

New York-Breds at the Races: July 25 to 31

By Bill Heller

Uncle Southern Causes Delay, Then Runs Down La Bella Valeria on a Wet Track

J and M Racing Stable's four-year-old filly **Uncle Southern**, who was about 20 minutes late arriving to the paddock, ran down front-running **La Bella Valeria** to win a 5 ½-furlong \$78,000 New York-bred allowance/optional \$40,000 claimer by three lengths in a race washed off the grass and switched to the muddy main track Thursday at Saratoga. Luis Saez rode Uncle Southern, who won in a final time of 1:04.93.

A quick-hitting storm after Thursday's steeplechase opener caused all five grass races to be switched to the main track. That caused seven of the 12 fillies in the third race to scratch.

Bettors made the entry of La Bella Valeria and **Your Time Is Up** the 3-2 favorite. **Lumineuse** was sent off at 9-5 odds and both Uncle Southern and **Image of Noon** went off at 3-1.

John Velazquez gunned La Bella Valeria to the lead and Saez parked Uncle Southern in second. They remained 1-2 through a quarter in :22.32 and a half-mile in :45.66. At one point, La Bella Valeria led by three lengths, but Uncle Southern cut into that margin quickly in the stretch.

Uncle Southern collared La Bella Valeria inside the sixteenth pole and won going away. La Bella Valeria held second, 13 lengths clear of Lumineuse in third.

Linda Rice trains Uncle Southern, a daughter of Uncle Camie out of Southern Statement by Dixie Brass who was bred by Uncle Camie Breeding Farm. She improved her dirt record to one-for-six with one second. On grass, she has two wins and a second from five starts, good for combined earnings of nearly \$160,000.

In a \$73,000 New York-bred maiden special weight for two-year-olds Thursday, Gary Barber's colt **Bullheaded Boy** made his first start a winning one, gamely edging **Persuasive Devil**, the only horse in the field of eight who had already raced, by a long neck. Bullheaded Boy, who went off as the 3-5 favorite, completed the five furlongs in :58.67 on a track that had been downgraded from muddy to sloppy. John Velazquez rode the winner for trainer Todd Pletcher.

Bullheaded Boy was sold for \$9,500 as a weanling, then for \$40,000 as a yearling and finally for \$115,000 as a two-year-old in June after working a quarter-mile in under 22 seconds. He is a son of Bullsbay out of Sister Dyer by Pulpit who was bred by Zeke Kobak and Danny Bramer.

He was odds-on in his debut, but he had to work diligently to get the job done. Breaking from the rail under Manuel Franco, 8-1 **Scorecard Harry** and 8-1 **Watergate**, who broke from the outside eight post, hooked up dueling for the lead. Velazquez moved Bullheaded Boy into third on their outside through a :22.54 first quarter.

Saratoga Heater, the 5-1 second choice, advanced into fourth but tired, while 6-1 Persuasive Devil moved up boldly on the inside under Rajiv Maragh through a half-mile in :46.20.

Persuasive Devil spurred to a short lead, but Bullheaded Boy wasn't done and went after him on the outside. Bullheaded Boy kept coming and got by Persuasive Devil maybe 50 yards from the wire. Persuasive Devil was second, Watergate third and Scorecard Harry fourth.

Willet Wows Them at 1-2 Wednesday

Trainer/co-owner Jimmy Iselin's ultra-classy six-year-old mare **Willet** unleashed a powerful rally on the way to taking a six-furlong \$85,000 New York-bred allowance by four lengths under Joel Rosario as the 1-2 favorite at Saratoga Wednesday afternoon. Making just her second start this year, Willet won in a final time of 1:09.48. **Risky Rachel** finished second at 7-1 odds, three lengths clear of 4-1 **Galiana** in third in the field of just six.

Willet is a daughter of Jump Start out of Katina K by Distinctive Pro who was bred by Michael Martin. She is co-owned by Charlotte Assoulin and Eli Gindi.

Last year at Saratoga, Willet was nosed in the Lottsa Talc Stakes then won the Union Avenue Stakes by a length and three-quarters.

