

Six amateur betting races on Friday at Monticello; Hannah Miller wins a pair

Friday, July 08, 2016 - by John Manzi, for the Billings, NAADA and Catskill Amateur Series

Monticello, NY --- If you think amateur racing isn't an integral part of the sport don't tell Monticello Raceway's director of racing Eric Warner because he just won't believe you.

On Friday (July 6) afternoon, Warner carded six betting races for amateur drivers; two in the CKG Billings Series, two in the NAADA Trotting Series; and two in the Catskill Amateur Club's Series. Many of the participants are members of all three organizations.

"The amateur races truly help us fill our betting cards and the fans wager on them with confidence," Warner said. "More than half our Friday card was for amateur drivers"

In what started out as a pleasant afternoon weather-wise Mother Nature turned the tables when halfway through the racing program the skies opened up and rain made the enjoyment of driving more than a bit unbearable. But the amateurs persevered through the extreme weather conditions and responded as professional drivers would have.



Geri Schwarz photo

Hannah Miller and Tijuana Party cruise to their third consecutive victory in a Catskill Amateur Series event at Monticello Raceway.

Not surprisingly, "Hurricane Hannah" Miller was the star of the day. The talented miss drove two winners and had three seconds in five drives. Other winners included "Smokin" Joe Faraldo, Bob "the Headhunter" Heckkoff; "Tough Tony" Ciuffetelli and "Boppin' Barry" Addison, who won his first pari-mutuel race.

Bob Heckhoff won the first Billings contest when he guided The Franchise to a wire-to-wire 1:58.2 victory over Hannah Miller and Jacks To Open.

"The inside post (pylon position) helped but once I got him through the first turn I knew he'd be good from there," Heckkoff said after his victory. "He's a real horse."

Owned by RBH Ventures and Spagnola Racing The Franchise paid \$7.20 for win

The second Billings trot went to For You Almostfree and driver by Joe Faraldo in a 2:00 clocking despite being parked out for the entire mile. They collared pacesetter Shanghai Jack and Hannah Miller in the final strides to score a head triumph.

"When I saw Hannah go to the whip in the stretch I knew her horse was in trouble," Faraldo said. "I urged "Almostfree" a bit and he just kept grinding and we collared her at the wire. He's a classy old-timer."

The veteran [Glidemaster](#) 8-year-old stallion, a lifetime winner of almost \$480,000, is owned by Faraldo, Wittstruck and Tietel and trained by Richard Banca. He paid \$8.30 for win.

Hannah Miller's first triumph was with pacer Tijuana Party in a 1:58.2 clocking in a Catskill Amateur Series event.

In that one Hannah left softly from the four-hole as Late Nite Flight (Monica Banca) and Shark Treasure (Alan Schwartz) locked horns in a :27.2 first quarter. After Schwartz settled in along the pylons Ms. Miller sent her charge to the front as the field passed the halfway point. From there it was all Hannah and Tijuana Party as they rambled to a three-length victory over Late Nite Flight.

"He (Tijuana Party) is a real pleasure to sit behind. He's got quick speed and can leave like a rabbit and you can drive him with two fingers", Miller said.

It was the third consecutive victory for Miller and Tijuana Party who paid \$2.90 for win. Hannah co-owns with trainer Nick Surick.

Hannah's other victory was in a NAADA Trot behind Scottish Cross in a pounding rainstorm. Starting from the far outside they went wire to wire in a 2:01.2 clocking holding off a late charge by Tony Ciuffetelli and Mack's Gold Band.

Owned by Allard racing and trained by Rene Allard, Scottish Cross paid \$3.70 for win. However, the veteran 11-year-old [Angus Hall](#) mare was claimed for \$18,000 by Howard Taylor.

Tony Ciuffetelli won a NAADA trot with the veteran 12-year-old Tagmaster in 2:02.4 as the rain continued fall relentlessly. They got to the front easily and were chased the entire mile by Hannah Miller and Lou Lous Princess. But Tagmaster was up to the challenge and finished a one length ahead of Lou Lous Princess.

Ciuffetelli owns and trains the winner who paid \$11.20 for win.

The last amateur race on the card will always be a memorable one for Barry Addison who drove KB's Bad Boy to a 1:58.4 triumph over McCabe Hall and Tony Ciuffetelli. It was Addison's first lifetime victory.

"I had the pole and I let Monica (Banca with Allamerican Dice) go and then retook," Addison said. "Once on top again "KB's" was comfortable and pretty much cruised to victory. It's always special when do something for the first time and I don't think I'll ever forget this, my first win."

Sent off at odds of 5-2 the KB's Bad Boy returned a \$7.20 mutual.