

CAN 'LARRY BIRD' BECOME A STATEBRED CHAMPION...IN NEW YORK?
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Friday, September 21, 2018—For years in Boston Celtic green, Larry Bird taunted, tortured and tormented New York. Saturday night (Sept. 22nd), his 'nicknamesake' tries to take it.

Hickfromfrenchlick drew post position No. 6 in 2-year-old pacing colt and gelding event during Yonkers Raceway's \$1.8 million New York Night of Champions. The race, sponsored by the state's Agriculture and Horse Breeding Development Fund, is the fourth of a dozen-race card and the third of eight consecutively-contested \$225,000 sire stakes finales.

Hickfromfrenchlick is no stranger to the spotlight, having won the \$100,000 Lawrence B. Sheppard Pace here in mid-July (1:55.4). The son of So Surreal returned to Westchester in late August, picking off divisional leader—and tonight's pole-sitter—Melodie's Major in a New York Sire Stakes event (1:53.3).

It was off to Vernon Downs after that and a down-the-road, life-best 1:51.3 statebred romp. For the season, he's won four of six tries (\$120,541), though he did not fire in his final NYSS try (Batavia).

"Stuck behind some bad horses who had no reason to pull," Ray Schnittker said.

Fortunately for Hickfromfrenchlick's co-owner/trainer and sometime chauffeur, those sort of nights have been few and far between. Schnittker drove that night (as he did at Vernon), but is AWOL (Meadows) Saturday, so he enlists Tim Tetrick this time around.

"Training down, he was good, so I'm not surprised," Schnittker said of the \$47,000 (Goshen, NY) lad who's also co-owned by Nolamaura Racing and Thomas Spatorico. "He had a :27 and change last quarter (in a Landmark event) at Goshen, so I knew he was ready.

"I trained his mother (My Girl's a Star) and she had a record of (1):52 and 2 as a 2-year-old.

(Author's aside...My Girl's a Star was a solid New York Sire Stakes lass, winning 7-of-11 and more than \$139,000 as a frosh [2010] despite having the misfortune of being in the same age group as one See You at Peelers).

"I told Mark (MacDonald) he was going to win the Sheppard, so just don't screw it up, which he didn't."

Any such guarantees for Tetrick before he and Hickfromfrenchlick Saturday night?

"No one can outleave Melodie's Major if they wanted to, but I think (Hickfromfrenchlick) can get around some of the others, and if he's close, he wouldn't stun me."

Regardless of Saturday's outcome, Hickfromfrenchlick is finished for the season.

“He’s done everything we’ve asked,” Schnittker said.

Post time for the New York Night of Champions fun and frolic is the usual 6:50 PM.

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(photo-Katy Gazzini-accompanies)

(FFI...Frank Drucker, Yonkers Raceway Publicity Director, 914-968-4200) **CAN ‘LARRY BIRD’ BECOME A STATEBRED CHAMPION...IN NEW YORK?**

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