

Donovan is excited about Jugette starter Band Of Angels

by Ken Weingartner, Harness Racing Communications

Freehold, NJ --- Bill Donovan is looking forward to seeing Band Of Angels compete in Wednesday's (Sept. 23) \$252,250 Jugette for 3-year-old female pacers at the Delaware County Fairgrounds in central Ohio, but the longtime owner will watch from afar.

"Of course, I'm excited," Donovan said. "Anytime you have a horse good enough to go into one of the premier races in the sport, you're excited. She's earned her way in, for sure.

"(But) I'm very superstitious," he added with a laugh. "Every time I go to a big race, it seems like disaster strikes."

Band Of Angels is one of 12 fillies entered in the Jugette, and one of four horses in the race from the stable of trainer Ron Burke. She will start from post No. 3 with driver Yannick Gingras in the second of two \$50,450 eliminations and is the 3-1 second choice on the morning line. The top four finishers from each division return later in the day for the \$151,350 final. A horse must only win the final to be declared the Jugette champion.

Post time is noon for Wednesday's first race at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, located 30 miles north of Columbus. The Jugette eliminations are races 12 and 13. The final is race 17.



Mike Lizzi photo

Band Of Angels held off Devil Child to win the New York Sire Stakes final at Yonkers.

Band Of Angels heads to the Jugette off a nose win over Devil Child in the New York Sire Stakes championship on Sept. 12 at Yonkers Raceway. Band Of Angels and driver Jason Bartlett started from the outside, post eight, but got the lead in the opening quarter-mile and went on to victory.

"I think most people wrote her off from winning the sire stakes final, but she persevered," Donovan said. "I was surprised myself. Jason Bartlett gave her an aggressive drive getting her off the (starting) gate and she did the rest. She's just been a real pleasure."

Band Of Angels has won six of 13 races this year and 12 of 23 lifetime starts, with total earnings of \$462,745. She has finished worse than third only once in her most recent 12 races.

In 11 career races on half-mile tracks, such as the oval at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, she has posted eight wins, one second, and one third.

"She is awful good on a half-mile track, so I think she'll give a good accounting of herself on Wednesday," Donovan said. "She's been a solid horse this year. When they make the money she's made this year, it's obviously a good year.

"We've been fortunate with Band Of Angels in that she did come out of a terrific 2-year-old season and she has more than held her own at 3. I think she belongs there. I think she's definitely in the top 10 of 3-year-old fillies this year."

Band Of Angels is a daughter of Rock N Roll Heaven, the 2010 Little Brown Jug winner and Horse of the Year honoree, and the mare Time N Again. She is a half-sister to millionaire Romantic Moment and was purchased as a yearling for \$100,000 at the 2013 Lexington Selected Sale.

Donovan is making his second appearance in the Jugette as an owner. His filly Bettor B Lucky finished second to Darena Hanover in the 2012 Jugette. Both horses were trained by Burke.

"I'm hoping to turn the tables on that finish this year," Donovan said.

The morning line favorite at 5-2 in the second elimination is trainer Virgil Morgan Jr.'s Momas Got A Gun, who will start from post No. 2 with driver David Miller. She is coming off back-to-back second-place finishes in the Pennsylvania Sire Stakes championship, where she missed by a head, and Valley Forge Stakes.

A daughter of stallion Somebeachsomewhere out of the mare Benear, she is a full sister to 2014 Little Brown Jug winner Limelight Beach. She has won three of 14 races in 2015 and earned \$313,368.

Triple V Hanover is the 3-1 morning line favorite in the first elimination. The Brian Brown trainee will start from post one, also with Miller in the sulky. She has won four of 11 races this year and earned \$105,265 for owners Donald Robinson, King McNamara, and Strollin Stable.

Following are the Jugette elimination fields in post order with drivers, trainers and morning line odds.

\$50,450 First Elimination

Post-Horse-Driver-Trainer-Morning Line

1. Triple V Hanover-David Miller-Brian Brown-3-1
2. Southwind Roulette-Matt Kakaley-Ron Burke-7-2
3. Bettor N Better-Yannick Gingras-Ron Burke-6-1
4. Moremercy Bluechip-Andy Miller-Julie Miller-10-1
5. Wicked Little Minx-Brett Miller-Nancy Johansson-12-1
6. Mosquito Blue Chip-Jim Morrill Jr.-Paul Jessop-7-2

\$50,450 Second Elimination

1. Serious Filly-Scott Zeron-Brian Brown-6-1
2. Momas Got A Gun-David Miller-Virgil Morgan Jr.-5-2
3. Band Of Angels-Yannick Gingras-Ron Burke-3-1
4. Bedroomconfessions-Tim Tetrick-Tony Alagna-12-1
5. Somewhere Sweet-Jim Morrill Jr.-Brian Brown-8-1
6. Sassa Hanover-Matt Kakaley-Ron Burke-4-1