

Great Finishes Highlight Virginia Breeder's Three Year Old Championship Races Sunday (Sept. 24) at Shenandoah Downs



Lil Cool Fly'n Fun (#4) beat Welcometotheparty (#2) to win the \$43,600 Virginia Breeder's 3 Year Old Colt & Gelding Pace Sunday (Sept. 24) at Shenandoah Downs. Photo by Dee Leftwich.

Fans that stayed for a trio of Virginia Breeder's Three Year Old Championship races were rewarded with thrilling finishes Sunday at Shenandoah Downs. The second weekend of racing in Woodstock wrapped up with ten pari-mutuel races followed by three non-betting Breeder's events on another clear and picturesque day in the Shenandoah Valley.

Sunday's \$44,000 Filly Pace saw The Third Day and Camystery battle side by side through the stretch and at the wire, The Third Day was best by a head. The Third Straight filly set early fractions of :29 2/5, 1:01.0 and 1:30 4/5 before tackling her main challenger, who sat a patient second throughout the four horse race. Driver/trainer James Stiltner II directed his charge to a 2:00 3/5 finish for owner Herman Hagerman of North Tazewell, Virginia. The victor, out of Klondike Lady by Cambest, was the most experienced of any with 15 starts heading into the Breeder's finale. Camystery, who won a conditioned race in 1:59.0 opening weekend, was the runner-up. Gone South finished third and Ellie'sbelleringer was fourth.

Yagot A Winner gained revenge on his stablemate Dusty Fool in the \$41,200 Colt & Gelding Trot. In this rematch of trainer Carlo Pliseno's pair, Yagot A Winner trotted patiently behind front stepping Dusty Fool through three fractions, came out in mid stretch and edged the early leader by a head in 2:07 3/5. The duo, both owned by Jane Dunavant of Kenbridge, Virginia, were the sole competitors last year when Dusty Fool took freshman championship honors. They were the only two to compete as sophomores Sunday as well. Heading into the showdown, Yagot A Winner had earned \$60,867 while Dusty Fool collected \$49,425. The '17 winner is out of the CR Commando mare, Yagot Me.

Six colt & gelding pacers battled in a \$43,600 divisional title race where two year old Breeder's champ Royal Red looked tough early on. The Dream Away gelding had won five straight Fair races in addition to a conditioned race in 1:56 2/5 opening weekend. Trainer Jimmy Viars' pacer led through three fractions, tripping the timer respectively in :27 4/5, :57 3/5 and 1:28 2/5. In the final turn, Leon Harris's Lil Cool Fly'n Fun and Stacy McLenaghan's Welcometothe party came on strong and surged into a match race of sorts from that point. The former, driven by Justin Vincent, was a neck better at the finish in 1:58 4/5. The winner, who was third in last year's freshman clash, is by Cool Flying Fun out of River Isle by Laag. The runner-up, who finished a close second to Royal Red in the September 2nd prep race, was driven by Wayne Long. Royal Red was third followed by Hot Card Shark, Tulsi and Southern Jamie.

The \$44,600 Filly Trotting Championship was held during the pari-mutuel card Sunday and Miss Pick Up, who did not compete as a two year old, won convincingly in wire-to-wire fashion. The Master Glide filly disposed of five other foes, including two year old champ Lizzybeth Taylor, in 2:02 4/5. The winner is owned by Anne McDonald of Alexandria, Virginia, and was trained and driven by Mark Gray. Miss Pick Up had four starts entering the race and most recently, finished fourth in the \$175,000 Kentucky Sire Stakes Final at The Red Mile. Renfrow Hauser's Lizzybeth Taylor finished second, 5 1/2 lengths behind the winner, and Betsy Brown's Irish Blessings took third. Gretal Garbo was fourth followed by Boog and Guacamolie Gammy.

The third race weekend at Shenandoah Downs is slated for this Saturday and Sunday, September 30th and October 1st, at 1 PM. parking and admission are free. The annual "Wine & trotter" festival is on Saturday where fans can purchase a ticket to sample wines from area Vineyards. Attendees are encouraged to wear their most elegant or unique headwear and enter the WINC Fancy Hat Contest. On Sunday, the first 200 fans will receive a commemorative Shenandoah Downs baseball cap. The season continues through October 15th. More details are at shenandoahdowns.com and virginiahorseracing.com.