

By DAVE LITFIN

# Saratoga

AUGUST 16, 2004

MONDAY

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With the meet at the halfway point after Monday's card, trainer Todd Pletcher and jockey John Velazquez were on pace to eclipse their respective record totals of 35 and 61 winners set at last year's meet.

Pletcher and Velazquez teamed with **KWONDO** (4th, \$4.80), a 2-year-old firster by Grindstone, who dueled **WOODLANDER** into submission and drew off through the stretch. With three weeks down and three to go, Pletcher has a 19-7 lead over Bobby Frankel and Mark Shuman, and Velazquez has a 32-18 lead over Jerry Bailey and Edgar Prado.

Kwondo and **ALL HAIL STORMY** (7th, \$11.20) were on-the-pace winners, the latter winning for the second time at the meet, but outside closers won the day's four other dirt races, including last-to-first scores by **SHOWMESOMELOVE** (3rd, \$7.60) and **DELTA SEA** (5th, \$24.80).

Delta Sea began a run of five straight winners at double-digit mutuels to close out a pick six that carried over \$47,181 into Wednesday.

After **SPANISH SPUR** (8th, \$18.80) weaved through traffic in midstretch to win a three-turn turf marathon going away, the heavens opened up, and the ninth race was run in a downpour. **SCHEMER** (9th, \$38.60) handled the soft going well, and drove clear in a field of New York-bred allowance fillies to give trainer John Hertler his fourth meet win.

AUGUST 18, 2004

WEDNESDAY

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It was a formful card in which the highest mutuel was \$10.

There was value to be found in the exotic pools nevertheless, particularly in the pick four, where the sequence of **BAILERO** (6th, \$8.70), **SWINGING** (7th, \$7.80), **SABELLINA** (8th, \$9.40), and **ANAMERICANBID** (9th, \$7.40) returned \$1,185 for \$2, slightly more than twice the win parlay.

The 3-year-old Sabellina took on older fillies and mares in the Yaddo, just 10 days after winning a second-level allowance, and nosed co-favored On the Bus after a long drive. Sabellina is now 4 for 4 on grass for trainer Joe Aquilino.

Pace-pressers dominated on the main track, winning all seven races, including first-time starters **ALFONSINA** (2nd, \$10) and **LADY H.** (4th, \$4.70) in divisions of a maiden dash for 2-year-old fillies.

The Nick Zito-trained Alfonsina, a daughter of Grand Slam, stalked even-money chalk **CAPE OF GOOD HOPE** and took over in midstretch.

Lady H., yet another debut winner from Pletcher, rushed up to contest the pace with **FIVE STAR FUND**, and widened impressively in the lane. **DIXIE BOOM**, off slowly after being bumped and pinched back, outfinished **SHOP AGAIN** for second.

Swinging nipped **SILENT OATH** in an entry-level allowance route. Pacesetter **WHAT A GAME** was fractious in the post parade and at the gate.

AUGUST 19, 2004

THURSDAY

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**MILES AHEAD** (1st, \$9.20) became the second 'chase winner in as many days for trainer Jonathan Sheppard, who won Wednesday's jump-up with Cherokeeinthehills (\$9.30). Both were hand-ridden through the stretch to score by widening margins. Remarkably, the winner was claimed by Richard Dutrow Jr. for \$35,000,

so plan on seeing him entered back in a flat race.

Divisions of a New York-bred turf mile were switched to the main track at seven furlongs. **GRAND KIDS** (4th, \$22.20) won the slower heat as the only double-digit mutuel on the card, and was the primary cause of a \$50K pick-six carryover in a sequence in which the next five winners were favored or co-favored. **SHADY DEVIL** (6th, \$5.90) went seven-fifths faster to win the second heat.

**CHANGING WORLD** (7th, \$6) had not been out since winning an ungraded stakes at Calder in December, but was bet strongly for her 4-year-old debut in an optional claimer with three-other-than allowance conditions on the Mellon turf. A bit rank pressing **MA FEMME** into the backstretch, Changing World opened a clear lead leaving the far turn and staved off a late run from **ALCHEMIST**.

**CLEVER ELECTRICIAN** (8th, \$5.30), shuffled back from the inside post most recently at Belmont, drew the outside for the restricted John Morrissey Stakes and caught **UNCLE CAMIE** in deep stretch after chasing that rival throughout. **TRAFFIC CHIEF**, making his first start since October, had a useful sprint tune-up at a distance short of his best.

AUGUST 20, 2004

FRIDAY

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**SENSE OF STYLE** (8th, \$3.90) was a very professional debut winner here Aug. 1, and the \$800,000 daughter of Thunder Gulch showed it was no fluke, taking the Spinaway Stakes, which was downgraded to Grade 2 status this year. Clearly the East's top 2-year-old filly at the moment, Sense of Style stalked the leaders four wide, wrested the lead from **PORTSEA** and **MISS MATCHED** at the eighth pole and drew off.

