

Resolute Bluegrass Score For Tall Dark Stranger

By Ray Cotolo, for The Red Mile

LEXINGTON, KY—Game to the finish once again, Tall Dark Stranger withstood a late challenge from pocket-popper Captain Barbossa to pad his resume with a 1:48.3 victory in the final of three divisions for the \$203,800 Captaintreacherous Bluegrass Three-Year-Old Colt and Gelding Pace—sponsored by the Captaintreacherous Syndicate and Hanover Shoe Farms—on Sunday (Oct. 4) at The Red Mile.

Unhurried from the pylon post to a :26.3 first quarter, driver Yannick Gingras angled Tall Dark Stranger off the pylons to brush for the lead moving into the backstretch. Early leader Captain Barbossa yielded for the pocket approaching a :55 half and remained in tow behind the Bettors Delight colt to three-quarters in 1:22.2.

Spinning into the stretch, Captain Barbossa pulled for the attack and pressed Tall Dark Stranger for the lead into the final eighth. But Tall Dark Stranger fought back to the inside and edged away from Captain Barbossa to the finish to score his 17th victory from 19 starts. The Greek Freak finished third with Seriously Hanover fourth.

“He makes it a little hard on my heart, really,” said Gingras after the race of the colt’s continual gutsiness. “I knew he was going to put up—and every time I’ve called on him he’s always been there. He just makes anxious moments once in awhile, but he always [shows] up. Top of the stretch I called on him, and halfway through the stretch I knew [Captain Barbossa] wasn’t going to go by me. I knew mine was fighting; he was still in front—usually they’re by me at that point and he comes back and beat them. But this time I held them at bay.”

Amassing \$1,775,445 in earnings for owners Crawford Farms Racing, Marvin Katz, Caviart Farms and Howard Taylor, Tall Dark Stranger now has nine wins from 10 starts this year. Nancy Takter trains the James Avritt Sr.-bred colt who paid \$2.10 to win.

Captain Kirk set a quick pace with Cattlewash stalking second, but once driver David Miller pulled the Ron Burke trainee from the pocket he lifted flight and sprinted to a 1:46.4 victory in the opening division of the Captaintreacherous.

With Captain Kirk clearing Cattlewash by a :27 first quarter, Captain Kirk continued to roll up the backstretch towards a :53.3 half and around the far turn to three-quarters in 1:20.3. Cattlewash revved out of the pocket spinning for the finish and swept past Captain Kirk with extended strides as Miller kept the reins high in the final-quarter sprint. The Somebeachsomewhere colt stopped the clock to match his sire’s world record while winning by open lengths over Captain Kirk. Save Me A Dance closed for third with Sandbetweenmytoes fourth.

Shaving nearly four seconds off his lifetime best, Cattlewash scored his third victory from 10 starts this season and his seventh from 23 overall, earning \$551,502 for owner-breeder W. J. Donovan. He paid \$5.60 to win.

A seam to the inside gave Warrawee Vital open road in the stretch, and the Robert Fellows trainee flew through to snag the lead late and win the second division of the Captaintreacherous.

Taking command to a :27 first quarter, Warrawee Vital let Fortify clear the lead into the backstretch while Capt Midnight looped from third to the lead approaching a :54.1 half. Tru Lou then leapt from sixth to the lead before the far turn, shuffling Warrawee Vital to fifth while also speeding to three-quarters in 1:20.3.

Capt Midnight kicked from the pocket into the stretch and marched to the lead while Fortify fanned to the center of the course and Warawee Vital swooped into contention to the inside, vaulting by Capt Midnight in the final strides to stop the clock in 1:47.1. Capt Midnight settled for second with Fortify finishing third and Tru Lou fourth.

Winning his seventh race from 11 starts this season and his eighth from 13 overall, Warrawee Vital has earned \$141,607 for owners Blair Corbeil, Yolanda Fellows and M&S Racing Stable Inc. The Warrawee Farm-bred Captaintreacherous colt paid \$6.60 to win.

Grand Circuit competition resumes at The Red Mile on Friday (Oct. 9) with the International Stallion Stakes for two-year-old trotting colts and two-year-old pacing fillies. First-race post time is slated for 1:00 p.m. (EDT).