

New York-Breds at the Races: September 7, 8 & 11

By Bill Heller

Summerdale Edges Easy Living to Begin Her Career Wednesday at Belmont Park

Robert Hahn's homebred first-time starter **Summerdale** held off **Easy Living**, another firster who was the 5-2 favorite, by a half-length in a seven-furlong \$70,000 New York-bred maiden special weight on the grass for two-year-old fillies in a final time of 1:24.82.

Rajiv Maragh rode Summerdale, a daughter of More Than Ready out of Patagonia Tango by Storm Boot, trained by Jeremiah Englehart. Patagonia Tango was zero-for-11 in her racing career, but has now produced five winners from five foals.

Bettors weren't impressed, sending Summerdale off at 25-1 odds. Easy Living, who is trained by Christophe Clement and was ridden by Joe Bravo, was bet down to favoritism in the field of 11, which included seven two-year-olds making their first lifetime start.

Summerdale scrimmaged for the early lead with **Lehigh Alum**, **Maybry's Fortune** and **Lucky Nancy E.**, who broke in from the also-eligible list and left from the outside post.

Summerdale emerged from that pack of four with a clear lead in mid-stretch as Easy Living rallied strongly on the outside. Easy Living ran out of real estate and Summerdale held on for the victory.

Freshly Claimed Suilleabhain Wins Finale at 17-1 at Belmont Park Sunday Afternoon

Gerald Antonacci and Antonacci Racing's **Suilleabhain** made his first start off the claim a memorable one, getting up late under Jose Ortiz at 17-1 odds to edge front-running **Orino** by a neck in a mile-and-a-sixteenth \$77,000 New York-bred allowance grass race in Sunday afternoon's finale at Belmont Park.

Orino, sent off at odds of 3-1 under Luis Saez, seemed home free in deep stretch as he tried to finish a wire-to-wire win. But Suilleabhain emerged late from a pack of would-be closers to get up in the final yards in 1:43.51.

The Antonaccis claimed Suilleabhain for \$20,000 at Saratoga when he finished sixth at 13-1 under Ortiz's brother, Irad, Jr. New trainer Danny Gargan decided to move his new purchase up to state-bred allowance company and he got the job done, scoring his second grass victory in 10 starts with one third. The four-year-old gelding by Sunriver out of Crystal Lady by Stop the Music was bred by Rhapsody Farm and Sunriver Syndicate. On dirt, Suilleabhain has one win and two seconds from seven starts.

Earlier Sunday. Steeplechase Farm's homebred four-year-old gray filly **Sweet Maxine** rolled to a gate-to-wire two-length victory in a six-furlong \$72,000 New York-bred allowance for fillies and mares. She went off as the 2-1 favorite under jockey John Velazquez and won in a final time of 1:10.86. **Pennymine**, a 31-1 longshot, finished second.

Michael Gorham trains Sweet Maxine, a daughter of Value Plus out of Wild Berry by Wild Event, who improved her record to four wins, two seconds and a pair of thirds in 14 dirt starts, for earnings of more than \$115,000.

In a great stretch duel, Rajiv Maragh rallied Funky Munky Stables' three-year-old gelding **Ocala Jim** to a half-length victory over **Downgoesfrazier** in a mile-and-a-sixteenth \$72,000 New York-bred grass allowance Sunday. Ocala Jim, making his first start following a claim, went off at 18-1 odds from the 11 post, while Downgoesfrazier was sent off at odds of 5-1 from the 12 post.

Saltine Warrior, at 8-1 odds under Jose Ortiz, led most of the way before Downgoesfrazier, ridden by John Velazquez, passed him in deep stretch. But Downgoesfrazier couldn't hold off Ocala Jim, who had finished fifth in his only prior turf try. Returned to dirt in a state-bred maiden \$20,000 claimer, he was second by a nose when claimed. Gary Gullo took over as trainer and put the son of E Dubai out of Merion Miss by Halo, who was bred by Berkshire Stud, back on turf for his fourth career start.

