

New York-Breds at the Races: November 6 to 10

By Bill Heller

Gallagher Stud's Inimitable Romanee Steals the G3 Long Island Handicap Under Chris DeCarlo

Trainer Graham Motion already had a legitimate contender for Saturday's mile-and-a-half \$200,000 Grade III Long Island Handicap in Strathnaver, who won a shorter, easier grass stakes at Laurel in her last start and would go off at odds of 7-2. Yet Motion also entered Gallagher's Stud's five-year-old gray New York-bred mare **Inimitable Romanee**.

"It's something we've always wanted to try with her," Motion said after the race. "We'd thought she'd like going long. I'm very fond of this filly. She's a hard trier."

Still, Inimitable Romanee was just one-for-16 the last two years, including an eighth after brushing the starting gate and racing seven-wide in the \$200,000 Ticonderoga Stakes for New York-breds at a mile and a sixteenth in her last race. However, she has five seconds and three thirds in her previous eight grass starts, all vs. state-breds. "These New York-breds are a very solid group," Motion said. "She had some bad luck."

Not on Saturday. For openers, she drew the rail in the field of seven. She also had a rider switch from injured John Velazquez to Chris DeCarlo. And while DeCarlo is obviously not as accomplished as Velazquez, he did his homework. There seemed to be an utter lack of speed in the Long Island.

Inimitable Romanee had gotten away 10th after her rough start in the Ticonderoga, but had finished a front-running third in the 2012 John Hettinger Stakes for New York-breds 14 months earlier.

Bettors certainly weren't impressed, sending Inimitable Romanee off at 28-1 odds.

Inimitable Romanee broke sharply from the rail and only one other horse, ironically Strathnaver, Motion's other un-coupled filly, made a move for the early lead under Rajiv Maragh. DeCarlo asked a bit more from Inimitable Romanee to secure a clear lead, which she did so readily.

And though Strathnaver and Left a Message, who was also 7-2, were vying for second and third only a little more than a length behind Inimitable Romanee, DeCarlo got away with murder. He slowed the quarter down to :26.30 on a course rated "good," then added an even slower second quarter, hitting the half in a crawling :53.62.

With no one pressuring her, Inimitable Romanee raced three-quarters in 1:20.65 and a mile in 1:46.29.

Around the far turn, Strathnaver and Left a Message both moved closer, getting within three-quarters of a length of the frontrunner, who had covered 10 furlongs in 2:10.19. DeCarlo, though, had plenty of horse left, and Inimitable Romanee opened three lengths on the field in early stretch. Tabreed, a 5-1 shot, got through on the inside, but Inimitable Romanee was still clear.

DeCarlo merely showed Inimitable Romanee the whip twice in the final yards and she crossed the finish line in 2:34.28, thanks to a final quarter in :24.09 and a final half mile in :47.99, to win by a length. Tabreed edged Left a Message by a half-length for second. Strathnaver finished fourth.

Motion was understandably impressed by DeCarlo's ride: "He rode a very smart race, especially the way she kicked for home. They finished fast."

Who would have imagined the New York-bred would bring Motion to the winner's circle instead of his other filly? "That's the beauty of this game," Motion said. "You have to run the race."

Inimitable Romanee had run the race of her life for her third victory in 18 turf starts with six seconds, five thirds and career earnings of just under \$325,000. The mare is a daughter of Maria's Mon out of Cellars Shiraz by Kissin Kris. She was bred by Gallagher's Shiraz LLC.

Earlier Saturday, Dennis Marlinger's four-year-old gelding **Jeter** held off fast-closing **Sportswriter** by half a length to win a deeply contentious six-furlong \$64,000 New York-bred allowance/optional \$25,000 claimer in a snappy 1:10.27. **Longfor the City** was another half-length back in third.

Jeter's second straight victory as the 2-1 favorite gave jockey Javier Castellano his second of six winners on Saturday. Longfor the City was the 5-2 second choice and Sportswriter was sent off at 11-1 odds in the field of seven.

Jeter was making his second start for trainer Hugh McMahan, Jeter's third different trainer in five starts this year. McMahan took over from Kelly Breen and Jeter responded with an 11 1/4-length romp in a \$14,000 claimer at Laurel.

Saint Arthur, who had won a Finger Lakes stakes on a sloppy track in his last start, set the pace. **Cay to Pomeroy** and Sportswriter were second and third, respectively, through a quick :22.59 opening quarter. Both horses fell back as Saint Arthur sped to the half in :45.31. By then, Castellano had Jeter in full gear on the outside and he swept to the lead.

He wasn't home free as Sportswriter rallied boldly on the outside, but Castellano had him measured and Jeter held on for his fourth career victory in 13 dirt starts with two seconds, a pair of thirds and earnings of more than \$150,000. The son of Lawyer Ron out of Biagio's Beauty by Distorted Humor was bred by Frank Mancini.

