

Saturday,
January 21, 2012

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Tioga/Vernon Announce Stakes Schedule....p3

More Now Bet in PA Than AC....p3

Handicapping Tonight's Pick 4 at Big M....p4

Check Me Out is Riding Out the Winter

By Bill Finley

MIDDLETOWN, NY—There will be many times in 2012 when **Check Me Out** (Donato Hanover) will have to be primed, pressured and ready to do battle, maybe even against males in the Hambletonian. This just isn't one of them. It's mid-January, her first start of the year is about five months away and the only immediate goal for Check Me Out is for her to be able to relax, have fun and enjoy being a horse.



Check Me Out being ridden by trainer Ray Schnittker

And that's why her training routine is a bit unusual. Every other day, trainer and co-owner Ray Schnittker saddles her up and takes her for a ride. He used the same methods with his last great trotter, Deweycheatumhowe.

"I do it with her just to get her calm and relaxed," he said. "I got her now where I can say 'whoa' and she just stops. For some reason you can't do that with the jog cart--or at least I can't. Doing it this way, you're not on the racetrack all the time. Otherwise, you go to work every single day and never get a break or change your routine and it's pretty tough to keep your focus, especially with these 3 year olds.

"Most of them like it, more than being on the racetrack. It's like with a human runner, the difference between being on a treadmill or out running on a trail, which is more interesting."

The technique is unusual among North American trainers, but Schnittker says it's a more common practice in Europe. He doesn't do it with all horses, just ones that deserve the star treatment and those who he think may particularly benefit from it.

"A lot of Swedes do it and some people in France," he said. "I don't know if they ride them as much as I do through woods. I'll have her out for 45 minutes to an hour. If I have some problem horse that doesn't try, I'll do it with them, too, and ride them really hard. With her, it's more a matter of keeping her calm and relaxed. If they're going to be around that long they have to want to go and this helps. Two year olds don't get sour, but with 3 year olds you start the year off and 10 colts look great for the Hambletonian and by end of the year most are a train wreck."

Schnittker believes in riding his horses so much that last summer he hired someone whose only job was to ride his horses. He was too busy at the time with his other training duties.

For the most part, Schnittker has remained calm and relaxed as well, even though his filly came into the new year amid great expectations. Check Me Out won 14 of 16 starts as a 2-year-old and was widely regarded as the best juvenile trotter in North America of either sex. If the Hambletonian were held tomorrow she would be the heavy favorite. **Cont. p2**

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p,2,1:50.2; 3,1:47.3 (\$2,657,862)

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Cont. from p1

"I'm more relaxed about this now because I went through it will Dewey," said Schnittker, who owns Check Me Out along with Charlie Iannazzo. "He won all 10 starts at 2, so, in a lot of ways, we went through the same thing with him. She is the soundest horse I've ever had. That could change in one bad steps. She's had zero vet bills and she's shipped all over the place."



Check Me Out with owners Ray Schnittker and Charlie Iannazzo

Schnittker has yet to map out a 3-year-old campaign, but says he'll be most apprehensive before she qualifies.

"I've watched a zillion good horses and I know the first two qualifiers really sets the tone," he said. "If it seems like a mess when they first go out there you know it's going to be awful the rest of year. Dewey (as a 3-year-old) qualified in 53, and we knew we were in business right out of the box."

Though there's no firm schedule in place yet, Schnittker said he'll look at some of late spring races at Mohawk in which to get started. The Casual Breeze and Elegantimage are possibilities.

He knows that not all horses make the transition from 2 to 3, but doesn't think that will be a problem for Check Me Out, who is a good-sized horse and has plenty of horses in her pedigree who were good well after their 2-year-old seasons. Sire Donato Hanover was every bit as good at 3 as he was at 2.

He has no plans to race against males prior to the Hambletonian.

"We'll stay with fillies before the Hambletonian," he said. "If she doesn't look outstanding she's not going to go against the boys because there's still a lot of money in the filly races. You don't just throw that away to finish fourth in the Hamblertonian. But right now she looks as good as any horse I've ever seen at two."

If it sounds as if Schnittker is enjoying this it's because he is.

"It's great," he said. "A lot of pressure? Sure. I hope I have this problem every year."

o o o



Check Me Out at work last year at Tioga
Fred Brown photo

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More Now Bet in Pa. Casinos Than in AC

Revenues increased 21.65 percent at Pennsylvania's casinos in 2011, largely due to the advent of table games. With the increase, Pennsylvania passed Atlantic City and now is the second largest gaming state in the U.S. behind only Nevada. To read the Las Vegas Review Journal's coverage of the story click [here](#)

Tioga/Vernon Announce 2012 Stakes Schedules (press release)

Tioga Downs and Vernon Downs have finalized their 2012 race and stakes schedule for the upcoming race season (pending regulatory approval).