In Sunday's opener, a \$45,000 New York-bred maiden \$20,000 claimer for two-year-olds at six furlongs, Selcuk Tamgac's first-time starter **Captain Toews** practically walked out of the starting gate but recovered to beat front-running **Executive Office**, another first-time starter, by three-quarters of a length in 1:12.03.

Jena Antonucci trains Captain Toews, a colt by Roaring Fever out of Try Your Best (TUR) by Royal Academy.

Smooth Bert Gamely Holds on for Allowance Win in Opening Day Opener at Belmont

Cleverly ridden on the front end by Mike Luzzi, Bona Venture Stable's three-year-old **Smooth Bert** held off **Go Get the Basil** by three-quarters of a length to win a one-mile \$79,000 New York-bred allowance, the opening race on Saturday opening day of Belmont Park's fall championship meet.

Sent off at 5-2 odds, Smooth Bert outsprinted **Cousin Michael** and Go Get the Basil to grab the lead in a :23.73 first quarter. Luzzi doled out Smooth Bert's speed through a half in :46.70 and three-quarters in 1:10.72 as Go Get the Basil, who added blinkers Saturday, rallied into second. **Zivo**, the even-money favorite in the field of eight, was all out in third, but couldn't keep up with the top pair.

Through the stretch, Go Get the Basil slowly cut into Smooth Bert's lead without getting to him, his third loss to Smooth Bert in his last three starts. Zivo was a distant third as Smooth Bert won in a final time of 1:34.81.

Leah Gyarmati trains Smooth Bert, a ridgling by Smooth Jazz Out of Little Bertie by Devil His Due, who was bred by Allen Hallett and Briggs & Cromartie Bloodstock. Smooth Bert now has three wins, three seconds and three thirds in 11 career starts, for earnings topping \$220,000.

J and M Racing Stables' three-year-old filly **Uncle Southern** sprang to the lead immediately from the outside post in a field of eight, then held off **Ave's Halo** by a neck to win a six-furlong \$72,000 turf allowance for New York-bred fillies and mares Saturday in a final time of 1:10.07.

Jose Ortiz rode Uncle Southern, the 5-2 second choice to Ave's Halo, who went off the 2-1 favorite under Cornelio Velasquez. Linda Rice trains both horses, who raced as an uncoupled entry.

Uncle Southern improved her grass record to two-for-three. The daughter of Uncle Camie out of Southern Statement by Dixie Brass was bred by Uncle Camie Breeding Farm.

In a seven-furlong \$72,000 New York-bred allowance on dirt Saturday, Francis Paolangelio's **Street Lord** delivered as the 6-5 favorite under Junior Alvarado, defeating 13-1 **Roaring Conquest** by two lengths in a final time of 1:24.53. Trainer Charlie Baker added blinkers for Street Lord's sixth career start and he responded well, settling in third and then overtaking front-running **Fiona's Hero** when asked.

The victory was Street Lord's second with one third. The three-year-old gelding by Street Hero out of Land Lady by Zamindar was bred by Patricia Staskowski Purdy.

Wellspring Stables' homebred three-year-old gelding **Hooked Forever** rallied from last, shooting up the inside late under Manuel Franco to win a six-furlong \$70,000 New York-bred maiden special weight on the grass Saturday by a half-length at 15-1 odds. Jim Ryerson trains the son of Hook and Ladder out of Stellar Maiden by Raffie's Majesty, who began his career zero-for-12 on dirt. Switched to grass in his previous start, he finished sixth in a field of nine.

William Parsons, Jr. and David Howe's homebred two-year-old gray filly **Blithely**, who had been second by a neck in her debut, stepped forward in a big way to win her second start by 11 ¼ lengths at 2-5 odds in a \$60,000 New York-bred maiden special weight for two-year-olds Saturday, completing the six furlongs in 1:11.01.