

DR. J HANOVER, ROCKIN' RON DOUBLE UP
IN SECOND ROUND OF LEVY SERIES
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Saturday, March 24, 2018—Yonkers Raceway Saturday night (March 24th) offered the second round of the George Morton Levy Memorial Pacing Series.

A quartet of \$50,000 events again brought together many of the marquee Free-For-Allers. The result was three, down-the-road winners, including two series repeaters.

The encore performers were faves Dr. J Hanover (Brett Miller, \$4.10) and Rockin' Ron (Yannick Gingras, \$2.30) in the bookend divisions.

Dr. J Hanover won the draw for the second consecutive start and put his rivals to sleep for the second consecutive start. A cheapy (:27.4, :57.3) half served him well after another first-leg winner, Always at My Place (George Brennan), offered a hard, first-up challenge. That one was disposed after a 27-second third quarter (1:24.3), while Dr. J Hanover swelled up to two lengths entering the lane.

The final margin was 2½ lengths a season's-best (purse start) 1:52.4. Chumlee A (Larry Stalbaum) lost touch in the pocket, crossed the line second but was set down to fourth for cutting some cones. That placed Keystone Velocity (Dan Dube) second and Bit of a Legend N (Jordan Stratton) third.

“He surprised me,” Miller said. “After that third quarter, he just opened up.”

For Dr. J Hanover, a 5-year-old Somebeachsomewhere gelding co-owned by Brad Grant, Robert Leblanc, Steven Wienick & Irwin Samelman and trained by Tony Alagna, it was his second win in three seasonal starts. The exacta paid \$21, with the triple returning \$91.50.

Rockin' Ron, from post position No. 2, wanted no part of an early pocket. He took over from pole-sitting Luciano N (Brent Holland), then—with another pedestrian early portion—held that rival at bay (:26.3, :57, 1:24.4, 1:53.2).

The margin was three-quarters of a length. Mach it So (Tim Tetrick), after last week's win, turned in a solid, two-move effort for third from behind the eight-ball.

For Rockin' Ron, a 6-year-old Real Desire co-owned (as Burke Racing) by (trainer) Burke, Weaver Brusceci, RTC and J&T Silva Stables, it was his second win in four seasonal starts. The exacta paid \$4.60, with the triple returning \$19.20.

Saturday night's third down-the-pike series winner was another wagering choice in Evenin' of Pleasure (Joe Bongiorno, \$3.20). From post No. 3, he took no prisoners (:26.2, :56.1, 1:24, 1:53.1). A wide-closing Bettor Memories (Kyle Husted) was second, with Another Daily Copy (Jason Bartlett) third and an out-the-mile Orillia Joe (Stratton) fourth.

For Evenin' of Pleasure, a 8-year-old son of Dragon Again owned by Gestion J Y Blais and trained by Jennifer Bongiorno, it was her first win in a pair of seasonal starts. The exacta paid \$31.40, triple returned \$173 and the superfecta paid \$558.

The night's only off-the-pace series winner, a second-over Western Fame (Mark MacDonald, \$11), was also the only non-winning second-round favorite.

From post No. 5, he parlayed a perfect tow behind Somewhere in L A (Bartlett), to whip that one by a length in 1:53.1. Missile J (Tetrick), the 9-10 choice, did not retake from polester Caviart Luca (Brennan) after that one led through intervals of :27, 57.1 and 1:24.3.

For this race, the soft fractions caved, effectively burying Missile J. He did end up a non-threatening third, beaten two lengths.

For third choice Western Fame, a 5-year-old homebred son of Western Ideal owned by Brittany Farms and trained by Jimmy Takter, he's now 1-for-3 this season. The exacta paid \$40.20, the triple returned \$85.50 and the superfecta (Franco Rayner [Bongiorno]) paid \$275.50.

Saturday's \$40,000 Open Handicap Trot was won by Mostinterestingman (Bartlett, \$6) in 1:56.2

The 12-race handle was \$1,007,866, the Raceway's first 'non-French' seven-figure wagering card of the season.

Monday night (March 26th) offers the \$62,000 final of the Petticoat Pacing Series for 3- and 4-year-old fillies and mares.

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(photos-Mike Lizzi-accompany)

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