Willet made her 2014 debut on July 3rd at Belmont, when she was a strong second by 1 3/4 lengths to multiple stakes winner La Verdad. That impressed bettors Wednesday, who tattooed her at the windows.

Though she broke alertly from the outside post 6 as opposed to 9-1 **Here's Zealicious**, who jumped up at the start 6 Willet fell back early as 7-1 **Atlantic's Smile** raced to the quarter in :22.56. Risky Rachel chased in second, followed by Galiana and Here's Zealicious. Willet was in fifth before suddenly commencing her move on the inside as the horses headed into the far turn.

Willet gained quickly and was switched to the outside to take on Risky Rachel, who had taken over the lead through a :45.53 half-mile. In a matter of seconds, Willet flew by and was long gone, winning by herself.

She improved her outstanding record to eight-for-17 with six seconds, one third and earnings of more than \$560,000.

Lianna Stables' **Nonna Jo** chased front-running **Myfourchix** on the front end, confronted her in mid-stretch and wore her down late to win a five-furlong \$73,000 New York-bred maiden special weight for two-year-old fillies by a length and a half in a final time of :58.45. Nonna Jo was sent off at 3-1 odds from the two post under Jose Ortiz, and Myfourchix was the 5-2 favorite under Junior Alvarado on the rail. **Yourcreditgood**, who finished third in her debut, was the only filly in the field of eight not making her first career start.

Myfourchix and Nonna Jo broke sharply, and Myfourchix took over the lead with Nonna Jo a little more than a length behind through a :22.15 opening quarter. Myfourchix increased her lead to two lengths by running a fast half-mile in :45.40 before Nonna Jo closed the gap.

Through the lane, Nonna Jo proved best. Myfourchix finished second, well clear of 8-1 **A Perfect Freud** in third and 6-1 **First Charmer** in fourth.

Neal Terracciano trains Nonna Jo, a daughter of Majestic Warrior out of Spenny by Meniffee who was bred by Vincent Vivolo, Jr.

Beautifully ridden by Luis Saez, Tina Marie Bond and Jay Portnoy's **Brandini**, who is trained by Tina's husband Jim, opened a big lead in mid-stretch then held off **Confessa** to win a mile-and-an-eighth \$45,000 New York-bred maiden \$40,000 claimer by a length and a quarter in a final time of 1:55.65. Brandini was sent off at odds of 7-2 and Confessa went off at 5-1 in the field of nine.

Brandini, who had finished second in four of her seven starts, made her second appearance in a maiden claimer a winning one. The four-year-old filly by E Dubai out of Mystical Lady by Jim Bond's former star Behrens was bred by Song Hill Thoroughbreds.

Breaking from the five post, Brandini settled in mid-pack as a three-way duel developed on the front end between 18-1 **Miz Sweet**, 2-1 favorite **Kelly's Prize** and 4-1 **On a Snowy Evening**. They battled three-across-the-track through a demanding opening quarter of :23.83 as Saez bided his time in fourth.

Miz Sweet bailed out after a half in :48.33 and, heading for the far turn, Saez sent up Brandini three-wide around Kelly's Prize and On a Snowy Evening. Brandini swept to the lead through three-quarters in 1:14.79 and opened up by four lengths on the field.

Apprentice Taylor Rice rallied Confessa up the inside and she closed strongly for second. There was a huge break of 8 ½ lengths back to 9-2 **Bella Fachi** in third. Kelly's Prize finished fourth.

Brandini improved her record to one-for-eight with four seconds, and has now earned more than \$80,000.

Good Luck Gus Jumps Tracks Again and Still Wins

In a promising debut at Belmont Park on July 3rd, Michael Dubb, Bethlehem Stables and The Elkstone Group's two-year-old New York-bred **Good Luck Gus** broke last in a field of nine and rallied to finished second, beaten just a length and three-quarters at 6-1 odds, despite jumping over tire tracks. Entered for the main track only Monday at Saratoga, Good Luck Gus got back to action when rain washed off all four turf races. He rallied powerfully late under Irad Ortiz, Jr., who rode him in his debut, and won by 5 ½ lengths at 3-5 odds despite jumping over tire tracks again.

