

Atlanta romps in the slop at the Big M

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East Rutherford, NJ — Gusting winds and drenching rains from Tropical Storm Fay could not extinguish the harness racing fire that is super mare Atlanta at The Meadowlands Friday (July 11) night.

Facing an easier task than in her first two starts of the season not having to face arch-rival Manchego, the Ron Burke-trained Atlanta (Yannick Gingras) had an easy time of it in the \$40,000 second leg of the Miss Versatility for open mare trotters over a sloppy track.



Hambletonian champion Atlanta continued her winning ways Friday (July 11) with a game victory in the Miss Versatility at The Meadowlands. Lisa Photo.

Driver Yannick Gingras kept Atlanta off the early action, sitting fifth past the quarter and half. He then got the 5-year-old daughter of Chapter Seven-Hemi Blue Chip in gear after leader Kenziesky Hanover (Corey Callahan). With Atlanta gaining quickly, Plunge Blue Chip (Ake Svanstedt) swerved out of the three-hole, which provided a live tow for the eventual winner.

Plunge Blue Chip was just off the leader's flank at three-quarters, and out of the turn, Gingras swung Atlanta three-wide for the drive and easily coasted by Plunge Blue Chip to record a 3¼-length score in 1:51.2. Plunge Blue Chip, the 5-1 second choice, completed the \$5.20 exacta. Felicityshagwell S (Andy Miller) was third.

"I wasn't concerned about the sloppy track because I knew Yannick would adjust to the conditions," said Burke. "The truth is, she prefers to get the kind of trip she got tonight. I wanted to follow Plunge Blue Chip, and as long as we could outkick her, we'd be alright. I am going to give Atlanta next week off. I don't want to over-race her. She's more thoroughbred than standardbred. She'll go next in two weeks in the Spirit of Massachusetts at Plainridge."

Atlanta has now won 22 of 42 lifetime outings, good for earnings of \$2,026,089 for owners Crawford Farms Racing, Brad Grant and Howard Taylor.