Tioga Downs will hold 61 live racing days in 2012, set to begin on Saturday, May 5 (Kentucky Derby Day). Highlighting the 2012 stakes calendar at Tioga Downs are the \$200,000 (est.) Artiscap for open mare pacers and the \$200,000 (est.) Bettor's Delight Open Pace, both scheduled for Sunday, June 10.

Tioga Downs will once again host the first leg of pacing's Triple Crown, the Cane Pace, with eliminations on Sunday, Aug. 26, with the final on Monday, Sept. 3. The Empire Breeder's Classic for 3-year-old New York-bred pacers will be held later in the year as in years past, with eliminations on Sunday, Aug. 5, and the \$250,000 (est.) finals being held a week later on Sunday, Aug. 12. Other marquee events held at Tioga Downs in 2012 will include: Tompkins-Geers, a leg of the Miss Versatility, the Shady Daisy, and the Historic Stakes.

Vernon Downs will kick off its 2012 race season on Friday, April 27, to open up its 90-day race meet through Nov. 3. Vernon Downs will be the 2012 host of American Racing and Entertainment's marquee event, the \$50,000 Drivers' Championship, which has been held at Tioga Downs since its inception in 2007.

The Drivers' Championship will share the spotlight at Vernon Downs with the \$700,000 (est.) Zweig Memorial Trot on Sunday, Aug. 26. The \$200,000 (est.) Muscle Hill Open Mares Trot and the \$200,000 (est.) Credit Winner Open Trot will also return to Vernon Downs in 2012 on Friday, Sept. 7.

The \$500,000 (est.) Empire Breeder's Classic for New York-bred trotters will headline the month of June at Vernon Downs, with the eliminations on Friday, June 1, and the \$250,000 (est.) finals a week later on Friday, June 8. Also scattered around the 2012 stakes schedule at Vernon Downs will be the Historic Stakes, along with legs and the final of the \$175,000 Kindergarten Classic.

"We pride ourselves at Tioga and Vernon on the racing product and promotions we offer our fans during the summer months in upstate New York, and look forward to what we hope will be the best year yet for Tioga and Vernon Downs," said Jason M. Settlemoir, VP of racing and simulcast. (Tioga/Vernon)

Golden Oldie Silent Swing Eyes Presidential Win

By Lucas Marquardt

Mark Ford didn't want to buy **Silent Swing** (Northern Luck) last year. Not at any price.

You couldn't have blamed him. The gelding was 9 and coming off by far the worst year of his life.

"What did I want a broken down old horse for?" he said. "He had been a really good horse and then a year goes by and he only makes \$30,000. It didn't take a brain surgeon to figure out he was done."

But a friend of Ford's, John Hennessy, told him that Silent Swing probably had a little more left and talked him into buying part of the horse.

Cont. p4



Silent Swing

Lisa photo

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Cont. from p3

For \$10,000, he bought a 50 percent interest, thinking "maybe we'd have an OK \$20,000 claimer."

Sometimes horses can fool you, even when you're a good trainer like Ford. That "broken down old horse" is the 3-1 second choice in the morning line for tonight's 2nd leg of the Presidential Series at the Meadowlands.

"It was the best \$10,000 I ever spent by far," Ford said. "There's nothing wrong with him. For one that has raced as long and as hard as he has, he's basically sound. He's not a top free-for-all pacer, but he's very close to it."

Ford took over the training of Silent Swing last spring after the horse had been languishing in cheap races at Flamboro Downs. He gave him some time off and brought him back in May at the Meadowlands. He started off win a 7 3/4-length win in an \$11,000 race and has never slowed down. By the time the year was over he had won 10 times and earned \$245,611.

"For all intents and purposes, we didn't do a whole lot to him," Ford said. "We swim him quite a bit and train him kind of hard. But the answer is, he's just a good horse. He's a special, special horse. What I wouldn't have given to have him when he was a young horse. You never see horses come around and do that, be that far gone and come back."

Five days after his 10th birthday, Silent Swing won a race restricted to 10 year olds and upward and beat better, younger horses in the \$33,000 Open at Yonkers. He's in tough tonight, but he's in great form and, obviously, doesn't want to act his age.

