

Clear Idea to face older rivals in filly and mare open at Yonkers

by Brandon Valvo, for the SOA of NY

Yonkers, NY --- After a breakout season in New York Sire Stakes, 3-year-old filly Clear Idea will test the waters in Yonkers Raceway's \$50,000 Filly and Mare Open Handicap Pace Friday (Nov. 10). The sophomore will face seven aged rivals, including last week's winner Mackenzie A and Breeders Crown finalist Blue Moon Stride.



Mike Lizzi photo

New York Sire Stakes standout, Clear Idea, will take on her elders Friday evening at Yonkers Raceway.

determined to put the filly in the race.

Trained by Blake Macintosh, Clear Idea entered the \$225,000 New York Sire Stakes final Oct. 14 with nine wins and another eight placings in 2017. Five of her wins came against her New York-bred rivals at tracks across the state, including a 1:55.1 score from post seven at Buffalo Raceway. The filly was also second in the \$257,850 Empire Breeders Classic final behind Sire Stakes champion Obvious Blue Chip, but ahead of 2016 freshman champion Tequila Monday.

Although she drew post seven in the Sire Stakes final, regular reinsman Mark MacDonald was

"She was at the top of her division. She had the seven-hole, so we had to take a shot," MacDonald said. "There was never a chance I was going to take back to last or second-last. Especially when guys were ducking, I was going to try and go to the front."

While much of the field came away in post position order, MacDonald gunned Clear Idea to the lead in the opening furlong before allowing Obvious Blue Chip to clear the front. After a pocket trip, Clear Idea couldn't catch her favored rival, but stayed on for a second-place finish at odds of 12-1. MacDonald was happy with the effort and happier for his friend Macintosh, who also co-owns Clear Idea with Hutt Racing Stable.

"She's had her aches and pains throughout the season, maybe getting a little tired, I think if she had been on top of her game, I think she would have won, but second was good," MacDonald said. "Blake Macintosh, one of my best friends, owns half of her and it was a nice little payday for him. Anytime you can win when a friend owns the horse, it's always rewarding to win, but it's extra rewarding when it's for a family member or a friend."

MacDonald met Macintosh in the late 1990s when the pair raced at Windsor Raceway. Stabled across from one another, MacDonald soon began driving for Macintosh and the pair became close friends.

"We were about the same age and we just got to hanging out. I was driving and I ended up driving all of his stable. One year, Blake was the leading trainer and I was the leading driver at Dresden Raceway. I remember we got gold Timexes," MacDonald remembered with a laugh. "We've been really good friends forever, so that's how long I've been driving for Blake. Pretty near my whole life."