

Bill Heller's Week-end Wrap Oct. 24-26

Thanks to Jose Lezcano, Ocala Jim Wins in Open Company Sunday

By Bill Heller

Benefitting from an outstanding ride by Jose Lezcano, Funky Munky Stable's four-year-old New York-bred gelding **Ocala Jim** won a mile-and-a-sixteenth \$77,000 open grass allowance by a length and a half on Closing Day at Belmont Park Sunday afternoon. Departing from the outside post as the 5-2 second choice in the field of 10, Ocala Jim got through on the inside in mid-stretch to win in 1:44.60 over a yielding course.

Another New York-bred, 11-1 **Adirondack Dancer**, finished second, a length and a half clear of 7-1 Ironicus in third. Yet another state-bred, 5-1 **Powerful Instinct**, finished fourth, a neck behind Ironicus while a nose ahead of the 9-5 favorite, Energy Spirit in fifth.

David Donk trains Ocala Jim, a son of E Dubai out of Merion Miss by Halo who was bred by Berkshire Stud. Ocala Jim was purchased for \$40,000 at the 2012 March Ocala Breeders' Two-Year-Olds-in-Training Sale.

In his previous start, Ocala Jim finished fifth at 7-1 in the \$200,000 Mohawk Stakes for New York-breds on Showcase Day Oct. 18th. Bettors concluded that he was taking quite a drop in a bottom-level, open-company allowance race Sunday and made him the second choice despite the extreme outside post.

Lezcano got Ocala Jim away in third early as a pair of 10-1 shots, Cashmere Cat and New York-bred **Orino**, disputed the early lead in a :25.08 opening quarter. Cashmere Cat led Orino by a length after a half-mile in :50.46. Then 51-1 New York-bred longshot **Idle American** made a sudden move for the lead under Taylor Rice. Lezcano decided to keep Ocala Jim on the inside of Orino and was rewarded after three-quarters in 1:14.63 with a gaping hole on the inside when Idle American tired and Orino briefly led.

Other closes rallied on the outside, so when Ocala Jim passed Orino on the inside, he was suddenly in front. Ocala Jim finished strongly to win by two lengths. In doing so, he improved his grass record to five-for-nine with one second. He also has one second from five dirt starts for total earnings of nearly \$240,000.

Racing on the far outside, Patricia A. Generazio's home-bred gray filly **Image of Noon** nipped Hidden Brook Farm's roan filly **Neck of the Moon** on the inside by a desperate head in a seven-furlong \$65,000 New York-bred grass allowance/optional \$40,000 claimer.

Besides having rhyming names, both fillies are four-years-old and both went off at 7-2 in the field of 12. Johnny Velazquez rode Image of Noon, who won in 1:24.89 on a yielding turf course. Irad Ortiz Jr. was the pilot of Neck on the Moon.

Neither Image of Noon nor Neck of the Moon was close early as **Jet Majesty**, the 5-2 favorite under Joel Rosario, led through a half-mile in: 48.22. Jet Majesty was barely in front of 6-1 **Lady's Lunar Luck** two-

wide and 61-1 **Mighty Reward** after three-quarters of a mile in 1:12.85. Velazquez had Image of Noon moving up on the extreme outside.

But it was 45-1 **Princess Jenny**, who got through on the inside of horses under seven-pound apprentice Israel Rodriguez, who struck the lead in mid-stretch. Her lead didn't last long as Neck of the Moon got through on her inside and Image of Noon moved up on the far outside. Even further outside was 9-1 **Rumble Doll**.

In deep stretch, Image of Noon drew even with Neck of the Moon, and then nudged her head in front at the wire. Rumble Doll was just three-quarters of a length back in third and Princess Jenny salvaged fourth.

Jim Ryerson trains Image of Noon, a daughter of the late Disco Rico out of Momma's Image by Marquetry. Image of Noon is now three-for-14 with four seconds, two thirds and earnings of more than \$200,000.