CFC Stables' **One Red Cat**, the 2-5 favorite, was Castellano's fourth winner on Saturday, taking a \$28,000 New York-bred maiden \$20,000 claimer by a length and a quarter over 14-1 longshot **Sunrise Lover**. **Six Drivers** finished third at odds of 35-1.

Dominic Galluscio trains One Red Cat, a three-year-old gelding by One Nice Cat out of Ms. Emma by Claramount, who was bred by Wachtel Stable.

One Red Cat had two seconds from eight previous starts.

Kharafa Wins an Open Grass Stakes Too

Concluding a great weekend for New York-breds in open grass company at Aqueduct, Paul Braverman and Timothy Pinchø's four-year-old gelding **Kharafa** captured the \$100,000 Three Coins Up Stakes under Javier Castellano on Sunday afternoon.

Kharafa was one of five state-breds in the 10-horse field, and went off at 7-1 odds off a 10th in his last race, the Mohawk Stakes for New York-breds.

Castellano let Kharafa settle in mid-pack in the mile-and-a-sixteenth stakes as Plainview set a sensible pace: a half in :47.59 and three-quarters in 1:11.96.

Abilio, a New York-bred who had been second the whole way, went after Plainview around the far turn, but Plainview turned him away.

By then, Kharafa was making his move. He wore down Plainview to score by a length and a quarter in 1:42.96. Plainview was second and New York-bred **Lubash** third.

Kharafa, a son of Kitalpha out of Exquisite Cassie by King of Kings, was bred by High Meadow Farm and is trained by Tim Hills. The hard-hitting gelding now has six wins, five seconds and two thirds from 16 grass starts, with earnings of just under \$400,000.

In Sunday's finale, a one-mile \$65,000 New York-bred maiden special weight on the grass, Chester and Mary Broman's two-year-old homebred gelding **Mark My Way** won with authority. Adding blinkers in his second career start off a fast-finishing third as the 7-2 favorite in his debut for trainer Linda Rice and jockey Cornelio Velasquez, Mark My Way won by five lengths.

Mark My Way, a son of Noonmark out of Whichwaydidshego by Storm Cat, got away fourth and settled comfortably as **Maybrys Challenge** set a slow pace: a half in :48.85 and three-quarters in 1:14.76.

Maybrys Challenge took a two-length lead into the top of the stretch, but tired badly as Mark My Way rushed up to take control. He won easily in 1:39.77. **Giant Jo**, who had been second most of the way, finished second, a length and a quarter in front of **Pax in Terra** in third.

In Sunday's third race, a \$60,000 New York-bred maiden special weight at seven furlongs, No One Racing Stable and Xtreme Racing Stable's three-year-old gelding **Native Singer** went virtually wire-to-wire under Manuel Franco, beating 3-5 favorite **Escape to the Moon** by 4 ½ lengths in 1:23.71. Native Singer, who was previously trained by Dominic Galluscio, was making his second start for trainer Gary Gullo.

Native Singer went his first quarter in :22.84, the half in :46.10 and three-quarters in 1:10.82 to maintain a comfortable lead on **Bird Hunter** in second. Escape to the Moon, who was third behind those two heading into the far turn, made his move into second. He got within two lengths of Native Singer, who then opened up, winning easily.

A son of Songandaprayer out of Camargo by Brief Truce, Native Singer was bred by Akindale Farm. He had two seconds from five starts previously.

Cornelio Velasquez rallied Sunrise Stable and Golden Goose Enterprise's three-year-old New York-bred filly **Sus Annmaries Gold** on the inside and she just got up to edge Assyria, who was in the middle of the track, by a head in a one-mile \$31,000 conditional \$20,000 claimer in a final time of 1:38.32.

Ninth early, Sus Annmaries Gold rallied into second in mid-stretch and then just kept coming to get up in a tight photo. The daughter of Frost Giant out of Gold Ginny by Gold Legend, bred by Andrew Cohen and trained by Rudy Rodriguez, is now three-for-seven in her career.

In a six-furlong, \$28,000 New York-bred maiden \$20,000 claimer, Tobey Morton's three-year-old filly **Raven Rise** drew off to a 4 1/4-length victory under Irad Ortiz, Jr. in a final time of 1:13.71. Raven Rise is a daughter of Raven's Pass out of Top of the Class by Deputy Minister, was bred by Chester and Mary Broman and is trained by John Kimmel. She had one second and one third in nine prior starts.

Ground Force and Willy Beamin Finish 1-2 in Open Allowance Company

Making his first start off the claim, trainer David Jacobson and Drawing Away Stable's New York-bred **Ground Force** defeated the accomplished New York-bred **Willy Beamin** in a seven-furlong \$55,000 allowance race at Aqueduct Friday afternoon. They were the only state-breds in the field of eight.

