

Pye on Racing

2019 Ohio Fair Column

By Thom Pye

Pickaway Promised, Pickaway Delivered

Circleville, Ohio – After over a year-long extensive multi-million dollar renovation of the Pickaway County Fairgrounds, a modern, attractive, and fan-welcoming showcase opened on Saturday, June 15th.

The resurfaced half-mile oval was in perfect shape as well the 2019 edition of the Ohio Colt Racing Association's two-and three-year old trotters and pacers zipped around the lightning fast track.

In the very first race of the day Steve and Peggy Carter's Mr D's Rock, a two-year-old colt by Pet Rock out of Cotton Candy with driver Dustin Bothman, christened the circle with a mile in 1:59.2h by 8 open lengths over Dancin Waylon L (Hank Le Van) and Nvrpoptdaplugs and driver Ken Holliday.

It was the first time in front of a crowd for the slick-gaited youngster, co-owned with Steven Price, and he did not



disappoint the fans as he went off the favorite and picked up his 50% share of the \$3,331 OCRA purse.

It was also the quickest mile of the program as well despite some other impressive performances by two-and three-year-old colts such as D' Big Promise (Josh Sutton), Doubleyellowline (Dan Noble), and Will E Finn (Jeremy Smith) as they stepped off fast last quarters to each prevail by a head.

Good sharp driving and exciting Fair racing at its best.

The Judges managed to get all 14 contests in before the rain came in earnest after 5 p.m.



Pickaway Picks Up the Pace... and Trot

When Sunday's, June 16th 10-race card was washed out due to heavy overnight rains, the Pickaway County Fair hosted 22 contests with a split program starting at 12 noon on Monday, June 17th.

And the resilient surface was worked and screened and kept in tip top shape by a determined track crew.

The results were some purty good trottin' miles for the two and three-year-old OCRA fillies and colts.

The Steve Carter-trained Homer Hall (a 3-year-old gelding by Broadway Hall) and Ryan Holton clipped a mile in 2:03h as he trotted off by two over Secret Jet (Derek Wattiker) and Roger Hughes' Forgotten Treasure.

Ken Holiday tool Black Magic Racing LLC's So Romantic (a 3-year-old filly by My MVP) to a 7 length win in 2:03.4h.

The 3-year-old Dejambro gelding Bridge Works, owned by

Don Tiger and trained by Sophie Desroches, trotted a mile in 2:02h with Chris Page as they held Bully Boy (Dan Ater) at bay by $\frac{3}{4}$'s of a length.

DeWayne Minor got the call aboard Pasko Vucinaj's 3-year-old filly by Tom Camp Triple Seven Seven and trotted her \$4,886 OCRA division to a win in 2:07h.

Opening up by nine in the \$3,533 OCRA 2-year-old filly 2nd division was Dream Change (by Winning Fireworks) as Ken Holliday and the Pamela Young-trainee glided home in 2:08.4h for owner Big Dog Racing of Thomville, Ohio.

The 3rd OCRA two-year-old filly division saw trainer Jeff Smith steer Walter Fister's Hometown Honey (by Manofmanymissions) to a 3-length win in 2:07.4h as Team L (Hank Le Van) and Susie D (Bryan Weaver) gave chase.

Chris Page piloted his 3rd win on the delayed day with Mary Dawson's 10-year-old Bettorseeitmyway pacing to a 5-length triumph.

And for the 53rd time in his career, the Le Van Stables' 9-year-old iron horse Hanky L, zinged into the Winners Circle as Harrison Le Van played "see you later" to Ufpfortydevensgirl (Matt Aman) as Playing Favorites (Jessica Smith) was 3rd in 2:00.4h.

After a two hour break between programs the evening's card came out on the track under darkening skies. It never deterred Penpaperpaige (by Pet Rock) with Tyler Smith behind her as the two-year-old filly pacer wowed the fans with a mile in 2:02.1h and posted a final panel of :28.3 in her very first appearance before a crowd. It was the first of Tyler Smith's driving triple on the evening as he took Officially My Way and Dirty Ruby to Victory Lane as well.

Equally as impressive was T Degengold (by Pet Rock) and Jeff Nisonger as she took the 2nd OCRA division in a quick 2:02.2h by stepping a final quarter of :28.3 to hold off Bigrisk Cruiser (by Bigrisk) and Dan Noble by ¾'s of a length. Nisonger would grab a Hat Trick too navigating LMN Bred Stables' Mae Be Magic (2-year-old filly by Dragon Again) and Thomas Radominski's Nob Hill High 2-year-old lass Shehitthehighnote in 2:05.2h despite a rain-soaked hour long pause.

The Spring Haven Farm Ladies Driving series squared off in the tenth and Jazmin Arnold and Why Don't U Stay kept newcomer Elizabeth Murphy at her wheel with Emily and Colton Hay's Royal Delta in 2:05 over the off-track.

This was the Ladies Drive Against Hunger to benefit The Haven House of Pickaway County and we'd like to thank the Circleville horsemen for their generosity.

The 2019 finale was the Steamin Demon Pace which produced the fastest mile of the Fair when the Gregory Forcum-trained 8-year-old gelding Blooming Genius, driven by Shawn Barker II, grabbed the winner's share of the \$8,500 purse by way of a rain-soaked time of 1:59h as Ashlee's Four Star (Matt Amann) and Princeofrocknroll (Scott Cisco) rounded out the top three. It was a good mile especially on a surface now rated "sloppy" with a two second allowance.

The evening's Racing With The Stars fan contest showed just how family tradition is kept alive at Circleville as we chatted with the people who entered: Nell and Bob Stider who have been in Circleville for 35 years – "newcomers" – and have been married for 61 years. When offered congratulations Bob quipped "don't make it sound like it was easy" as Nell just raised her eyebrows with a smile.

Circleville native Tom Perkins, our eventual RWTS winner, has been coming to the Fairgrounds "since I was ten and

I'm 73," he smiled proudly. His uncle was Jim Arledge Sr (1934-2012) who was remembered this day with a memorial race "and," Perkins added, "Jim Jr's cousin and Dustin's 2nd cousin."

Bowlin' Bob Friesnel, who had an eye on the clock as he "had to get to work by five." "You're golden," he was assured as he lined up under a wet tent for the photo op and Renee Vititoe, who kept scooting up to the windows to bet, was naturally chided "Don't walk away, Renee."

And we got to talk with 95-year-old Mr. Shirley Stant who had raced horses with his family at Circleville for years from the 1950's onward. He was there for all three programs and remembers his favorite horses with ease.

Because you never forget the good ones.

It's like a Family Tradition.



After a massive and extensive remodeling of the Pickaway County Fairgrounds the OCRA pacers went behind the Mike Woebkenberg starting gate, on time, at Circleville, Ohio on Saturday June 15.



The OCRA two-year-old pacing fillies are off to a fine start and it would be T Degengold, Johnny Kearns' daughter of Pet Rock-Goldies Cam, taking her 2nd lifetime victory in as many starts for trainer/driver Jeff Nisonger. This one was a jaw dropper as she win in 2:02.2h with a final panel of :28.3.