

## Sophomore pacers capture stakes eliminations at Pocono

from the PHHA/Pocono

**Wilkes-Barre, PA** --- Control The Moment and Racing Hill each posted new lifetime marks in capturing their respective \$25,000 Max Hempt Memorial eliminations for 3-year-old male pacers on Saturday (June 25) at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono. In the \$20,000 eliminations in the James Lynch Memorial for 3-year-old filly pacers, Newborn Sassy and Pure Country were victorious.



The first turn told the tale in the first Hempt elimination, as there was a four-wide scramble for the lead: Control The Moment went three-wide to just past the eighth pole to live up to his name; Boston Red Rocks used track geometry to the maximum from the rail, holding the pocket while forcing JK Will Power alongside to tuck third; and American Passport scooted away four-wide, but was unable to clear and broke at the three-sixteenths.

**Control The Moment held off a very game Pocono Pike-shooting Boston Red Rocks by a half-length in 1:49.3.**

From there Control The Moment did just that, getting the quarter in :26.1 and the half in :55.1 after the stretch headwind, then sprinted home in :54.2-:27 to

hold off a very game Pocono Pike-shooting Boston Red Rocks by a half-length in 1:49.3, with JK Will Power holding third and More Dragon fourth. The time was both a personal best and the fastest mile of the year by a 3-year-old on a five-eighths-mile track.

Control The Moment, a son of [Well Said](#), won for the first time in four starts this season, after opening his career with eight straight triumphs followed by his season-ending loss in the Breeders Crown. But Control The Moment looks to be in top form at the moment for driver Randy Waples, trainer Brad Maxwell, and the Control The Moment Stable of Philadelphia, Pa., which contains Maxwell and, as many will have figured from the "Philadelphia," owner Howard Taylor, who took two of the night's first three races at Pocono.



**Racing Hill was a 1:49.1 winner in the second Hempt elimination.**

In the second Hempt elim, the [Roll With Joe](#) colt Racing Hill was the quarter-mover No. 2 behind Katies Rocker, brushing to the lead in front of the stands, repulsing a big third quarter bid by Talk Show, and then drawing off in the stretch under a Brett Miller hold in tallying for trainer Tony Alagna and U.K. owner Tom Hill while also winning for the first time this year and raising his lifetime earnings to \$333,666. The victory was the third for driver Brett Miller in the card's first five races; finishing behind him were Katie's Rocker, Big Top Hanover, and late

inside rusher Western Fame.

The fractions told the story of the rapidly-developing Racing Hill's victory: after a quick :26 opener, Racing Hill made the lead well before the :55.2 half, sprinted in :26.3 down the back to turn away Talk Show by the 1:22 three-quarters, then continued on into the headbreeze in 27.1 for a :53.4 back half and a 1:49.1 total package, a new mark and lowering the 40-minute old standard of Control The Moment for fastest 3-year-old on the

five-eighths-mile oval. Talk Show's 1:50.2 clocking in finishing fifth earned him a spot in the Hempt final.

### **Pure Country, Newborn Sassy capture Lynch eliminations**

Champion filly Pure Country showed her class and toughness in taking the faster of the Lynch eliminations, having to go first-over for five-eighths of the mile against New Jersey Sire Stakes champion Blue Moon Stride, then both getting by her late and holding off a late rush from her early-season nemesis Darlinonthebeach in 1:50.1. Blue Moon Stride was a neck behind the winner and a neck ahead of Darlinonthebeach, with Penpal closing for fourth and Kiss Me Onthebeach advancing to next week as the faster fifth-place finisher.



**Pure Country got up at the wire to score in a time of 1:50.1.**

Blue Moon Stride worked her way to the top around speedy longshots to pace control at the rapid :26 quarter, with Pure Country starting the outside train raw at the three-eighths, with Kiss Me Onthebeach and Darlinonthebeach in tow two-wide.

The half was reached in :55.2, which means that Pure Country went her last half in :54.2 (:27.1 on the tail end) without cover, but 50 feet from the wire she again showed herself an irresistible force (although if you watch driver Brett Miller, handling his fourth winner in the first eight races, earlier in the lane, he seemed to feel he had enough filly in front of him).

The late rally of Darlinonthebeach did her credit, as did the game pacesetting effort of Blue Moon Stride, but Pure Country has (at least) temporarily reclaimed the undisputed top peg in her division for trainer Jimmy Takter and Diamond Creek Racing.

Newborn Sassy proved to be a pocket rocket in taking the first Lynch elimination, catching favored I Said Diamonds in the final strides for a 1:51.3 triumph.



*Curtis Salonick photos*

**Newborn Sassy and Tim Tetrick were narrow winners in 1:51.3.**

The victorious daughter of [Western Ideal](#) left strongly three-wide to the early lead for driver Tim Tetrick, with the looped I Said Diamonds making the top near the :27 quarter. The half was rated to :56.1 and the third quarter with the wind was :27.4, for a 1:24 three-quarter clocking. The last quarter was in :27.3 against the wind, and Newport Sassy came out and finished strongly to catch her rival, who in her defense had been off 29 days, winning by a neck, with JK Fannie missing the win by only a length, and Lindwood Beachgirl overcoming post nine for fourth.

Newborn Sassy became the third winner in three 3-year-old eliminations on the big Pocono card to be notching her first seasonal victory, although like the two Hempt colt winners she had been knocking on the door of stakes company in recent starts. Last year the career winner of \$301,845 was eight for 10, and she seems to have picked a fine time to pick back up her winning ways for trainer Jo Ann Looney-King, who is also the co-owner with CC Racing LLC.

## **Rockeyed Optimist wins winners over pace**

There was also a \$25,000 winners over pace contested on the card, which went to Franklin non-eligible Rockeyed Optimist, an easy winner in 1:48.3.

Brett Miller tucked the Rocknroll Hanover gelding in fourth early behind inside leavers after starting from post six in the eight-horse field, then brushed past early leader Scott Rocks (who set the :26.2 quarter), backing off the half to :55.1 into the wind, then smoking to a :26.3 third split to get the three-quarters in 1:21.4 en route to the easy victory.

Steve Elliott conditions Rockeyed Optimist, who is already up to \$255,210 in earnings this year for the ownership combine of Anthony Perretti, Virginia Berkner, A&B Stable, and Joseph Battaglia, with his career tally now at \$525,755.

Wakizashi Hanover, a million-dollar earner at three making his 4-year-old bow, had the best spot on the racetrack for the first three-eighths -- right behind Rockeyed Optimist -- and after that the worst spot -- uncovered against him, and faded in his first race in 7-1/2 months.