Ground Force, a five-year-old gelding by Bowman's Band out of Liese by A.P. Jet, was claimed for \$35,000 when he finished third by a half-length as the 2-1 favorite in his previous start. With apprentice Emanuel Esquivel replacing Rajiv Maragh, Ground Force went off at odds of 7-2 on Friday.

Willy Beamin, who won the state-bred Mike Lee and Albany stakes and the Grade I King's Bishop as a three-year-old last year, went off at 4-1 odds under Jose Ortiz, making his first start since June 30 for new trainer Michelle Nevin. He had finished fifth twice and seventh in his previous three starts.

The 5-2 favorite was Tujoes, who'd finished eighth by 16 lengths as the 7-5 favorite in a \$60,000 Pennsylvania-bred stakes at Penn National in his last start on June 1. Jose Lezcano took the mount here.

Ground Force broke third and rushed up quickly to battle on the lead with Rein King and Haverhill early. Ground Force shook loose through a :46.03 half-mile. Willy Beamin had dropped back a bit on the far turn, then rallied strongly.

Ground Force hit six furlongs in 1:10.75 with a clear lead and held off Willy Beamin comfortably, getting the seven furlongs in 1:23.49.

Ground Force improved his dirt record to five wins, seven seconds and a pair of thirds in 31 starts, with earnings topping \$250,000.

In a thrilling finale Friday, Irad Ortiz, Jr. got Nick-Mike Stables' homebred three-year-old filly **Adriatic Dream** up in the final stride to nail **Palace Dreams**, ridden by Ortiz's brother Jose, by a nose in a one-mile, \$69,000 grass allowance for New York-breds. Adriatic Dream completed the distance in 1:39.13 on a course labeled "good." **Caribbean Beat**, ridden by Joel Rosario, was just another nose back in third, a length and a quarter clear of **Jitney**.

Adriatic Dream was sent off at 8-1 odds, Palace Dreams 9-1, Caribbean Beat was 5-1 and Jitney was 16-1 in the field of 12. **Elusive Rumour**, the 2-1 favorite, was never involved.

Double the Energy led through the first half-mile in :48.16 with **Atlantic's Smile** second. Palace Dreams got through on the rail to take the lead when the other two tired after three-quarters in 1:13.67.

Then things got crazy as Jitney, racing two-wide, Caribbean Beat three-wide and Adriatic Dream, who had broken from the 12 post and was four-wide, all roared into contention. The three-way win photo was too tight to call. It showed Adriatic Dream a nose in front of Palace Dreams with Caribbean Beat another nose back in third.

Trained by David Donk, Adriatic Dream is a daughter of Wild Desert out of Dinah's Pearls by Dynaformer. She improved her turf record to three wins, two seconds and two thirds in 14 starts. She has career earnings topping \$170,000.

Geezee Stable's three-year-old filly **Bileaps and Bounds** bounced to the lead on the rail and never looked back, taking a six-furlong \$40,000 New York-bred maiden \$35,000 claimer by 5 ¾ lengths in 1:11.89 as the 3-5 favorite. **Moonstone Beach**, the 2-1 second choice in the field of five, finished second, 16 ½ lengths clear of first-time starter **Sixwinesfriendly** in third.

Angel Arroyo rode the winner, a daughter of Disco Rico out of Bound On Bi by Bounding Basque, who was bred by Charles Goldberg, Phil Zodda and Edward Schichman, and is trained by John Hertler.

Bileaps and Bounds had finished second in her last start, by far the best performance of her six-race career, in her first start in a maiden claimer. Friday, she took another step forward.

She zipped out of the starting gate and immediately opened a two-length lead. She ran a quarter in :23.28 and a half in :47.48 as Moonstone Beach, who was second the entire way, closed within a length of her at the top of the stretch.

Then Bileaps and Bounds said, "Goodbye," and widened her advantage right to the wire.

Budding Star La Verdad Wins Her Third Straight in an Impressive Return

Making her first start since early May, Eklektikos Stable's homebred three-year-old filly **La Verdad** demolished eight opponents Thursday afternoon at Aqueduct, scoring her third consecutive victory by 8 3/4 lengths in a six-furlong \$64,000 New York-bred allowance.

Jockey Jose Ortiz never even moved his hands on this talented filly, trained by Linda Rice, who is now three-for-four lifetime.

The daughter of Yes It's True out of Noble Fire by Hook and Ladder finished a tiring fourth in her debut on March 15th as the 9-5 favorite. She hasn't lost since, winning her maiden wire-to-wire by 6 3/4 lengths at 2-1 odds and an allowance race by 5 3/4 lengths at odds of 8-5.