JEH Racing Stable's four-year-old New York-bred filly **Lakeview Lady** gamely held off Blistering Strike by a nose to complete a gate-to-wire victory in a six-furlong \$34,000 conditional \$25,000 grass claimer in the final race on Closing Day at Belmont. Seven-pound apprentice jockey Andre Worrie rode Lakeview Lady, who won in 1:12.20 at 14-1. Blistering Strike was 7-1 in the field off 10, which included five state-breds.

Perfect Step, who went off at 2-1, finished third, two lengths behind Blistering Strike and 14-1 New York-bred **Mr Rico Is Valid** finished fourth.

John Hertler trains Lakeview Lady, a daughter of Flashy Bull out of Accrediting by Scarlet Ibis who was bred by Anthony DePaula.

Leaving from the three post, Lakeview Lady was quickly in front, chased by Blistering Strike and 6-1 William'sluckygray through a half-mile in :47.88.

Lakeview Lady couldn't shake off Blistering Strike, who continued to gain on her in the final 100 yards. But Lakeview Lady gamely held on to win. Lakeview Lady is now two-for-nine on grass with one third and earnings of more than \$50,000.

American Creed Wins Second Straight at 44-1 Saturday at Belmont

Sent off at stunning odds of 44-1 – despite having won his last start by a length and a half as the 9-5 favorite in open company – Robert Baker and William Mack's idle three-year-old colt **American Creed** broke first on the rail under Manuel Franco and never looked back, winning a six-furlong \$62,000 New York-bred allowance by 1 ¼ lengths in 1:11.42 at Belmont Park Saturday.

American Creed actually came into the race with four consecutive solid efforts. After finishing second by three-quarters of a length in a New York-bred maiden \$35,000 claimer as the 5-2 favorite, he won at that level by seven lengths at odds of 2-5. Then, in a pair of open starter allowance races, he finished

second by three-quarters of a length at 13-1 on March 28th and won by a length and a half at 9-5 on June 4th. He hadn't run since, but his last victory was off a near 10-week layoff.

Franco, who had ridden American Creed four times previously, sent him gunning for the lead and American Creed opened a length-and-a-half advantage in a :22.83 opening quarter. **Seal Team Four**, a 13-1 shot, and 44-1 **Lulu Rocks** chased in second and third, respectively. They moved up two and three-wide on the far turn to nearly draw even with American Creed. American Creed responded by spurting away to a three-length lead after a :46.52 half-mile.

Giantinthemoonlite, the 2-1 favorite from the outside post in the bulky field of 13, closed strongly despite a wide trip under Jose Lezcano, and rallied into second. But American Creed had plenty left to win comfortably. Giantinthemoonlite finished second, a length and a half in front of 13-1 **Thnxtomyuncle. Leroy Jr.**, who got through inside horses around the far turn, was another half-length back in fourth as the 5-2 second choice.

American Creed is a son of Quiet American out of Thin Disguise by Yes It's True, who was bred by Dr. William Wilmot and Dr. Joan Taylor and is trained by Tom Albertrani. He improved his dirt record to three-for-10 with two seconds, one third and earnings of just under \$115,000.

Tic Stable's home-bred, three-year-old gelding **Blue Pigeon**, a beaten favorite in his five previous starts, went off the 3-1 second choice Saturday and delivered a 1 ¾ length victory in a one-mile \$62,000 New York-bred grass allowance in 1:39.51 on a yielding course. That gave jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. his third winner and trainer Christophe Clement his second winner Saturday. **Northern Tripp**, 41-1 longshot ridden by Manuel Franco, rallied from 10th in mid-stretch to finish second, a length and a half in front of 7-1 **Changewilldoyagood. Iced Over** finished fourth in the field of 12 at 13-1.

Blue Pigeon is a son of Mizzen Mast out of Gdansk Queen by Langfuhr. He hadn't raced poorly in his five previous starts, he just didn't get the job done as the favorite, finishing fourth, second three straight times, and third.

