

# Ramona Hill Leads Sunday Sophomore Bluegrass Blitz

*By Ray Cotolo, for The Red Mile*

LEXINGTON, KY— Hambletonian winner Ramona Hill leads the Alagna Armada's charge on Sunday (Oct. 4) at The Red Mile, where the champion filly will race in the final of a total 12 divisions of Bluegrass Stakes.

Ramona Hill, conditioned by The Red Mile's leading trainer Tony Alagna, will start from post 7 in the third of three divisions of the \$209,600 Bar Hopping Bluegrass Three-Year-Old Filly Trot, sponsored by the Bar Hopping Syndicate and Hanover Shoe Farm. The Muscle Hill-Lock Down Lindy filly enters the race the 8-5 morning line favorite and on a six-race win streak with 12 wins overall from 14 starts and \$1.3 million banked. Regular pilot Andrew McCarthy will have the reins as she competes against Pennsylvania Sires Stakes champion Crucial, who starts from post 5 for trainer Ron Burke and driver David Miller.

The opening division of the Bar Hopping sees Nancy Takter trainee Panem finally shake away from the top fillies of the division. Finishing third in the Hambletonian Oaks, the Father Patrick filly has since taken residency at the Lexington oval competing in Kentucky Sires Stakes and finishing second in the \$250,000 final. Dexter Dunn will steer the three-time winner with over \$300,000 earned from post 3 against Sans Defaut, who enters off a win in the \$83,800 Old Oaken Bucket, and New York Sires Stakes star Love A Good Story.

Hambletonian Oaks champ Sorella returns stateside in the second Bar Hopping division following a third-place finish in the \$266,000 Elegantimage at Woodbine Mohawk Park. Yannick Gingras drives the Muscle Hill filly for trainer Nancy Takter as she matches up with Elegantimage runner-up Sister Sledge—starting from post 7 for trainer Ron Burke and driver Tim Tetrick—and Oaks runner-up Hypnotic AM—starting from post 5 for trainer Marcus Melander and driver Brian Sears.

Alagna sends Captain Kirk in the opening Bluegrass Stakes division on the day, the first of three splits for the \$203,800 Captaintreacherous Three-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Pace—sponsored by the Captaintreacherous Syndicate and Hanover Shoe Farms. Sired by the star Alagna pupil and the stake's namesake, Captain Kirk enters off a third-place finish to Tall Dark Stranger in the \$250,000 Kentucky Sires Stakes Final. Joe Bongiorno drives the only horse to beat Tall Dark Stranger this year from post 4 against Little Brown Jug-heat winner Sandbetweenmytoes and Jug runner-up Cattlewash.

Capt Midnight later goes for Alagna in the second Captaintreacherous division. Another sired by Captaintreacherous, Capt Midnight nears \$500,000 in earnings after finishing third in the first heat of the Little Brown Jug, but then scratching from the final. Andrew McCarthy will drive from post 1 against world champion and Ohio Sires Stakes-star Elver Hanover, Grand Circuit-upstart Warrawee Vital and Kentucky Sires Stakes runner-up Fortify.

Tall Dark Stranger leads the final division of the Captaintreacherous as the 3-2 morning line favorite. The millionaire son of Bettors Delight has only lost twice in 18 starts and accrued \$1.7 million in earnings from wins including in the Meadowlands Pace, Cane Pace and North America Cup. Yannick Gingras drives the colt from post 1 for trainer Nancy Takter as they face Captain Barbossa, starting from post 6 for trainer Tony Alagna fresh off a win in the Little Brown Jug.

Per Engblom trainee Beads looks to continue his trail of improvement in the first of three divisions for the \$211,700 Greenshoe Bluegrass Three-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Trot, sponsored by the Greenshoe Syndicate and Hanover Shoe Farms. The Archangel colt was aimed earlier in the year for the Hambletonian but failed to make the final. Once adding Lasix on Hambletonian Day, the Archangel colt has yet to lose and will carry a five-race win streak into Sunday with Brian Sears at the helm from post 5.

Pennsylvania Sires Stakes champ Amigo Volo returns to the site of his coming-out in the second Greenshoe division. Last year, the Father Patrick gelding shipped to Lexington and won his division of Bluegrass by seven lengths and the next week, despite making a break in the race, won in a division of International Stallion Stakes. The Richard “Nifty” Norman trainee parlayed those performances into a win in the Breeders Crown and has since also finished fourth from post 10 in the Hambletonian and won the Pennsylvania Sires Stakes Championship. Dexter Dunn drives the near millionaire from post 7.

Norman later sends Chestnut Hill, off a 60-1 upset in the Canadian Trotting Classic, in the final division of the Greenshoe. The Muscle Hill colt had, prior to his Grand Circuit victory, strolled to a 1:53.2 win in the Pennsylvania Sires Stakes Consolation. David Miller gets the reins back as Chestnut Hill starts from post 5 in a field which includes an Ake Svanstedt-trained trio: Gangster Hanover from post 1, Coventry Hall from post 6 and Jula Trix Treasure from post 8.

Alagna sends a pair in the first of three divisions of the \$236,600 American Ideal Bluegrass Three-Year-Old Filly Pace, sponsored by Brittany Stallion Management. Reflect With Me, a daughter of Captaintreacherous, enters the 2-1 morning line favorite off a second-place finish in the \$250,000 Kentucky Sires Stakes Final to Baby Your The Best—who starts from post 1. Andrew McCarthy again drives the filly while her stablemate, New York Sires Stakes champ Hen Party, starts from post 3 with Tim Tetrick in the sulky.

Sail By steps up into Grand Circuit company for trainer Tony Alagna in the second American Ideal division off a 1:50.4 romp in the Kentucky Commonwealth Final. Andrew McCarthy will drive the Captaintreacherous filly from post 8 as she competes against the likely favorite in the race Party Girl Hill, who enters undefeated in 11 starts and off a victory in the Jugette. Dexter Dunn drives the 2-1 morning line choice for trainer Chris Ryder.

Runner-up to Party Girl Hill in the Pennsylvania Sires Stakes Championship, JK First Lady will start from post 2 in the final division of the American Ideal. The Nancy Takter trainee, out of former pupil JK Shesalady, enters off a 1:49.1 victory in an overnight race at the Meadowlands in the middle of September. Yannick Gingras drives the Western Ideal filly against a field

including Alagna trainee Lady Lou from post 5, Juette runner-up New Year from post 6 and Linda Toscano trainee Rocknificent from post 7.

The stakes-laden 15-race card gets underway with first-race post time slated for 1:00 p.m. (EDT).