

ODDS-ON 'RUTH,' 'BELLA' PREVAIL IN THURSDAY'S
167G NYSS CIPRIANI TROT

BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Thursday, September 14, 2017—Yonkers Raceway Thursday night (Sept. 14th) hosted the \$167,500 New York Sire Stakes Mike Cipriani Trot for 3-year-old fillies.

A pair of equally-purses, \$83,750 divisions comprised the event, named for the Raceway's longtime award-winning photographer...and two high-class lasses did not disappoint.

The opening event saw Hudson Trot winner Celebrity Ruth (Jason Bartlett, \$2.10) return the legal minimum to win after having the legal minimum amount of angst.

From post position No. 5, she worked around Mamora Bay (Sam Schillaci) before leading at every weigh station (:29.2, :59, 1:26.4, 1:55.3). The margin, 2¼ lengths entering the lane, was a wrapped-up length at the wire. Mamora Bay was a never-threatened second, four lengths in front of Maewegonow (Charlie Norris).

For Celebrity Ruth, a daughter of 2012 Yonkers Trot winner Archangel owned White Birch Farm and trained by Trond Smedshammer, it was her seventh win in 13 seasonal/career tries (3-for-3 here). The exacta (two wagering choices) paid (local season-low) \$3.50, with the triple returning \$9.40.

The second and final Cipriani division had to wait out a power issue (first-turn lights). When the wattage returned, Barn Bella (Jeff Gregory, \$2.40) saved her best for last.

Unhurried from post No. 4 (in one notch after a scratch), Barn Bella watched as polester Ostrich Blue Chip (Scott Zeron) led through intervals of :29, :59.1 and 1:27.2. This Ostrich was not about to put her head in the sand, opening 2½ lengths off the final turn.

Meanwhile 'Bella,' the defending sire stakes champion, was out briefly before setting fourth. She then moved with purpose from the half, eventually ducking into a vacant pocket before taking her shot at the leader.

Barn Bella was relentless, finally wearing down her foe by a neck in 1:56.2. Chapter Too (Brian Sears) was third, beaten 6¾ lengths.

For Barn Bella, a Conway Hall miss co-owned by (trainer) Steve & Nancy Pratt and Purple Haze Stables, it was her 11th win in 14 '17 tries (17-for-22 lifetime). The exacta (two wagering choices) paid \$5.30, with the triple cancelled due to the limited number of starts (five, after that defection).

Neither the unexpected delay nor the fact his date was coming in off two breaks (Batavia and Tioga) was a concern to Gregory.

“She just didn’t handle Batavia,;” he said. “The turns there are just too flat for her. I didn’t drive her at Tioga the start before, so I can’t speak to that. Tonight, she seemed very relaxed and I just wasn’t going to race her off her feet early.

“I knew she had enough get-up, but the other filly (Ostrich Blue Chip) made us work for it.”

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(FFI...Frank Drucker, Yonkers Raceway Publicity Director, 914-968-4200)