He was far back early Saturday as 6-1 **Boston Strong** sped to the lead on the rail. **Oklahoma Den**, a 14-1 shot ridden by Ortiz's brother Jose, raced in second and 86-1 longshot **Papa Freud** was third through a quarter in :23.27 and a half-mile in :47.54. Papa Freud took a run at Boston Strong, but couldn't sustain in as Boston Strong opened a two-length advantage.

Boston Strong led through three-quarters in 1:13.29 before Changewilldoyagood rallied into second and Blue Pigeon began passing horses quickly. As Blue Pigeon took over the lead, Northern Tripp came flying down the center of the course. His rally was too late as Blue Pigeon won handily. Blue Pigeon now has two wins, three seconds and two thirds from nine starts with earnings of just over \$150,000.

Masie Stable's home-bred **Miss Matzoball** rolled to a 6 ½ length victory as the 2-1 favorite in the field of 12 in Saturday's finale, a seven-furlong \$60,000 New York-bred maiden grass race for two-year-old fillies in 1:26.94.

Javier Castellano supplied a flawless ride, settling Miss Matzoball into second on the flank of front-running **Not Now Joanie**, a first-time starter who went off at 16-1. Castellano asked Miss Matzoball for more around the far turn and she readily took the lead and opened a gaping lead. Another firster, 9-1 **Aussie Player**, finished second, 1 ¼ lengths clear of Not Now Joanie in third. **Forma's Joy** finished fourth at 5-1.

Roy Lerman trains Miss Matzoball, a daughter of Smoke Glacken out of Miss Matzo by Royal Academy. After finishing eighth and second with Lasix added in two dirt starts, Lerman tried Miss Matzoball on grass, and she finished third under Joe Bravo at this distance at 9-1 heading into Saturday's race. She has earned nearly \$55,000 in her four starts.

Showing how much a drop from maiden special weights to maiden claimers can mean, Waterford Stable's three-year-old gelding **Domer** dominated seven opponents under Irad Ortiz Jr. in his second career start, taking a seven furlong \$41,000 purse for New York-bred maiden \$40,000 claimers switched from turf to a "Good" main track by eight lengths. Trained by Christophe Clement, Domer scored gate-to-wire in 1:25.44 at 5-1.

In his debut in a maiden special weight a month earlier, he's finished a troubled 10th by 26 lengths at odds of 7-2.

On Saturday, he out-sprinted 33-1 **Speed Read** to take the early lead. He took the field to a quarter in :23.09 and a half-mile in :46.86 with a one-length lead. Then Ortiz let him loose and he quickly opened up a gaping lead on the way to an impressive victory. **A Marked Man**, the 6-5 favorite, rallied to finish second, a length and a half in front of 6-1 **Lyrical Miracle**. There was a gap of five lengths back to 7-2 Luv Dakota Style in fourth.

Domer is a son of Posse out of City Roar by Carson City who was bred by Tom Moore.

Friday's Finale

Sea Gulf Associates' first-time starter **Clockwork** stormed down the center of the track to win Friday's finale, a six-furlong \$60,000 New York-bred maiden race for two-year-olds, by a little more than a length, giving jockey Joe Bravo his third winner of the day. Timothy Hills trainers Clockwork, a colt by Noonmark out of Loves to Peak by Peaks and Valleys who was bred by Hidden Lake Farm and was purchased earlier this year for \$32,000.

Chase This Bandit, the 2-1 second-choice in the field of 11, finished second, but fell after crossing the finish line. **Hundred Percent**, the 9-5 favorite who was adding blinkers, was 2 ½ lengths behind Chase This Bandit in third and a length in front of 21-1 firster **Beyond the Green**.

Private Thrill, a firster who went off at 7-1, took the early lead, chased by Hundred Percent two-wide and Chase This Bandit three-wide through a quarter in :23.13 and a half-mile in :47.11. Bravo sent Clockwork up four-wide on the far turn to join the fray.

In mid-stretch, those four were stacked across the track. Chase This Bandit and Clockwork spurted away from the other two with Clockwork out-finishing Chase This Bandit to win in 1:12.25.