HANDICAPPING TONIGHT'S PICK 4

at the Meadowlands

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By Brett Sturman

Race 6: N/W \$22,750 L5

ROCK TO GLORY grinded away first over and just ran out of track in his pursuit of the race winner in 1:49:2 last Saturday – a night where the track was producing record fast winter times. In his race prior he was dead game against River Shark, and that one went out to win a Presidential division in 1:48:4 the following race. Razor sharp for Coleman. As referenced, **WARNING ZONE** put up a 1:49:2 win last out, after going straight to the front in a relatively mild :27 opening quarter. Similar tactics coming again. **ANDY ROO** won the Preferred on opening weekend and then didn't have the same punch at Yonkers.

MCCLELLAND was much better last week in his second start back, but I feel he may need even more to go with these. **TRANSCENDING** seems to be in line for a piece from the rail; probably won't offer too much value.

Race 7: N/W \$16,000 L5

NOBLE FALCON was in the process of storming by them all last week when he made an uncharacteristic break in the stretch. This one was better than I would have expected from the aging classmaster, but if that sharp again he'll rate a big chance. Had an overland trip two back against River Shark. **NEW RELEASE** gunned last week into a :26:1 opening quarter, was shuffled and had sharp pace late to still close in :26:2. Dangerous.

SMELLTHECOLORNINE was caught in a 1:49:2 mile while making his first start back since last March. **BAY OF SHARKS** exits a 1:50:4 win; now has his work cut out.

Race 8: N/W \$22,750 L5

GREAT VINTAGE showed speed in Warning Zone's (as above) 1:49 mile last week, while making his first start since August. That came on the heels of a 1:51:3 qualifier and this Takter trainee looks ready for a big bounce back season. **BET ON ROULETTE** made a strong brush last out to the front en route to a relatively easy 1:50:2 win.

This will be a bit tougher now but he does land a favorable post once again to help stay close. **ELECTROFIRE** beat #2 on opening weekend and then suffered a shuffle last week after showing speed. Drolet is off to a good early meet, similar to last year. **RUTHLESS ACE** didn't miss by much last out at 100/1, makes second start over the track.

Race 9: Claiming Price \$30,000

BEST MAGIC scored with a well earned win last Saturday, going first over to wear down Poker Hat and prove clearly best. He seems to do his best work at this track and now with a start under his belt from the month layoff; should be good once again. It's worth noting that while he's in for a \$30,000 tag tonight, the third finisher from his recent race (Meant To Be Me) was just purchased for \$40,000 on Monday. The classy **WESTERN TRADEMARK** drops in for a claiming price and beat Keystone Rideau in that recent Q. I'd almost consider a cinch if not for the four months off. **TAMAYO** and **PAN GRAD** both step up against tougher and get slammed with the outside two posts. **MASTER STROKE** drops and lands the rail for Fraley. Will take action, but I'm fairly certain his one's better days are behind him.

The Plays

\$8 ticket: 6-7 / 1-3 / 5 / 3-7

\$54 ticket: 6-7 / 1-3-6 / 2-5-6 / 3-7-9

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Friday's Results:

6, Mea, \$22,500, Pace, *F&M PREFERRED HANDICAP* P.P.1-4 DRAWN; 5-9 DRAWN, M, 27.0, 56.2, 1:24.2, 1:52.3, FT

Mud Pie Hanover (m, 6, Allamerican Native--Mud Hen, by Call For Rain), \$2,500 2007 PA-Pref O-Robert D Main. B-Hanover Shoe Farms Inc. T-Jason Robinson. D-Eric Ledford, \$11,250, Lifetime Record: 93-24-25-13, \$249,334 To view the replay click [here](#)

Meadowlands Report

Friday's Results:

3, M, \$16,000, Pace, CLYDE HIRT STAKE 4 Year Old Stallions & Geldings N/W 3 Extended PM Races or \$75,000 Lifetime Up to & Including 12/10/2011 2nd Leg, M, 27.2, 54.3, 1:22.3, 1:50.1, FT

Thebestofjoel (g, 4, Cammibest--April Magic, by Apaches Fame) O-Burke Racing Stable LLC & Weaver BrusceMI LLC. B-Ross D & Judy R Brown, CA. T-Ron Burke. D-Yannick Gingras, \$8,000, Lifetime Record: 45-7-8-5, \$67,085 To view the replay click [here](#)

5, M, \$16,000, Pace, CLYDE HIRT STAKE 4 Year Old Stallions & Geldings N/W 3 Extended PM Races or \$75,000 Lifetime Up to & Including 12/10/2011 2nd Leg, M, 27.3, 55.1, 1:23.4, 1:51.0, FT

