

TOP FLIGHT ANGEL WINS 63RD YONKERS TROT
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Saturday, September 2, 2017—...and the second tier shall be first.

Top Flight Angel (Brian Sears, \$16.20) overcame eight rivals (nine, if you include Mother Nature) Saturday night (Sept. 2nd), winning the \$500,000 Yonkers Trot.

The 63rd edition of Yonkers Raceway's premier trotting event—second jewel of the Trotting Triple Crown---saw nine 3-year-olds (eight colts and one gelding) go postward for the first time since 2000.

When the field left beneath the start of what became a steady rain, it was millionaire Devious Man (Andy Miller) pushing off from the pole as the even-money favorite. Di Oggi (Montrell Teague) hard outside of him, while the pair of last week's elimination winners, Guardian Angel AS (Jason Bartlett) and Yes Mickey (Ake Svanstedt), were also put in play.

Guardian Angel AS, however, did not see the completion of the first turn, jumping it off. Di Oggi, too, did the dance of the damned, leaving 'Mickey' pocketed and a gingerly-handled (from post position No. 9) Top Flight Angel away third.

Devious Man had few issues through intervals of :28.4, 58.4 and 1:27.3, with the front three separating themselves from those that remained trotting.

Top Flight Angel moved from third just past the three-quarters, relegating Yes Mickey to the passing lane, which, given the weather, may not have been the best route. Devious Man owned a length lead into the lane, but was about to get unwanted company from both flanks.

Top Flight Angel and Yes Mickey went past, with the former whipping the latter (lone gelding and lone \$30,000 supplement) by a nose in 1:56.3. Devious Man faded to third, beaten a length-and-a-half, with 105-1 Southwind Cobra (Marcus Johansson) and Southwind Hydro (Matt Kakaley) settling for the remainder.

Money Macintosh (Jordan Stratton), Another Chapter (Dan Dube), Di Oggi and Guardian Angel AS completed the order.

For fourth choice Top Flight Angel, a homebred/statebred son of 2012 Trot winner Archangel owned by Legacy Standardbreds and trained by Julie Miller (who had three in here), it was his third win in a dozen seasonal starts. The exacta paid \$79.50, with the triple returning \$287.50.

"I thought he raced well last week (closing third in elim)," Sears said. "I just wanted to nurse him out of there after I saw a couple of them 'stand on their heads' early."

“I sat as long as I could, and when I moved alongside Andy (Miller, with Devious Man), he started working on his horse and mine just picked it up. I’m glad we able to get the job done.”

Twenty-five minutes earlier, Sears won the half-million-dollar Messenger Stakes with Downbytheseaside.

“It’s nice to have a Yonkers Trot winner,” Julie Miler said. “Andy and I work very hard and we’re very happy.”

A carrot at the end of the stick is an invitation to the \$1 million Yonkers International Trot, set for Saturday afternoon, Oct. 14th.

“We’re definitely going to consider it,” Mrs. Miller said.

As for Guardian Angel AS, “I wanted to leave with him,” Bartlett said. “I saw a couple inside of me and Yes Mickey also leaving and I thought I could get into a three-hole. I don’t know why he broke. It’s happened before at Monticello (New York Sire Stakes) and it’s very disappointed.

“I really thought I had a good chance. It’s a race I really want to win (now boardless in seven career drives).”

-30-

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