

Three New York-bred standouts seek Hambletonian glory

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East Rutherford, NJ — Three New York-bred trotters look to solidify their names in harness racing history this weekend in the 94th Hambletonian and 49th Hambletonian Oaks. Gimpanzee, a morning-line favorite, and Mr Vicktor will meet in the first elimination heat for the Hambletonian, looking to secure their place in the \$1 million final later in the card Saturday (Aug. 3) at Meadowlands Racetrack. Sweet Chapter has drawn the six post in the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks final for 3-year-old fillies.

New York Sire Stakes champion Gimpanzee (Chapter Seven-Steamy Windows) is looking to defend a perfect 12-for-12 lifetime record. His three wins so far this year include the Empire Breeders Class and two wins in the NYSS. As a freshman, Gimpanzee received the 2018 Dan Patch Award for best 2-year-old male trotter from the U.S. Harness Writers Association and set a Yonkers track record of 1:56.3 at the NYSS Night of Champions.

Gimpanzee is owned by S R F Stable (Lennart Agren), who also won the Hambletonian in 2017 with Perfect Spirit, and Courant Inc. He is trained by Marcus Melander and driven by Hall of Famer Brian Sears.

Mr Vicktor (RC Royalty-Hawaiian Vicky) will look to get one (or two) over on Gimpanzee, who he has lost to twice this season, in the Empire Breeders Classic and in a leg of the NYSS in July. The second-place finish was Mr Vicktor's only defeat in five NYSS races this season which sees him sitting at the top of the points board with three legs to go.

Mr Vicktor's owners include former New York Yankees manager Joe Torre and assistant equipment manager Joe Lee. He is trained by Jennifer Lappe and driven by Tyler Buter. Buter drove Money Shot Hanover to victory in the 2018 NYSS final for 2-year-old filly pacers.

A victory in the final for either would make them the second New York-bred in two years to capture the Hambletonian. Atlanta took the honor last year in 1:50.4, becoming the first filly since 1996 to do so.

Sweet Chapter (Chapter Seven—Mom’s Sweetie Pie) is representing New York-breds in the Hambletonian Oaks, finishing fifth in her elimination heat to take the final qualifying spot. She took last year’s NYSS consolation final and is currently in position to qualify for the Night of Champions. A third-place finish in the Empire Breeders Classic final is also on her list of highlights this season.

Sweet Chapter is owned by Hutt Racing Stable, Blake MacIntosh and Mortgage Boys Stable. Trainer Blake MacIntosh and driver Matt Kakaley both make their Hambletonian Oaks debuts.