Leaving from the outside post in a field of six, Good Luck Gus broke well before Ortiz settled him in third behind front-running 9-2 shot **Jamaalaree**, a filly racing against colts, and 33-1 longshot **Essence At Noon**. **Banana Thief**, a first-time starter and the 5-2 second choice under Shaun Bridgmohan, was fourth.

Jamaalaree buzzed to the quarter in :22.81 under John Velazquez, opening a four-length lead on Essence At Noon with Good Luck Gus another four lengths back in third. Heading into the far turn, Jamaalaree began to tire as Good Luck Gus rallied outside and Banana Thief gained on the inside through a :47.17 half-mile.

Banana Thief moved past the front-runner on the inside while Good Luck Gus surged on the outside. Good Luck Gus spurted past Banana Thief and, after again jumping tire tracks, won easily in a final time of 1:05.78. Banana Thief was six lengths clear of 10-1 **Amazing Anne** in third, and Jamaalaree salvaged fourth.

Good Luck Gus is a son of Lookin At Lucky out of Tacticmove by Deputy Minister who was bred by Fred Hertrich III and is trained by Rudy Rodriguez. Purchased for \$97,000 at the Saratoga Yearling Sale last August, he has already earned \$57,000.

Lucky Nancy E. Frolics in the Mud at Saratoga Sunday Afternoon

Jockey Manuel Franco put Patricia Generazio's homebred, three-year-old filly **Lucky Nancy E.**, on the lead and she romped on a muddy track at Saratoga Sunday afternoon, winning a mile-and-an-eighth \$75,000 New York-bred allowance switched from turf to dirt by more than six lengths at 8-1 odds in a final time of 1:54.46. **Milkyourway**, who had finished second in three consecutive turf races, ran second again at 7-2 odds, finishing well clear of 12-1 **Chrysolite**, who nosed 4-1 **Very Accomplished** for third.

Touching My Toes, the 2-1 favorite in the field of eight, was fractious in the gate, taken out of the gate and reloaded. She started and was never involved in the race.

Jim Ryerson trains Lucky Nancy E., a daughter of Disco Rico out of Beyond the Limit by Unbridled. She improved her dirt record to two-for-seven with one second and a third. She also has a win, a second and a third from eight turf starts for combined earnings of more than \$115,000.

Palace Dreams Wins Her Return in Rich Allowance Company Saturday

Making her first start since November, Patricia Moseley's homebred four-year-old filly **Palace Dreams** won a mile-and-a-sixteenth \$78,000 New York-bred grass allowance/optional \$40,000 claimer under Jose Lezcano wire-to-wire by a length over **Distorted Beauty** in a final time of 1:41.00 Saturday at Saratoga. Distorted Beauty was the 5-2 favorite and Palace Dreams was sent off at 5-1 odds in the field reduced to nine when **Run to Mama** acted up in the starting gate and was a late scratch.

Trainer Dave Duggan did a great job preparing Palace Dreams for her four-year-old debut. Last year at Saratoga, she won an allowance race by 4 ¼ lengths wire-to-wire then led late before tiring to finish third in a \$100,000 division of the New York Stallion Stakes Series.

Palace Dreams came out running and quickly took control of the race. **Elmra**, an 18-1 shot, chased in second and 4-1 **Lady's Lunar Luck** settled in third. They remained 1-2-3 the entire length of the backstretch before Lady's Lunar Luck rallied into second, drawing within a length of the frontrunner.

But Palace Dreams had plenty left and increased her lead to 3 ½ lengths in mid-stretch. She got a bit leg-weary late, but held off Distorted Beauty. **Caribbean Beat** was another four lengths back in third and **Miz Owell** was fourth.

Palace Dreams improved her record to three-for-seven with two seconds, one third and earnings now topping \$160,000.