Special T Rocks (g, 4, Rocknroll Hanover--Ladys Special Girl, by Artiscape) O-Daryl Scott Bier & Forrest L Bartlett & Joann Dombeck. B-4 For 3 Stable. T-Daryl Bier. D-Daryl Bier, \$8,000, Lifetime Record: 28-14-6-1, \$101,714 To view the replay click [here](#)

7, M, \$16,000, Pace, CLYDE HIRT STAKE 4 Year Old Stallions & Geldings N/W 3 Extended PM Races or \$75,000 Lifetime Up to & Including 12/10/2011 2nd Leg, M, 27.3, 55.3, 1:23.2, 1:51.0, FT

Sonic Dancer (h, 4, Mach Three--Beach Dancer, by Beach Towel) O-Francis H Azur. B-Enviro Stables LTD. T-Kevin Mc Dermott. D-Brian Sears, \$8,000, Lifetime Record: 11-4-2-2, \$64,119 To view the replay click [here](#)

Woodbine Report

Friday's Results:

2, Wdb, \$42,000, Pace, FILLIES & MARES OPEN, 27.4, 57.2, 1:25.4, 1:53, FT

Rebeka Bayama (m, 5 Leader Bayama--Joyce Bayama, by Run The Table) O/B-Bayama Farms Inc. T-Justin Fillion. D-Sylvain R Fillion, \$21,000, Lifetime Record: 31-18-6-2, \$333,928 To view the replay click [here](#)

Yonkers Report

Friday's Results:

6, YR, \$33,000, Pace, F&M OPEN HANDICAP POST POSITIONS 1-7 DRAWN POST POSITION 8 ASSIGNED, M, 27.4, 57.4, 1:26.0, 1:54.2, FT

1-Cuz She Can (m, 7, Cambest--Second Symphony, by Abercrombie) O-Francis H Azur. B-Walnut Hall Limited. T-Kevin Mc Dermott. D-Jason Bartlett, \$16,500, Lifetime Record: 94-30-20-15, \$845,403

2-Kayla's Dream (m, 4, No Pan Intended--Witchn Flight, by Dragon's Lair), \$8,000 2009 NJ-CL O-Alan Wolnek & William Popfinger. B-Hanover Shoe Farms Inc. T-Eddie Sager. D-Cat Manzi, \$8,250

3-Oceans Motion (m, 5, Camotion--Cr Charisma, by Dream Away) O-Robert J Lovett. B-Rod Allen Inc. T-Chuck Connor Jr. D-Jordan Stratton, \$3,960 Calls: T, 1Q, 2, 1Q, T

Finish Order: Pancleefandarpels, Best Boss, Modern Magic, Shaky Hanover, Nutmegs Yankee To view the replay click [here](#)

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8, YR, \$33,000, Trot, OPEN HANDICAP POST POSITION 1 ASSIGNED POST POSITIONS 2-8 DRAWN, M, 28.1, 57.4, 1:26.4, 1:56.4, FT

1-Fool's Revenue (g, 6, Revenue S--Quit Foolin Around, by Armbro Goal) O-Ronald L & Douglas W & Jason E Allen. B-Bruce B Mc Elven & Ronald L Allen. T-Brett Bittle. D-Pat Lachance, \$16,500, Lifetime Record: 42-12-9-3, \$189,559

2-Sun Of A Victory (g, 6, Victory Sam--Well Connected, by Coleman Lobell) O-Richard Poillucci. B-James C Shipley. T-Mark Harder. D-Jordan Stratton, \$8,250

3-Wuthering Hanover (g, 6, Andover Hall--Windswept Image, by Balanced Image), \$105,000 2007 SHS-HBG O-Randall B Bendis & James P Walton & Diane M Novosel & Reed Broadway. B-Hanover Shoe Farms Inc. T-Albert Meyer. D-Brent Holland, \$3,960

Calls: 6, 5H, 2, T, HD
Finish Order: Pembroke Prayer, Celebrity Bluechip, Big Sky Domino, Twin B Caviar, Keenan To view the replay click [here](#)

7, YR, \$23,000, Pace, F&M NON-WINNERS OF \$25,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 28.2, 58.3, 1:26.0, 1:55.0, FT Quicksilvercandy A (m, 8, Bad Bert--Forzett, by Safely Kept) O-Larry D Stalbaum. B-Allyn Berry, AS & R J Charlton, AS. T-Kimberly Asher. D-Larry Stalbaum, \$11,500, Lifetime Record: 109-29-17-14, \$352,532 To view the replay click [here](#)