La Verdad went off at even money Thursday, and it seemed like an overlay. She broke like a shot, immediately taking the lead. She was three lengths in front after a quarter in :23.06 on a track labeled "good." She continued alone on the lead through a half in :46.82 and coasted home in 1:11.52. **Hot Stones**, the 2-1 second choice, rallied to be second. She was trying for her third victory in her last four starts, but couldn't get near La Verdad.

Rice did an exceptional job having her filly ready off a six-month layoff. La Verdad had three fast five-furlong works for return, including two bullets.

J and M Racing Stable's **Native Hero** took a giant step forward in his second career start, winning a six-furlong \$40,000 New York-bred maiden \$35,000 claimer for two-year-olds by 5 3/4 lengths under Joel Rosario in 1:12.50 on a track labeled "good."

In his debut in a maiden special weight, Native Hero showed a bit of early speed then tired badly, finishing sixth by 24 1/2 lengths at 34-1 odds. Dropped to maiden claimers by trainer Bobby Barbara, Native Hero went off at odds of 6-1 in a field of 10.

Rosario let the gelding by Andromeda's Hero out of Mac Lady by Abaginone, who was bred by Uncle Camie Breeding Farm, get away fifth as **Gone Country**, a 10-1 shot who had added blinkers, set the pace under Cornelio Velasquez.

Setting fractions of :22.64 and :46.64, Gone Country opened a clear lead over 39-1 first-time starter **Where's Elliot**.

Native Hero rushed up to engage the leader and then blew right on by, winning by himself comfortably. Gone Country held second, 4 1/2 lengths clear of the 4-5 favorite, **Bourbon Therapy**, who edged Where's Elliot by a head for third.

Bit Bustin Wears Down Alwaysinmycircle for Allowance Victory Wednesday

Edward McGettigan's diminutive homebred three-year-old filly **Bit Bustin** took a while to hit her best stride under Luis Saez in the stretch, then motored past front-running **Alwaysinmycircle**

at the sixteenth pole to take a one-mile \$67,000 New York-bred allowance by one length at Aqueduct Wednesday.

Bit Bustin and **Nonnie Connie** both went off at 2-1 odds in the field of seven. Alwaysinmycircle, a huge four-year-old gray filly on the rail, went off at odds of 4-1 under Jose Ortiz.

Nonnie Connie broke sharply from the three post with Javier Castellano aboard, but Alwaysinmycircle quickly overtook her on the inside to gain the lead through a :23.09 opening quarter. Nonnie Connie stalked in second, two lengths behind while three lengths clear of Bit Bustin in third, through a half in :46.05.

Alwaysinmycircle was challenged on the outside by Nonnie Connie on the far turn as Saez rallied Bit Bustin two lengths behind them.

In early stretch, Alwaysinmycircle shook loose from Nonnie Connie, only to be confronted by Bit Bustin, who seemed about half her size. Bit Bustin kept coming and finally edged clear, getting the mile in 1:37.31. Alwaysinmycircle saved second, three lengths clear of Nonnie Connie in third. **Guyana Princess** finished fourth.

Bit Bustin, a daughter of the undefeated Bustin Stones out of Iron Bit by Cormorant, is trained by Gary Contessa. She now has two wins, two seconds and three thirds from 13 dirt starts, with earnings of more than \$130,000.

Trinity Farms' homebred three-year-old gray gelding **Birchwood Road** made his first start for new trainer Pat Kelly a winning one, rallying eight-wide down the center of the turf course to take a one-mile \$65,000 New York-bred maiden special weight by three lengths under Alex Solis.

Previously trained by Angel Penna, Jr., Birchwood Road was coming off a badly-tiring 10th at 7-2 odds under Cornelio Velasquez. He was sent off at odds of 10-1 in a field reduced to 10 following the late scratches of **Hidden Warrior** and **Native Singer**.

Saltine Warrior, breaking from the rail at 9-2 odds beneath Luis Saez, took the early lead, shadowed by 10-1 **Chasintheblues**, 7-2 **Sunnysider** and **Downgoesfrazier**, the 2-1 favorite ridden by Joel Rosario.

Saltine Warrior maintained a clear one-length lead through a slow pace: a quarter in :25.42 and a half in :50.87. Around the far turn, 7-1 **Elroi** and Downgoesfrazier made aggressive wide moves. Shortly after hitting three-quarters in 1:16.09, Saltine Warrior was collared by those two and five other closers as they stacked up eight across the course.

The horse on the outside moving fastest of all was Birchwood Road, who quickly took control and drew off, completing the mile in 1:40.74. In a tight photo, Downgoesfrazier nosed out Sunnysider for second. Elroi was just half a length behind them in fourth. **Post Pattern**, who was sent off at 11-1, was moving strongly on the inside behind horses but had to check sharply and finished off the board.

Birchwood Road is a son of Pure Prize out of Isabel Away by Skip Away. He improved his grass record to one win, one second and one third in seven starts.