

New York-Breds at the Races: May 26 & 27

By Bill Heller

Idle Battle of Evermore Wins a Thrilling Three-Horse Photo Friday

Brilliantly prepared for his first start in nearly nine months by trainer Chad Brown and perfectly ridden by Javier Castellano, Doubledown Stable's four-year-old colt **Battle of Evermore** nipped front-running **Harbor King** and Manuel Franco by a head in a \$62,000 New York-bred grass allowance Friday at Belmont Park, completing the mile and a sixteenth in 1:41.51. **Cliffs of Dover** and Luis Saez finished just a neck behind Harbor King in third.

Battle of Evermore, who broke from the outside post in the field of 10, was the 3-1 third choice, Harbor King was sent off at odds of 20-1 and Cliffs of Dover, who was adding blinkers, was the 5-2 second choice.

Ned Williams bred Battle of Evermore, a son of Scat Daddy out of Maddalena by Good and Tough who sold for \$285,000 as a two-year-old in March 2014. Battle of Evermore hadn't raced since September 3rd, when he finished a distant fifth as the 9-5 favorite in a dirt allowance under Joel Rosario at Saratoga.

Harbor King, breaking from the four post, Cliffs of Dover, out of the seven post, and Battle of Evermore got away first, second and third, respectively, and remained that way for nearly a mile. Harbor King led by a length after a :24.60 first quarter-mile, by a neck after a half-mile in :48.30 and by a length through three-quarters in 1:12.62.

Cliffs of Dover was all out trying to get to the frontrunner two-wide, and was joined by Battle of Evermore three-wide in mid-stretch. Harbor King couldn't have been any gamer, but Battle of Evermore surged just before the wire to edge both Harbor King and Cliffs of Dover. There was a gap back to 15-1 **Cody's Notes** and Dylan Davis in fourth.

Battle of Evermore improved his grass record to two for five with one second. He also has a second and three thirds from six dirt starts, for total earnings of more than \$160,000.

R Precious Stones Scores in Debut at 22-1 Thursday at Belmont

Beautifully ridden by Jackie Davis, McConnell Racing Stable's homebred **R Precious Stones** dueled front-running **Leah's Dream** and Kendrick Carmouche into defeat, then drew away late to win a \$60,000 New York-bred maiden special weight for two-year-old fillies by a length and a quarter Thursday at Belmont. She completed the five-furlong distance in :58.25 at 22-1 odds in a field of 10 first-time starters.

Paz the Bourbon, sent off at odds of 6-1 under Joel Rosario, rocketed home to finish second, 2 ¼ lengths clear of Leahø Dream in third. **Party Mint Star**, who went off at 16-1 odds under Jose Ortiz, finished another three-quarters of a length back in fourth.

Gary Contessa trains R Precious Stones, a daughter of Bustin Stones out of Classical Fashion by Native Regent. R Precious Stones had six works for her debut, including a bullet three furlongs in :35, fastest of 17 that morning at that distance on April 29th, and a fast four-furlong move in :47 4/5, second best of 60 that morning at that distance.

Bettors werenø impressed, however, sending her off a decided longshot. Davis rode her from the start like she was on the best horse in the field.

Breaking sharply from the nine post, R Precious Stones hooked up immediately with Leahø Dream, who left from the five post. They battled head-to-head on the front end through demanding early fractions: a quarter-mile in :22.10 and a half-mile in :45.43. Past mid-stretch, R Precious Stones put away Leahø Dream to win her debut.

Getting up in the final frantic yards under Kendrick Carmouche, Mandaclair Stableø homebred three-year-old filly **Tizzelle**, co-owned by Bond Racing Stable and trained by Jim Bond, nipped front-running **Alabama Bound** and Luis Saez by a head in a \$60,000 New York-bred maiden special weight on the grass Thursday. She completed the mile and a sixteenth in 1:41.59. Tizzelle was the 6-5 favorite and Alabama Bound went off at 7-1 odds in the field of seven.

