

By DAVE LITFIN

Saratoga

AUGUST 2, 2004

MONDAY

Chalkplayers had their best day so far, as favorites won five of the nine races and upped their record to 17 for 57 (29.8 percent) at the conclusion of Week 1.

Apprentice Jose Lezcano rode both ends of the \$23.80 early double, wiring the opener with **SPARKLING BLUE** (\$3) and getting **SUNSHINE JOANNE** (2nd, \$14.60) up to nail 7-5 choice **TAKE ME THERE**.

BALLETO (3rd, \$8) broke slowest but recovered to reach contention approaching the stretch and came through on the rail to overtake 3-5 **PARAGON QUEEN** in an allowance sprint for 2-year-old fillies.

Divisions of a juvenile dash for New York-bred maiden fillies were won by **MEGASCAPE** (4th, \$3.90) in 1:05.94 and **KIKI B** (6th, \$6.70) in 1:06.72.

Megascape was the second 2-year-old debut winner at the meet for trainer Steve Asmussen. Kiki B, bred and owned by New York sports radio personality Mike Francesa, quickly sprinted clear from her inside post and held off a late rally from **TIFFANY TOUCH**.

SEDUCER (8th, \$15.40) overcame some early traffic and a slow pace to kick clear in deep stretch of the Lake George Stakes for 3-year-old fillies on turf. **VENTURI**, an Irish import from Bobby Frankel, saved ground throughout and edged **FORTUNATE DAMSEL** for second.

AUGUST 4, 2004

WEDNESDAY

BRINTON BRIDGE (1st, \$23.60)

was up to nip **MAJOR HERO** in the steeplechase opener, and after that things were dominated by "The Big Three" jockeys, as John Velazquez, Edgar Prado, and Jerry Bailey split up seven of the eight flat races and turned Saratoga into their personal playground.

Velazquez won with hard-knocking older claimer **GAIL'S DRIVE** (2nd, \$5.10) and came right back aboard the Todd Pletcher-trained **UPSCALED** (3rd, \$13.60), who outgamed odds-on **STORIED CAT**, as those two put nine lengths on the rest of the field. Third-place finisher **TANI MARU** galloped out strongly past the wire.

Prado slipped through a tight opening on the hedge with **MOOREBELLA** (4th, \$5.60) in a daring display and then swept the late double with **CHOWDER'S FIRST** (8th, \$15) and **CONFIDENT CAT** (9th, \$7.90).

Chowder's First necked 1-2 chalk **WEST VIRGINIA** after a stretch-long drive in the \$250,000 New York Stallion Series - Prado's third stakes win at the meet. **ABSOLUTELY JOE** raced with two aluminum pads on.

Bailey won with back-to-back favorites **DAYDREAMING** (5th, \$3.90) and **PLENTY** (6th, \$5.10).

AUGUST 5, 2004

THURSDAY

A formful card to the extreme - five winning favorites and two exactas linking the second choice over the chalk. The lone winner to return a double-digit mutuel was **BUZZY'S GOLD** (6th, \$21.80), who stalked a slow-fractioned duel between **SAVOY SPECIAL** and **FORMAL ATTIRE** and edged Formal Attire after a long drive.

SO SWEET A CAT (8th, \$8.50) was

the lone stakes winner going into the filly division of the \$250,000 New York Stallion Stakes and remained the field's only stakes winner after chewing up favored pacesetter **SOUTH WING** and leaving her in the dust.

Speed held exceptionally well in both mile races on the inner turf course, beginning with **L'OISEAU D'ARGENT** (7th, \$6.90), who dropped out of a pace-setting effort in the Bowling Green Handicap to wire a four-other-than allowance, lowering the course record to 1:33.42. **HE'S CRAFTY**, 3 for 3 on Spa turf going in, chased from gate to wire and remained clear of **FAST DECISION**, who was third at every call.

FOG BUSTER (9th, \$6), who finished a distant third in his second lifetime start last month, was bet long and strong for the switch to the inner turf and quickly sprinted clear to wire maidens.

AUGUST 6, 2004

FRIDAY

Jerry Bailey rode **SEASIDE SALUTE** (1st, \$6) and **TAITTINGER ROSE** (3rd, \$6.30) to catch and pass Angel Cordero Jr. as the all-time winningest jockey at Saratoga. Taittinger Rose, who is now 3 for 3 on dirt with Bailey and winless from 10 starts otherwise, was Bailey's 641st Spa winner, eclipsing Cordero's previous record of 640.

In the fourth race, **ENGLISH CHANNEL** (\$8.20) became the second James Scaturchio-owned juvenile winner in two days for Pletcher and Velazquez. In a trip very similar to stablemate **READY'S GAL** (\$5.50), who was also a first-time starter Thursday, English Channel broke slowly, raced far back early, and

unleashed a strong late run to win going away.

