



Winter Home of Champions since 1915

Matinee Races Attract Crowds

By Sue Smithson: Equestrian Correspondent

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The Pinehurst Matinee Harness Races are always met with enthusiasm and appreciation by the Sandhills community. Tailgate parking spots are sold out, bleachers fill up, the program is chock full of ads, and all eight races are sponsored.

Program coordinator Norm Hill reported that the crowds this year, April 3, were the largest in recent history.

A horse race has a stirring, uplifting spirit to it, and the Pinehurst Matinee is no exception. It is the harbinger of spring, graduation day for all the Standardbred youngsters in training here all winter. Full of promise and youthful enthusiasm, the babies are always impressive as they take in the crowds and color around their home track with amazing maturity.

Without a doubt, the Pinehurst Matinee is a much-loved event on the local calendar. The small-town carnival atmosphere holds an endearing quality, despite the fact that by the clock, these 2-year-olds aren't setting any world records.

Local owners Lin and Amy Higgins of Pinehurst fielded the first winner, Badlands Brownie, in the Neville's Pace. Trained by Poly Mallar, the filly was "ahead at every pole," and a "confident winner," Mallar said.

Badlands Brownie will be aimed at stakes races for Delaware-bred horses later in the year. It is a new program, Mallar explained, enhanced by the slot machines at the tracks. "It's just getting started, and not as competitive as, say, New York and New Jersey. The numbers (of horses) are low, and they go for decent money."

Five trotters lined up for the McBrayer Trot, and they shaved a second or two off the earlier pacers for a 2:32 mile.

The Meadors group in the Aberdeen Supply Pace looked like they were out for a training jog until the final quarter, and the early leader held on to win by a head. Medoland Doc, owned by Tami Hoovler, was the post entry that set the pace wire-to-wire.

The Blanton stable harnessed trotters for the Davenport Galaxy fourth race, and the winner moved with such grace and reach he could have a career in the show ring. Likeabatoutahell is an attractive gelding by SJ's Caviar, a star also trained at Pinehurst.

The Norris stable choreographed an exciting finish in the ReMax fifth race. Scott Norris drove

Ain'tdutchain'tmuch to win by a whisker over early leader Jack's Gameboy, driven by Joel Wheeler.

The Carolina-Holly-Manor sixth race was a walk in the park for the Miller and Medors combined stables. Know Dough, driven by "Speedy," almost broke the three-minute mile mark (2:57) for the "slowest" title.

Brunet Stables picked the pace back up in the Bill Smith Ford Pace for a respectable 2:32 finish for Winbak Vero, a gelding co-owned by Gates and Debbie Brunet of Pinehurst.

Fillies earned respect in the Post Printing Trot, with Larry McDonald stopping the clock in 2:30 driving the Winbak My Desire to the front.

RESULTS:

FIRST RACE: 1. Badlands Brownie (L. Higgins) Dude Goodblood, 2. Blissful Storm (Ramn Package) Danny English, 3. El Toro Grande (Dual Pat's Farm) Pat Leavett.

SECOND: Earl of Pembroke (W. Varney) W. Varney, 2. Billboard Act (King Stable) Gordon Corey, 3. Mom's Angel (Joel Wheeler) J. Wheeler.

THIRD: 1. Medoland Doc (Tami Hoovler) Gates Brunet, 2. She's A Bunny (Bill Monnier) Gaither Cloer, 3. Sam's Best (Jim Goodman) Mike Medors.

FOURTH: 1. Likeabatoutahell (M. Andrews) Dave Blanton, 2. Another Bogey (LaVerne Blanton) Joann Martin, 3. Mandy's Star (L. Dietrich) Dan Altman.

FIFTH: 1. Ain'tdutchain'tmuch (Anatolia Racing Stable) Scott Norris, 2. Jack's Gameboy (A. Barbara) Joel Wheeler, 3. Camford Hanover (J. Smitlyk) Mitch McKenzie.

SIXTH: 1. Know Dough (En-Mar Stable) Speedy, 2. Smooth Vintage (En-Mar) J. W. Miller, 3. Rodger (Bob Slowey) Mike Medors.

SEVENTH: 1. Winbak Vero (G. Brunet) Debbie Brunet, 2. Marathon Miss (T. Gewirtz) Danny English, 3. All Deuce (Brunet) Gates Brunet.

EIGHTH: 1. Winbak My Desire (M. Gingrich) L. MacDonald, 2. Clareen (B. Kirwan) Bill Kirwan, 3. Donerail's Lass (P. Fluet) Shane Fluet.

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