9, YR, \$20,000, Trot, NON-WINNERS OF \$18,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 28.3, 58.1, 1:28.0, 1:57.3, FT Pio Power (g, 5, Andover Image--E L Lexi, by Emile Angus) O-Patricia Ceraso. B-Erkki Laakkonen, FI. T-Jack Franklin. D-Jeff Gregory, \$10,000, Lifetime Record: 46-10-7-4, \$158,768 To view the replay click [here](#)

10, YR, \$20,000, Pace, F&M NON-WINNERS OF \$18,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 28.2, 59.2, 1:27.0, 1:56.0, FT Up Front Kellie Jo (m, 6, Bettor's Delight--Life's Highway, by Life Sign), \$40,000 2007 LEX-SEL O-C Ed Mullinax & Mark S Ford. B-Kentuckiana Farms Gen Par. T-Mark Ford. D-George Brennan, \$10,000, Lifetime Record: 107-19-22-24, \$553,704 To view the replay click [here](#)

11, YR, \$23,000, Trot, NON-WINNERS OF \$27,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 27.4, 58.4, 1:28.1, 1:57.3, FT Stand Guard (g, 7, Conway Hall--Cherished Victory, by Valley Victory), \$75,000 2006 LEX-SEL O-Mark S Ford & Barbara A Oppenheimer & Robert O Di Nozzi & David Litvinsky. B-Brittany Farms. T-Mark Ford. D-Eric Goodell, \$11,500, Lifetime Record: 111-26-14-16, \$471,803 To view the replay click [here](#)

12, YR, \$23,000, Pace, F&M NON-WINNERS OF \$25,000 IN LAST 6 STARTS, M, 27.4, 55.4, 1:23.4, 1:53.3, FT Fox Valley Sage (m, 8, Richess Hanover--Pink Cadillac, by Cam's Card Shark), \$7,000 2005 WALKER O-Stephen J Farrell Jr. B-Fox Valley Standardbreds. T-Ralph Andersen. D-Cat Manzi, \$11,500, Lifetime Record: 158-29-35-26, \$411,699 To view the replay click [here](#)

CUZ SHE CAN, FOOL'S REVENUE WIN FRIDAY NIGHT 33G CO-FEATURES

By Frank Drucker

YONKERS, NY--Favored Cuz She Can (Jason Bartlett) kept a longshot at bay Friday night, winning Yonkers Raceway's co-featured \$33,000 Filly and Mare Handicap Pace. Leaving from the pylons as the 9-5 choice, Cuz She Can was away second. She then went up and over early leader Kayla's Dream (Cat Manzi) before a :27.4 opening quarter-mile. From there, a soft :30 next interval (:57.4) give her ammo when millionairess Pancleefandarpels (Eric Goodell) launched her second move from an assigned eight-hole.

However, that one couldn't get serious and out of a 1:26 three-quarter, as Cuz She Can owned a length-and-a-quarter lead into the lane. The 28-1 pocket-sitter took aim, but Cuz She Can held sway. She won by a three-quarters of a length in 1:54.2. Ocean's Motion (Jordan Stratton), Pancleefandarpels and Best Boss (Pat Lachance) completed the cashers.

For Cuz She Can, a 7-year-daughter of Cambest owned by Fran Azur and trained by Kevin McDermott, she \$5.60 for her first win in a couple of seasonal starts. It was the lady's 30th career victory and fourth consecutive local win. The exacta paid \$75, with the triple returning \$594.

Friday night's co-featured \$33,000 Open Handicap Trot saw Fool's Revenue (Lachance) grind to glory. Leaving from post No. 5, he marched first-up from fifth, engaging Pembroke Prayer (Goodell) after that one put up intervals of :28.1, :57.4 and 1:26.4.

Fool's Revenue collared the tiring leader early stretch, then held off Sun of a Victory (Stratton) by a head in 1:56.4. Wuthering Hanover (Brent Holland)--outkicked from the pocket as the 17-10 choice--Pembroke Prayer and Celebrity Bluechip (Bartlett) rounded out the payees.

For Fool's Revenue, a 6-year-old Revenue S gelding trained by Brett Bittle for co-owners Robert (also a co-breeder), Douglas and James Allen, he returned \$7.10 (second choice) for a winning '12 debut. The exacta paid \$42.60, the triple returned \$89.50 and the superfecta paid \$443.50.