

Yoder makes Crown debut with speedy 'Charm'

by Ken Weingartner, USTA Media Relations Manager

Hightstown, NJ --- Verlin Yoder has sat behind his share of good trotters, such as millionaire Natural Herbie and a number of Indiana state-bred champions, but none impressed him as quickly as undefeated world-record-setting filly Woodside Charm.

"It was the middle of March," Yoder said. "I have a filly called O So Easy and last year she was a very nice (1):55-(1):54 horse as a 2-year-old, which is very good for Indiana. I came back in the barn from training (Woodside Charm) in March and I said to my wife, 'O So Easy who?'"

"Just the way (Woodside Charm) was doing things in March versus what anyone else ever has done for me was incredible. I knew she had high-end speed, I just didn't know how far she would go."



Dean Gillette photo

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She is Yoder's first Breeders Crown starter. Yoder, who trains and owns the filly, will be in the sulky.

"I've never had anything to go with before," Yoder said. "All I had before was BB guns. When you're going to go in a big fight you've got to have a big gun. It'll be exciting."

Woodside Charm is a daughter of [Chapter Seven](#) out of Fireworks Hanover. She is a half-sister to millionaire [Explosive Matter](#), himself a world-record-setter. As a 2-year-old, [Explosive Matter](#) won his Breeders Crown elimination before finishing second to [Muscle Hill](#) in the final.

As a young horse, Woodside Charm suffered a leg injury that cast doubt on her racing future. Since getting on the track, she has left no doubt about her ability.

In her second start, she trotted 1:55.2 in a division of the New York Sire Stakes at Tioga Downs, finishing just one-fifth of a second off a track record.

But that was nothing compared to what she did two starts later, on Sept. 13, when she won a NYSS division at Saratoga in 1:53.4 to become history's fastest 2-year-old trotter on a half-mile track. The previous record for a 2-year-old filly, 1:55.2, was set by Wild Honey in 2014. Don Dream holds the mark for the boys, at 1:55.

She heads to the Breeders Crown off a win in the Kentuckiana Stallion Management Stakes for 2-year-old filly trotters, which was her fifth win in five starts and pushed her earnings to

\$209,158. There has yet to be a horse within 2-1/4 lengths of her at the finish line. Her total margin of victory in her five races is 23-1/2 lengths.

"She's a very smart horse, very easy to work on," said Yoder, who is in the midst of his first million-dollar season as a trainer. "I like her speed and smartness. She's teachable. There are a lot of trotting fillies that are fast, but if you find one that's teachable and you can use when you want to use, then it's a different game. That's what separates the good ones from the bad ones."

Woodside Charm starts her Breeders Crown elimination from post five in a field of seven. The field also includes Grand Circuit winners Asiago (3-1 on the morning line), Sonnet Grace (7-2), Princess Deo (9-2) and Stella Jane (8-1).

"I think post five is going to be fine," Yoder said. "With 2-year-old trotting fillies you never know until it's done. I always say that if you go behind the gate enough you'll screw up somewhere along the line. But she seems healthy coming in. That's all we can ask for."

Whispering Oaks, whose wins include a division of the International Stallion Stakes and the finals of both the New Jersey and Kentucky sire stakes, is the 2-1 favorite in the first elimination for 2-year-old filly trotters. The Ice Dutchess, whose wins include the Jim Doherty Memorial and Peaceful Way Stakes, is the 5-2 pick in the third. Both are trained by Jimmy Takter.

Racing begins at 7 p.m. (EDT) Friday at Pocono. For the night's complete entries, click [here](#).