Parting Glass Racing's three-year-old colt **Sanctify**, who had been off since finishing a strong second with Lasix added in a shorter turf debut on May 31 at Belmont Park, charged through the stretch to win a mile-and-a-sixteenth \$75,000 New York-bred grass allowance by a length and a half Saturday in a final time of 1:40.85. Manuel Franco rode son of Pulpit out of Averymerrymoment by Distorted Humor, who was bred by Mia Gallo and Mary Kopley and is trained by Bill Mott.

Though he was listed at 7-2 on the morning line, Sanctify went off at 5-1 odds on the rail in a field reduced to nine when **Gridley Here** was a late scratch. **Blue Pigeon**, ridden out of the two post by Irad Ortiz, Jr., was the 9-5 favorite in his first start since finishing third by a neck in a \$100,000 New York-bred stakes last year.

Ortiz's brother Jose got 5-1 **Macagone** to the front while 45-1 longshot **The Spotted Wonder** settled in second. An even bigger longshot, 61-1 **Balderdash**, was third with Blue Pigeon fourth and Sanctify fifth through a moderate pace: a quarter in :23.74 and a half-mile in :47.35. Macagone opened a four-length lead by adding a third quarter in under :24, reaching three-quarters in 1:10.72.

Blue Pigeon began to make up ground on the inside, but Macagone still led by 2 ½ lengths in mid-stretch before he began to tire. **Hidden Vow**, the 9-2 second choice, moved up inside of Blue Pigeon while Sanctify unleashed a powerful rally on the outside. **Ocala Jim**, sent off at 8-1 odds, also gained quickly on the outside. Sanctify proved best, while Ocala Jim edged Hidden Vow by three-quarters of a length for second and Blue Pigeon finished another 2 ¼ lengths back in fourth.

Sanctify is now one-for-two on grass with one second. He also has a second and two thirds from four dirt starts and has earned more than \$105,000 in his career.

Rallying from dead last in a field of 10 Saturday, Stacy Purchase's four-year-old gelding **Elroi** collared **Charity Reins** in deep stretch to win a \$75,000 New York-bred grass allowance by a neck under Chris DeCarlo in a final time of 1:42.72. But it wasn't official until stewards decided not to change the order of finish after an inquiry and a jockey's objection against the winner by third-place finisher **Bluegrass Flash's** jockey Joel Rosario.

Elroi went off at 7-1 odds, Charity Reigns was sent off at 21-1 and Bluegrass Flash was 4-1. Peter Pugh trains Elroi, a gelding by Leroidesanimaux (BRZ) out of Wandering Ways by Polish Numbers who was bred by Fast Break Farm and Stonewall Stallions.

Speedy **Ballybrit**, a 9-1 shot ridden by apprentice Andre Worrie, took the lead from the two post, chased by 5-1 **Poliziotto** in second and Charity Reigns in third.

Poliziotto made a move for the lead around the far turn, drawing within a half-length of Ballybrit before Ballybrit blew the turn. That created an enormous hole on the inside, which Joe Bravo used to rally Charity Reigns to a clear lead in mid-stretch. Charity Reigns weakened late as Elroi stormed past to win. Bluegrass Flash was third, a length and a quarter behind Charity Reigns. Poliziotto nosed **Tapitation**, the 2-1 favorite, for fourth.

Elroi improved his record to two-for-10 with four seconds, three thirds and earnings of more than \$110,000.

In a powerful display of speed, Helen Alexander and Helen Grovesøfour-year-old gelding **Vecino** sprinted to the lead from the rail under Luis Saez, set a fast, pressured pace and simply drew away in the stretch, winning a \$73,000 New York-bred maiden special weight on the grass Saturday by four lengths. Sent off as the slight 5-2 favorite, Vecino covered the 5 ½ furlongs in 1:02.01. **Poppy's Watching**, who also went off at 5-2 under Manuel Franco, nosed 9-2 **Tom's Vision** for second, and 6-1 **Sir Maurice** finished fourth in the field of nine.

Michael Matz trains Vecino, a son of Street Boss out of Agarita by Danzig who was bred by Alexander Groves Matz and Darley Stable.