Ramon Dominguez has been testing the waters for a possible relocation to the New York circuit, and it's simply a matter of time – not much time – before he is universally regarded as one of the game's most talented riders. Dominguez delivered a flawless performance aboard **DEVINE WIND** (1st, \$4.70), who was smoothly eased out for a clear lane in midstretch to win a \$35,000 turf route. The half-length margin of victory was well measured, and Devine Wind won easily under confident handling.

The ever-dangerous Tom Voss saddled a pair of grass winners, **DEFROCKED** (6th, \$12.40) and **GRYFFINDOR** (9th, \$6.70).

AUGUST 21, 2004

SATURDAY

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Chalk up another one for The Giant Killer, after the Allen Jerkens-trained **SOCIETY SELECTION** (10th, \$13.40) became the first filly to sweep the Test and Alabama Stakes since November Snow back in 1992. November Snow, to recall, was also trained by Jerkens.

Society Selection, 2 for 2 since going on Lasix, raced wide on both turns, lugged in briefly in the upper stretch, then finished determinedly on the outside to wear down **STELLAR JAYNE** and 3-5 favorite **ASHADO** in deep stretch. Stellar Jayne was four wide on both turns and outgamed a three-wide Ashado, who lost for the first time ever on a wet track.

**AFLEET ALEX** (9th, \$3.40) won the Hopeful as expected, but had to work extremely hard to catch dead-game Calder shipper **DEVILS DISCIPLE** in the final strides. Afleet Alex, now 4 for 4, raced erratically through midstretch while bearing in and out under heavy pressure, and came back to the winner's circle looking like a tired horse. He may be a bet-against next time out. Devils

Disciple bobbed at the start but quickly rushed up on the rail to duel with **WINNING EXPRESSION** and **FLAMENCO**, remained on the lead to the shadow of the wire, and just missed.

**MIDWAY ROAD** (7th, \$3.40), freshened since running in the Pimlico Special and the Stephen Foster, returned in an optional claimer with classified allowance conditions, and received a useful confidence-builder bossing six overmatched rivals.

AUGUST 22, 2004

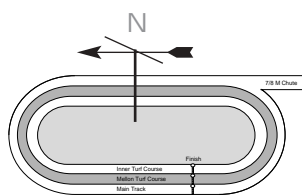
SUNDAY

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Cornelio Velazquez is having a very strong meet. He rode a three-bagger on this card, capped by an upset in the Saratoga Breeders' Cup Handicap aboard **EVENING ATTIRE** (9th, \$17), and moved into fourth place in the standings with 18 wins.

Evening Attire caught a drying-out track that was listed as fast but still retained some moisture, and benefited from a great pace setup as **THE LADY'S GROOM**, **CONGRATS**, and **FUNNY CIDE** carved out demanding early fractions. Funny Cide, making his first start at Saratoga, put away his early challengers but had no answer for the winner's late charge while neglecting to change leads. **BOWMAN'S BAND** slipped through along the rail to take a brief lead approaching the stretch but flattened out.

Even though Todd Pletcher had a 2-year-old in the race, it was the Dominick Schettino-trained **GALLOPING GROCER** (3rd, \$3.60) who attracted John Velazquez, which was a tip-off that the A P Jet colt had some ability. Does he ever. Galloping Grocer widened to win off by a dozen lengths under wraps, and ran five furlongs in 56.88 seconds, just a tick off the 11-year-old track record.



TRACK TRENDS

DATE	CONDITION	FORECAST	WIND/TEMPERATURE	COMMENT
MON. AUG. 16	Fast/Yielding-soft (Rails @ 12 ft. Mellon; 0 ft. Inner)	Cloudy-rainy	Variable wind, 69°	Heavy rain after the eighth race.
WED. AUG. 18	Fast/Yielding (Rails @ 12 ft. Mellon; 0 ft. Inner)	Cloudy	Light crosswind backstretch, 73°	Pace-pressers swept seven on dirt.
THURS. AUG. 19	Fast-wet fast/Yielding (Rails @ 12 ft. Mellon; 0 ft. Inner)	Cloudy-showery	Variable wind, 74°	Light rain after the eighth race.
FRI. AUG. 20	Fast/Yielding (Rails @ 12 ft. Mellon; 0 ft. Inner)	Cloudy	Light & variable wind, 77°	No apparent trends.
SAT. AUG. 21	Sloppy/Off turf	Raining	Negligible wind, 67°	Sloppy and sealed after morning rain.
SUN. AUG. 22	Good-wet fast/Soft (Rails @ 12 ft. Mellon; 0 ft. Inner, 5/6 off)	Clear	Variable wind, 71°	No apparent trends.