

Perfect Sting Perfect In Seven

By Ray Cotolo, for The Red Mile

LEXINGTON, KY— At the site of his sire's and dam's world-record miles, the Always B Miki-Shebestingin colt Perfect Sting remained undefeated with a 1:50 performance in the third of three divisions for the \$359,300 Stay Hungry Bluegrass Two-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Pace—presented by the Stay Hungry Syndicate and Hanover Shoe Farms—on Saturday (Oct. 3) at The Red Mile.

Away third to a :27.4 first quarter, Perfect Sting swooped to the front and grabbed the lead from Summa Cum Laude before a :55.1 half. Always A Miki raced third and angled first over as Straight Talk advanced uncovered to the far turn. Perfect Sting kept Always A Miki at bay to three-quarters in 1:23.3 and easily turned away that challenger into the stretch.

Summa Cum Laude stuck to the pylons and gave pursuit to Perfect Sting as the pair paced clear of the competition. Perfect Sting drifted off the pylons as Summa Cum Laude sprinted a straight course to the inside, but the Joe Holloway trainee dug in and held off the late challenger to win in 1:50. Always A Miki finished third with Pirate Hanover taking fourth.

“I said back in about March or April—he's got the potential to be the best horse I've ever had, and I think he is,” said Holloway, who conditioned both the winner's sire and dam. “Nobody was this advanced at two. Always B Miki wasn't this advanced, Jenna's Beach Boy wasn't. I was 38-years-old when I had Jenna and I thought they'd come along all the time. I now realize they don't come around that often. He's getting there, and he's still learning. He dug in, came [home] in :26.2... does what he has to do.”

Victorious in seven starts, Perfect Sting has accrued \$254,450 for owners and breeders Brittany Farms LLC and Val D'Or Farms. David Miller drove the \$2.10 winner.

A :52.4 half set by One Eight Hundred poised 8-5 favorite Lou's Pearlman for a stretch-drive burst, as the Sweet Lou colt scored in the opening division of the Stay Hungry in 1:49.1—a fifth of a second off the world record.

One Eight Hundred led a four-horse charge into the first turn. Fulsome landed in the pocket with Literl Lad Hanover third and Commanding Officer fourth to a :26 first quarter. Lou's Pearlman raced fifth into the backstretch while One Eight Hundred chugged towards the half but quickly backed through the field to three-quarters in 1:21.3.

Commanding Officer angled off the pylons as the pace slowed into the stretch and rushed to the lead. Lou's Pearlman advanced in tow before angling off cover and sliding by Commanding Officer. Literl Lad Hanover, finding room after the field bunched at headstretch, ripped down the center of the course to finish second behind his stablemate. Commanding Officer finished third with Captains Place taking fourth.

“That was a dream trip for sure,” winning driver Matt Kakaley said after the race. “We thought he was something special right away [but] he got a little sick—had a little problem here and

there. He didn't finish the PA Sires [Stakes] the way we hoped [fourth in Championship], but he's bounced back and Ronnie [Burke]'s done a good job getting him back to the way he was at the beginning of the year."

Collecting his fifth win from nine starts, Lou's Pearlman grew his bankroll to \$191,318 for owners Burke Racing Stable, Weaver Brusceci, Elizabeth Novak and Howard Taylor. The homebred paid \$5.20 to win.

Southwind Gendry strolled to the front and held firm to the finish when taking the second division of the Stay Hungry as the 1-2 favorite in 1:50.2.

Away fourth to a :28 first quarter, driver Yannick Gingras angled Southwind Gendry off the pegs and ranged towards the lead before a :55.4 half. Billy Clyde edged first over from eighth up the backstretch and flushed cover, with Red Right Hand tipping wide from fifth and Southwind Petyr catching that cover to the far turn.

Red Right Hand rolled towards Southwind Gendry pacing to three-quarters in 1:23.4 but folded into the stretch. Southwind Gendry gained separation as Highlandbeachslover shook loose from the pocket entering the final eighth, but only narrowed the leader's margin to settle for second. Shakespeare shot through a seam at the pylons to take third with Southwind Petyr taking fourth.

"We got him started a little big late this year and it maybe actually helped him," trainer Ron Burke said after the race. "He got very sick when he came up from Florida, so we maybe missed one Sire Stake and only had one qualifier. He's actually been a pleasant surprise—training down we really just thought he was just middle of the road. We gelded him because all he wanted to do his fight and not race. Since then he's improved tremendously and now I think he is a top colt."

Now winning five straight and his seventh from nine starts overall, Southwind Gendry has banked \$359,419 for owners Burke Racing Stable, Phillip Collura, Knox Services, J&T Silva and Purnel & Libby. The Southwind Farms-bred Always B Miki gelding paid \$3.00 to win.

Grand Circuit competition continues at The Red Mile on Sunday (Oct. 4) with a total 12 divisions of Bluegrass Stakes—three divisions for sophomores of each sex and gait. The 15-race card, which includes two non-betting races at 12:15 p.m. (EDT), is slated to start at 1:00 p.m. (EDT).

PHOTOS: Winners of each division of the Stay Hungry (Amanda Stephens Photo)