Out of Nowhere, sent off at odds of 27-1 under Eric Cancel, was a strong third, a length and a quarter behind Alabama Bound. Laurel Heights, who went off at 3-1 odds with Irad Ortiz, Jr. aboard, finished fourth, another half-length back. Laurel Heights was an absolute handful to load into the starting gate, delaying the start.

Song Hill Thoroughbreds co-bred Tizzelle, a daughter of Tizway out of Smart Engagement by Smart Strike who was a fast-finishing second by a half-length at 13-1 odds in her debut on April 17th.

Leaving swiftly from the rail, Alabama Bound quickly took the lead while pressed two-wide by 9-1 **Stevie the Cat**, ridden by Jose Lezcano, and three-wide by Out of Nowhere through a quarter in :23.88, a half-mile in :47.99 and three-quarters in 1:11.64.

Tizzelle, who raced in fifth for the first half-mile, worked her way up to third and then went after Alabama Bound, who still led by two lengths. Alabama Bound dug in gamely when confronted by Tizzelle in deep stretch and they battled nose-to-nose to the wire, with Tizzelle sticking her head in front just before the finish line.

Tizzelle has already earned \$48,000 in her first two starts.

Manuel Franco hustled Kennesaw Mountain Racing's three-year-old gray filly **Picco Uno** to the lead on the rail and she went on to win the third \$60,000 New York-bred maiden special weight of the day by 4 ½ lengths Thursday. She covered the seven-furlong distance in 1:23.77 as the 7-5 favorite in a field of nine.

Lilikoi, sent off at 7-1 odds with Dylan Davis aboard, chased in second the whole way, finishing five lengths clear of 9-2 first-time starter **Diamond Street** and Junior Alvarado in third. There was another gap of five lengths back to 5-2 **Meatball Maddnes** and Jose Ortiz in fourth.

Topsmeade LLC and Adena Springs Farm bred Picco Uno, a daughter of Macho Uno out of Piccola Isola by Western Expression who sold for \$27,000 as a yearling at Keeneland in September 2014.

Trained by Jason Servis, Picco Uno finished third and second in her first two starts at 4-1 and 8-1 odds, respectively.

Franco rode Picco Uno hard to maintain a one-length lead on Lilikoi through an opening quarter in :22.84 and a half-mile in :46.20. Then Picco Uno opened up to win handily.

Picco Uno has already earned more than \$50,000 in her first three starts.

In Thursday's finale, a mile-and-a-sixteenth \$55,000 starter allowance on turf, Peter, Maria and Brian Daly and Kerry Novak, Inc.'s homebred, the three-year-old New York-bred filly **Queen of Castle**, edged Wild Chatter by a head in a final time of 1:40.74. Queen of Castle, with Jose Ortiz riding, was sent off at odds of 11-1 and Wild Chatter, with Junior Alvarado up, went off at 3-1 odds in the field of eight. Candida, who started slowly under John Velazquez, finished third, a length behind Wild Chatter, at 5-2 odds.

Richard Stoklosa trains Queen of Castle, a daughter of First Defence out of Trust in Gold by Golden Missile. In her prior start under Dylan Davis on April 14th, Queen of Castle finished third by a length to Wild Chatter at 35-1 odds.

Ortiz had Queen of Castle well-placed in third as Dicey Flats, the slight 5-2 favorite breaking from the outside post under Irad Ortiz, Jr., took the early lead and 13-1 My Dinah Lee chased in second through a half-mile in :46.44.

Jose Ortiz sent Queen of Castle up to challenge for the lead, and she poked a head in front of Dicey Flats after three-quarters in 1:10.70. Wild Chatter was three-wide and gaining quickly in third.

Wild Chatter had dead aim on Queen of Castle but drifted out severely in deep stretch, allowing Queen of Castle to just hold her off for the victory.

Wild Chatter is now three for seven on turf. She's also raced twice on dirt and has total earnings of nearly \$90,000.