Vecino was making just his fourth career start, all on grass. He finished seventh in a two-year-old New York-bred maiden special weight at Belmont as a two-year-old in October 2012, then didn't race again until New Year's Day this year at Pimlico. In an open maiden special weight, he made the lead, fought hard and tired to finish sixth, but was beaten just a length and a half. Matz dropped him into a New York-bred maiden \$40,000 claimer at Belmont and he rallied four-wide to finish fourth by a length and three-quarters. That race impressed Matz enough to move him back up to a New York-bred maiden special weight Saturday.

Vecino broke sharply and beat **Junger** to the early lead, a half-length in front, through a torrid first quarter in :21.67. Junger kept the pressure on, but Vecino maintained that lead through a half-mile in a testing :44.60. Junger tired, but Vecino didn't. He opened up on the field to win by himself.

Noble Cornerstone Edges The Big Deluxe in Friday Thriller

My Meadowview Farm's three-year-old homebred gelding **Noble Cornerstone** lunged on the inside past the dead game front-running **The Big Deluxe** to win a \$78,000 New York-bred allowance race by a neck at Saratoga Friday afternoon. He completed the 6 ½ furlongs in 1:15.63 to notch his second consecutive victory. Jose Ortiz rode Noble Cornerstone, who went off a

slight 9-5 favorite in the field of seven. The Big Deluxe went off at 7-1 odds on the rail under Luis Saez.

The Big Deluxe didn't break first, but rushed up the rail to get past 5-1 **Dan's Gold** and make the front. Noble Cornerstone settled in third from the two post.

The Big Deluxe zipped to the quarter in :21.82 as Dan's Gold remained second. **Horatio**, the 2-1 second choice beneath Rajiv Maragh, moved up on the outside while Ortiz kept Noble Cornerstone on the rail. When Dan's Gold tired, Noble Cornerstone was able to gain ground inside as The Big Deluxe reached the half in a sizzling :44.49.

But in the stretch, The Big Deluxe went wide, leaving an enormous opening on the rail, an opportunity Ortiz was delighted to exploit.

In mid-stretch, The Big Deluxe still had maybe a three-quarter-length lead on Noble Cornerstone, who continued to fight on along the rail.

In the final 100 yards, Noble Cornerstone wore down The Big Deluxe to win. **Leilani's Ticket** finished a distant third at 11-1 odds and Horatio finished fourth.

Thomas Morley trains Noble Cornerstone, a son of Noble Causeway out of Besige by Polish Numbers, who improved his record to three-for-seven with a pair of seconds and earnings now totaling just under \$185,000.

James Riccio's amazing nine-year-old New York-bred gelding **Writingonthewall**, who won three consecutive grass races in a single Saratoga meet in his younger days, improved his dirt record at Saratoga to two-for-two Friday, gamely edging Regulus by a nose in a seven-furlong \$58,000 starter allowance. Jose Ortiz rode Writingonthewall, one of three state-breds in the field of eight, who went off at 8-1 odds and won in a final time of 1:22.86. Another New York-bred, front-running **Readthebyline**, finished a game third at 10-1 odds, just three-quarters of a length behind Regulus despite setting a wicked pace.

Michelle Nevin, who claimed Writingonthewall for Riccio for \$20,000 on May 22nd when he won by 7 ¼ lengths at 2-5 odds on dirt, is Writingonthewall's current trainer. Writingonthewall finished eighth on grass in his first start for his latest connections before returning to dirt Friday.

In his remarkable career, he is now 11-for-30 on dirt with six seconds and four thirds. On grass, he is five-for-22 with two seconds and a pair of thirds. His combined earnings are more than \$625,000.

Readthebyline, ridden aggressively by John Velazquez, made the early lead with Regulus chasing in second and Writingonthewall and 5-2 NY-bred **Bug Juice** in third and fourth, respectively.

Readthebyline sped to the quarter in :22.46 and hit the half in :45.01 with a two-length lead. Luis Saez sent up Regulus on the outside to challenge for the lead while Ortiz had a clear run on the rail with Writingonthewall. Readthebyline fought both challengers until the final 50 yards, with Writingonthewall nosing Regulus for the money.

