

Yonkers hosts NYSS Jim Meagher Pace

by Frank Drucker, publicity director, Empire City at Yonkers Raceway

Yonkers, NY — The New York Sire Stakes returned downstate Thursday night (June 20), with Yonkers Raceway hosting the \$155,300 Jim Meagher Pace for 2-year-old colts and geldings.

Three \$38,650 divisions and a \$39,350 finale comprised the event, which once again honored the memory of the Raceway's long-tome corporate controller and which saw all frosh making their purse debuts.



Cake Daddy was an impressive 1:56.3 winner in his New York Sire Stakes debut.

The first raced served as the first division, and odds-on Cake Daddy (Brent Holland, \$3.70) served notice.

He went the distance through splits of :29.1, :59.1 and 1:28.4, and used a :27.4 kicker to spurt away from an early pocket pull of Hurrikanekingjames (Dan Dube) in 1:56.3. The latter faltered late, as Always On The Hunt (Mark MacDonald) closed for second, beaten 4-3/4 lengths.

Hurrikanekingjames, Tomas (Jason Bartlett) and Major On The Beach (Matt Kakaley) grabbed the minors.

Cake Daddy is an [American Ideal](#) colt co-owned by trainer Homer Hochstetler with Connie Hochstetler and Dan Plesac. The exacta paid \$21.60, the triple returned \$133.50 and the superfecta paid \$385.

Without question, the happiest person in the joint was Plesac, the former standout big-league pitcher who said Cake Daddy "is the first horse I've owned in forever, at least 10 or 11 years."

Plesac, who at one time had a stable of about 25 on both sides of the border, "took a trip to Pinehurst (N.C.) and the itch came back. I've known the Hochstetlers and their

son, Jay, for about 25 years, and decided to get back in. I'd resettled in New Jersey, and the timing was right.

"Jay said the family had one they thought would be perfect."

The \$30,000 yearling "is staked to everything. I was so nervous before the race, and you do not want to be disappointed. Tonight, he proved everything we thought about him."

The second division saw second choice Sandy's Bolt (Bartlett, \$8.20) as the first one to the lead and the first one to the finish line.

From post position four, he watched as 3-10 fave Splash Brother (MacDonald) — gingerly-handled at the start — move to the lead. Splash Brother led the gang through intervals of :28.3, :59.2 and 1:28.4, taking a 1-1/2 length lead into the lane.

Sandy's Bolt then found a path inside, ducking left with the aptitude of a pro. He edged away, defeating Splash Brother by three-quarters of a length in 1:56.4. Level Up (Jordan Stratton), So So De Vie (Kakaley) and a recovering Darby's Ideal (Tyler Buter) picked off the remainder.

Sandy's Bolt, a son of [Bolt The Duer](#), is co-owned by Blindswitch Racing Stable, Doine Farm Services, Gary Axelrod and Denise Dennis and trained by Jose Godinez. The exacta paid \$15.80, the triple returned \$55 and the superfecta paid \$235.

The evening's third grouping had short-priced number Cigars And Port (MacDonald, \$2.80) fool very few. From post five, he had nary an anxious moment through splits of :29.1, :59.4, 1:28.3 and 1:56.3. The margin, 1-1/2 lengths on the final turn, was 3-1/4 lengths at the finish.

Second went to a first-over Oreo Dream Xtreme (Corey Callahan), with Come On Raags (Scott Zeron) a loose-pocket third. Ideal Artillery (Holland) and American Rebel (Stratton) came away with the minors.

Cigars And Port is a [So Surreal](#) lad co-owned by trainer Ray Schnittker with Nolamaura Racing, Ted Gewertz and Steven Arnold. The exacta paid \$9, the triple returned \$13, and the superfecta paid \$79.50.

"Young, but a smart horse," MacDonald said.



Groovy Joe took the speed badge for the night's stakes divisions with a 1:56 performance. Mike Lizzi photos.

The final state-bred event saw third choice Groovy Joe (Callahan, \$12.60) defeat a drifting Save Me A Dance (Bartlett) by 1-1/4 lengths in 1:56.

After Steuben Moose (Mike Merton) looped a few making the lead, Groovy Joe — from post two — took over and finished it off.

Steuben Moose, Teton Sunset (Stratton) and R Maddy Blue Chip (Kakaley) settled for the small change.

"I took advantage of (The Mystic) making a break, but my horse was good," Callahan said.

The Mystic (MacDonald), part of a 3-5 favored entry, made a nasty first-turn fumble and wound up a distanced last.

Groovy Joe is a homebred [Roll With Joe](#) colt owned by Winbak Farm and trained by Blake MacIntosh. The exacta paid \$108, the triple paid \$666, and the superfecta paid \$1,877.

New York Sire Stakes returns downstate Tuesday night (June 25), with the \$165,499 Dick McGuire for 3-year-old colts and geldings.

Total purses for the 2019 New York-bred program are estimated at \$14 million. For more information, please visit www.nysirestakes.com.