendry while Always A Miki rallied off a pocket trip up the pylons late. Southwind Gendry kept a neck in front of Southwind Petyr to the finish while Always A Miki settled for third and Lou's Pearlman leapt from last for fourth.

"You can do whatever you want with the horse—he's perfect to drive," Gingras said after the race. "I was hoping to get a covered trip for sure, it's always tough coming first up a long, long way. But he's a game horse; when they come to him, that's when he goes."

Collecting his eighth victory from 10 starts, Southwind Gendry has banked \$409,269 for owners Burke Racing Stable, Phil Collura, Knox Services and J&T Silva-Purnel&Libby. Ron Burke trains the Southwind Farms-bred Always B Miki gelding who paid \$2.60 to win.

Grand Circuit action concludes at The Red Mile on Sunday (Oct. 11) with a 12-race card headlined by the \$444,000 125th Kentucky Futurity and the \$255,000 55th Kentucky Filly Futurity. First-race post time is slated for 1:00 p.m. (EDT).



