

## JL Cruze stretches winning streak to 12 in Hambletonian Maturity

by Ken Weingartner, Harness Racing Communications

**East Rutherford, NJ** --- The ride continues for JL Cruze.

Unheralded entering this year, JL Cruze won for the 12th consecutive time, capturing Saturday's (July 18) \$443,300 Hambletonian Maturity for 4-year-old trotters by a neck over Resolve in a world-record 2:04.2 for 1-1/8 miles at the Meadowlands. Shake It Cerry finished third.



*Lisa photo*

**JL Cruze won for the 12th consecutive time, capturing Saturday's \$443,300 Hambletonian Maturity for 4-year-old trotters.**

It was JL Cruze's third consecutive world-record effort, following his 1:49.4 win in last week's Graduate Series final and 1:51 triumph in the Sun Invitational on July 4. The previous record for 1-1/8 miles was 2:05.3, set by Your So Vain in last year's Hambletonian Maturity.

JL Cruze, who was entered into the Hambletonian Maturity for a \$50,000 supplemental fee, was sixth in the race's early going, but brushed to the front after the half-mile point.

"They were trotting out of there hard the last two weeks and I just thought I was going to have to use him pretty hard the first part of it to get there," winning driver John Campbell said. "I was able to come down the backstretch when the pace was slow a little bit. Once he made the front, he did the rest."

Campbell was unconcerned about the race's additional distance.

"Not really," he said. "He's a horse that goes right down to the wire all the time, so I wasn't that concerned about it. It's a top group of horses and he's raced really hard his last three starts. I was more concerned with him keeping his form with the hard racing."

JL Cruze, trained by Eric Ell, has won 16 of 18 races this year and earned \$612,788. He had five wins in 17 races prior to this season. He was purchased for \$37,000 at the November Standardbred Horse Sale Mixed Sale by owners Ken Wood, Bill Dittmar Jr., and Stephen Iaquina.

Four of JL Cruze's last five victories have been by either a neck or a nose. The other win during that span was by a half-length.

"There's no quit in this horse," Iaquina said. "He's just unbelievable. Every week you think maybe he's going to get tired and every week he races better and better."

"It's a dream come true. I keep thinking I'm going to wake up from this dream, but I don't."

JL Cruze paid \$4.00 to win.