

MARION MARAUDER TRIES TO GO 'FOURTH'
FOR CANADA IN INTERNATIONAL TROT

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

YONKERS, NY, Thursday, October 4, 2018—The fact that Marion Marauder found himself invited to participate in the 40th International Trot was unrelated to any new North American trade agreement.

He's just pretty good. Three million dollars takes care of a lot of tariffs on any side of the border.

The million-dollar Yonkers International Trot @ Empire City Casino goes Saturday afternoon, Oct. 13th (first post 1 PM), and you couldn't legally assemble a field of 10 world-class trotters without including Marion Marauder.

"He's made that money for a reason," driver Scott Zeron said.

Actually, any number of reasons.

"He's always resilient, has never thrown out a bad race, does his job, can take air and knows where the finish line is."

The Great White North won three of the first dozen Internationals (Tie Silk-1962, mares Armbro Flight-1966 and Fresh Yankee-1970), but it's been a long time waiting for a fourth. "I wasn't even born when those happened," the 29-year-old Zeron said (Some of us were. Just sayin').

(Author's aside...The late addition of Will Take Charge gives Canada two legitimate chances in this International)

Marion Marauder, a 5-year-old son of Muscle Hill, is Canada-driven, Canada co-owned (Marion Wellwood & grandson Devin Keeling) and Canada co-trained (Devin's parents, Mike Keeling & Paula Wellwood, with Paula listed as stateside trainer).

"I have a great rapport with Paula and Mike," Zeron said. "They're laid back and love their animals."

Despite bleeding all that Canadian, Marion Marauder had not once been in the penalty box.

"I've never had to use him hard, go down to the half in 54 seconds or some crazy number," Zeron "His schedule (the International is just Marion Marauder's 11th race of the season) has always been planned to give him time off between starts," Zeron said. "He purposely skipped (the) Dayton (Trotting Derby) and didn't go to Lexington because Paula and Mike were hoping Yonkers would invite him.

In fact, Marion Marauder has made his \$3,080,380 in only 48 career starts (20 wins, 15 seconds, 5 thirds), with six of those wins and four seconds this season (\$544,680). His Westchester resume reads three wins—including the 2016 Yonkers Trot en route to the Trotting Triple Crown—and a pair of seconds in five starts.

He's come away with a pay envelope in 45 of those 48 starts.

Marion Marauder enters the International 22 days between races, the last a come-from-behind win in Hoosier's \$200,000 Caesars Trotting Classic.

A year ago, Marion Marauder was runner-up in the International, some 5½ lengths behind stakes- and world-record-setting Twister Bi's 2:22.1 frolic for the mile-and-a-quarter distance.

"He (Marion Marauder) was very good, but the winner was amazing," Zeron said.

Last season's race did provide some teachable moments for Zeron.

"I've driven a lot of the added-distance overnight races here (Yonkers), but that race was completely different," Zeron said. "In the overnights, guys want to find the pylons as quickly as possible to save ground. In the International, with the best trotters coming over, those drivers aren't looking for any shortcuts. They don't mind sitting outside. They won't leave anything to chance as far as getting locked in.

"Honestly, if Marion Marauder wins (the International), it wouldn't mean as much to me personally as it would for people to say he's the best trotter in the world.

Not bad for the one originally named Marion Monopoly, who sold for \$37,000 at Lexington (2014) and, according to Zeron, "was so mentally not there when he started out, he'd get to the gate and try to bite the horse next to him.

"Then, he figured it out.

"The horse deserves all the credit," Zeron said. "Me, Mike and Paula, we're just along for the ride."

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(photo-Mike Lizzi-accompanies)

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