

## World champion Six Pack keeps Ake Svanstedt guessing

by Ken Weingartner, USTA Media Relations Manager

**Hightstown, NJ** --- Six Pack has a tendency to keep Ake Svanstedt guessing. The colt, who is the 2-1 morning-line favorite in the second of Saturday's two Hambletonian eliminations at The Meadowlands Racetrack, tends to get lazy when in the lead, waiting for other horses to join him. And that can lead to anxious moments for Svanstedt, who trains and drives the horse.

"You never know if he's tired, or if he's lazy," Svanstedt said. "Sometimes he feels tired, but he's not tired. He's just waiting for someone and you get afraid. I always have that feeling in the stretch with him. Then someone comes and he picks it up again. But how should I know that? You don't know until it happens."

Six Pack heads to the Hambletonian, the sport's premier event for 3-year-old trotters, with eight wins in his past nine races dating to last September. His only setback was a second-place finish to Crystal Fashion in the final of the Earl Beal Jr. Memorial, which was only the third time in his career he was passed in the stretch when holding the lead.

For his career, Six Pack has won nine of 14 races and earned \$557,840 for owners Ake Svanstedt Inc., Jeff Gural's Little E LLC, Tomas Olofsson's Stall Kalmar FF, and Lars Berg.

The colt enters the Hambletonian off a 1:50 win in his division of the Stanley Dancer Memorial on July 14 at the Meadowlands. The time is the fastest ever by a 3-year-old male trotter. He will start his Hambletonian elimination from post No. 9 in a nine-horse field.

"He has raced better and better for every race this year," Svanstedt said. "He is going up the whole time. He's an all-around horse. The good horses are all around. He's nice to handle and nice gaited and can leave fast. I think he can go faster (than 1:50). He was not tired the last time. He was just lazy, so I must push him."

The stakes-filled Hambletonian Day card begins at 12 noon. The Hambletonian and Hambletonian Oaks will be featured on a live 90-minute broadcast on CBS Sports Network from 4-5:30 p.m. (EDT).

Wolfgang, from the stable of four-time Hambletonian-winning trainer Jimmy Takter, is the 5-2 morning-line favorite in the first Hambletonian elimination, which also includes the lone female in the race, Atlanta. The filly, trained by Rick Zeron, is 3-1. She is attempting to become the first filly to win the Hambletonian since Continentalvictory in 1996.



USTA/Mark Hall photo

**For his career, Six Pack has won nine of 14 races and earned \$557,840 for co-owner, trainer and driver Ake Svanstedt.**

The top-five finishers from each \$100,000 elimination return for the \$1 million final later Saturday afternoon.

Starting from post nine with Six Pack is similar to Svanstedt's situation in 2017 when Perfect Spirit left from post 10 in his elimination. Svanstedt got away fourth after a three-wide push on the first turn. He made a first-over move at the half, took the lead briefly in the stretch and finished third to advance to the final. His drive was inspired by a conversation with Hall of Fame driver John Campbell.

"I left fast with (Perfect Spirit)," Svanstedt said. "John Campbell said one thing. He said they don't race the Hambletonian tomorrow, and not next week, the Hambletonian is today. You have to leave and give him a chance. I did that."



*Lisa photo*

**Six Pack enters the Hambletonian off a 1:50 win in his division of the Stanley Dancer Memorial on July 14 at the Meadowlands.**

Six Pack is a son of [Muscle Mass](#) out of Pleasing Lady. He was purchased for \$30,000 at the 2016 Lexington Selected Sale. Svanstedt's familiarity with Six Pack's family goes back to Merger Blue Chip, who was out of Six Pack's third dam, Caviar Please, and was raced by former Svanstedt assistant Bjorn "Bernie" Noren before being sent to Europe. Svanstedt raced Six Pack's half-brother Limerence.

"We have a very good mare in Sweden, Merger Blue Chip," Svanstedt said. "We bought her here and she raced here for Bernie. Then we took her to Sweden and she was one of the best mares when she was a 5-year-old. Then we bought Limerence. I looked at the pedigree and saw it was the same family as Merger Blue Chip. Limerence was an OK horse.

"That's how I found Six Pack because he was a half-brother to Limerence. And Six Pack was a good-looking horse. He is a good-looking horse. He has very good conformation."

Svanstedt won the 2017 Hambletonian with Perfect Spirit, who was elevated from second to first when What The Hill was disqualified for interference in the stretch. He is not thinking of winning a second trophy.

"It's a big thing, of course, but you can never say something before (the race)," Svanstedt said. "You must race and see what happens. But I have a good horse and I'm happy that I have such a good horse. That is the first step. I don't think the heat racing will bother him. He is big and strong so he should be OK."

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Alarm Detector, the 2017 O'Brien Award winner for Canada's best 2-year-old male trotter, is in the same elimination as Six Pack, where he will start from post No. 4 with driver Trevor Henry.

Trainer Ben Baillargeon, who is making his Hambletonian debut, hoped his colt would have five starts this year heading into the race, but will enter with four because Alarm Detector made an uncharacteristic break in his elimination of the Earl Beal Jr. Memorial and failed to advance to the final.



*New Image Media photo*

**Alarm Detector enters the Hambletonian with lifetime earnings of \$280,418.**

Since then, Alarm Detector finished third in his division of the Stanley Dancer Memorial, which was Six Pack's world-record mile, and won a qualifier in 1:54 at Woodbine Mohawk Park. Earlier this year, in June, he finished third in the Goodtimes Stakes, but after the race was discovered to be sick.

"I thought he raced tremendous (in the Dancer)," Baillargeon said. "It was a very costly first quarter (:26.2) for a trotter at the Meadowlands. He was parked three deep and two deep the first quarter (before

getting the lead). They went very big fractions and he raced real good. I have no complaints about the horse.

"I just qualified him in (1):54 on Friday. We had a very big headwind down the lane and Trevor just let him roll the third quarter in :26.4. He did it pretty much under wraps. He's going into the race in great shape. He's as best as he's been all year. He's trotting perfect. All we need is a little luck. That day everything has to be perfect. If everything is perfect for us, we'll be right there at the wire. If not, well, some other time."

As for the break at Pocono, the trainer said, "For some reason he got on the right line in the second turn and just dove right in, tried to cut the corner too quick. Trevor had to grab him or he was going to knock somebody down. They all have their bad days at one time or another. We have to forget about it and move on."

Alarm Detector won all but one of his seven races last year, capping his abbreviated campaign with a victory in the William Wellwood Memorial. He did not race again in 2017 because of a bruise on the right hind cannon bone. He was given four months to recover.

The colt is a son of [Chapter Seven](#) out of Final Countdown. His family includes Dan Patch and O'Brien awards-winner Ken Warkentin, who was named in honor of the Meadowlands Racetrack announcer and voice of the Hambletonian, as well as stakes-winner [Holiday Road](#).

Alarm Detector was purchased for \$110,000 and is owned by Thomas Rankin, Elizabeth Rankin, Claude Hamel, and Santo Vena.

"I was in Harrisburg (for the Standardbred Horse Sale) with Santo Vena," Baillargeon said.  
"(Agent) Brian Montgomery said I should take a look at this horse. We took a look at him and we just fell in love. He was strong and built for the hard work. I liked the breeding page, you can't ask for anything better. There is enough pedigree in him. I said I have to bring him home. He's turned out to be a nice horse."