ASPEN GAL (7th, \$5) appreciated a class drop from graded stakes on dirt to an allowance for non-winners on turf and posted an on-the-pace triumph after outgaming **PATH OF THUNDER** through a long drive.

MY TRUSTY CAT (8th, \$30.20) helped ensure a two-day \$207,000 pick six carryover, coming from dead last with Pat Day to nail **EBONY BREEZE** (and Bailey) in the final stride of the Honorable Miss Handicap.

AUGUST 7, 2004

SATURDAY

Whitney Day got off on the wrong foot, quite literally, when even-money favorite **COLONIAL BAY** (1st) lunged and was in the hands of an assistant starter the instant the gate opened. Colonial Bay broke 10 lengths behind the field, ran on to finish eighth and was declared a non-starter, triggering \$997,548 in refunds.

ROLLED STOCKING (\$7.90) inherited the role of favorite, saved ground all the way and prevailed by a neck over **FORGET THE JUDGE** to notch his fourth straight win.

FUNK (2nd, \$9.50), somehow dispatched as the third choice in a field of eight first-time starters, outdueled **THUNDER RIDGE** to draw off.

PHILANTHROPIST (7th, \$7.80) trailed in ninth as a fast pace developed in a two-turn allowance route, circled four wide rallying into the stretch, and outgamed **CAPITAL SPENDING** after a prolonged drive.

BWANA CHARLIE (8th, \$9.40), last of seven after breaking slowly, angled off the inside turning for home and caught **POMEROY** in the final strides of the

Amsterdam.

ROSES IN MAY (9th, \$16.80) tracked **YESSIRGENERAL-SIR**'s insane 1:08.92 six-furlong split in the Whitney, locked horns inside **PERFECT DRIFT** in mid-stretch and outgamed that rival under Edgar Prado.

AUGUST 8, 2004

SUNDAY

Pletcher's fourth weekend winner was **PURGE** (9th, \$7.60), who caught pacesetter **MEDALLIST** and drew off to a decisive score in the \$500,000 Jim Dandy, boosting Pletcher's meet-lead to 14-5 over Steve Asmussen and Bobby Frankel.

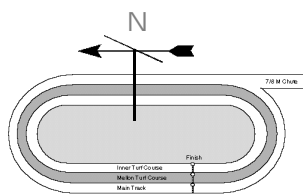
John Velazquez rode Purge and upped his meet leading total to 19 wins, nearly on pace with his record-setting total of 61 last year. In closest pursuit, tied with 13, are Prado and Jerry Bailey.

Bailey rode a three-bagger, winning with first-time turfer **PADDY'S DAISY** (4th, \$6.50) for Pletcher and the Bobby Frankel-trained pair of **CROCKER ROAD** (3rd, \$10.60) and **GREY TRAFFIC** (7th, \$3.90).

Crocker Road was returning from a 364-day layoff, and the second-time starter was along late from the outside to catch **LIQUOR CABINET** in a maiden special weight sprint.

Grey Traffic, back sprinting after two failed route attempts on turf and dirt, was much the best in an entry-level allowance.

JULIA SINGING BEAR (10th, \$34.40) was the second longshot winner to ship in from Calder for Eddie Plesa Jr., along with last Sunday's tenth-race bomber Cheetah Speed (\$27.60).



TRACK TRENDS

DATE	CONDITION	FORECAST	WIND/TEMPERATURE	COMMENT
MON. AUG. 2	Fast/Good (Rails @ 0 ft. Mellon; rails @ 9 ft. Inner)	Clear	Light variable wind, 80°	No apparent trends.
WED. AUG. 4	Fast/Firm (Rails @ 0 ft. Mellon; rails @ 9 ft. Inner)	Clear	Light headwind backstretch, 77°	No apparent trends.
THURS. AUG. 5	Fast/Firm (Rails @ 0 ft. Mellon; rails @ 9 ft. Inner)	Cloudy	Negligible wind, 71°	Races on the inner turf won wire to wire.
FRI. AUG. 6	Fast/Wet-firm (Rails @ 0 ft. Mellon; rails @ 9 ft. Inner)	Cloudy-showery	Light & variable wind, 67°	Intermittent light rain from the fourth on.
SAT. AUG. 7	Fast/Firm (Rails @ 0 ft. Mellon; rails @ 9 ft. Inner)	Cloudy-showery	Variable wind, 66°	Intermittent rain, heaviest after the sixth.
SUN. AUG. 8	Fast/Firm (Rails @ 0 ft. Mellon; rails @ 9 ft. Inner)	Cloudy	Light crosswind backstretch, 69°	No apparent trends.