

## New York bred fillies well represented in 2015 Jugette

By Tim Bojarski for the harness Horse Breeders of New York

Latham, NY---When you look at the entries for this year's 3-year-old pacing filly classic, the Jugette, one thing seems fairly obvious: New York bred fillies are well represented. In fact, half of the entrants of the stake are from the Empire State.

One week ago, five of the six who are entered in Wednesday's (Sept. 23) Jugette competed in the New York Sire Stakes (NYSS) \$225,000 Night of Champions final at Yonkers Raceway. Those five contested over a rain-soaked track in 1:54, finishing only three-lengths apart from each other. That was clearly a great tune-up for the Grand Circuit test ahead of them in Delaware, Ohio.

The group is led by a trio of Ron Burke trainees; Band Of Angels, Sassa Hanover and Bettor N Better.

Band Of Angels (Rock N Roll Heaven-Time N Again) 1:50 \$462,745, was crowned the New York State champion at Yonkers this year after cutting the whole mile and winning by a nose with a fast :27.4 final quarter.

Prior to that, Band Of Angels was used hard twice in the \$269,000 Empire Breeders Classic at Tioga Downs before coming up just a length short in 1:49.3. The filly left in :26.4 and led the field past three-eighths before yielding the lead. Band Of Angels was asked for more late and responded well, but could only manage third behind the hard charging Mosquito Blue Chip who was the winner.

Earlier this year she had a very impressive effort in the \$207,350 Mistletoe Shallee Stake at the Meadowlands. After winning her elimination heat in 1:50, Band Of Angels got locked in early in the final. When she was finally able to clear, the filly flew through the stretch before coming up just a long-length short in 1:49.2.

Sassa Hanover (Rock N Roll Heaven-Sayo Hanover) 1:49.4 \$704,002, did not compete in the NYSS final, opting instead to race in the Nadia Lobell at the Meadows on September 16. Coming into that race off a two-week layoff, Sassa Hanover cut the mile with stiff fractions of :26.3, :54.4 and 1:22.2 before tiring down the lane to get beat three-lengths in 1:50.4.

Although wins weren't as prevalent this year as last, her performances did not lack for effort. Sassa Hanover was second in the \$117,724 Lismore Final at Yonkers, fourth in the \$387,990 Fan Hanover at Mohawk Raceway and third in the \$350,000 Valley Forge at Pocono Downs. None of those defeats were more than two-lengths.

Last year Sassa Hanover finished second to Horse of the Year, JK She'salady, in the \$500,000 Breeders Crown.

Bettor N Better (Bettor's Delight-Vanite Semalu) 1:51 \$318,568, raced in-state all year and didn't see the Grand Circuit action some of the other entrants have. She did score convincing wins of 1:53.3 at Saratoga Raceway and 1:54.4 at Monticello Raceway and finished the year as the fourth highest point-getter in the series.

Aside from the Burke contingent, the other three New York breders have very impressive credentials of their own.

The Paul Jessop trained Mosquito Blue Chip (Bettor's Delight-Sandfly Hanover) 1:49.3 \$504,511, had a hard act to follow this year after coming away the NYSS 2-year-old pacing filly champion in 2014. However she acquitted herself well, besting both her mark and earnings of a year ago.

After starting off the year somewhat slowly, Mosquito Blue Chip turned it up in June. She strung together eight solid efforts where she didn't miss the board that included wins at Buffalo Raceway (1:53.3), Saratoga (1:53.3) and Harrah's Philadelphia (1:52.3).

In August she got away fourth in the \$269,000 Empire Breeders Classic at Tioga and laid-in-wait behind fast fractions. When she got loose in the lane and fanned three-deep, Mosquito Blue Chip powered her way to the lead and the winner's share of the purse in her career best time of 1:49.3.

Tony Alagna's Bedroomconfessions (American Ideal-Turnoffthelights) 1:50.2, \$318,791, has seen action in some major stakes this year but has come away with minor prizes. Her two best outings were wins in consolation events of the Shady Daisy at the Meadowlands where she won by three in 1:50.2 and the Empire Breeders Classic at Tioga where she was victorious again in 1:51.

Bedroomconfessions only had one win in NYSS competition all year (1:52.1 at Yonkers) but collected a lot of points along the way to make the final. In that event she drew post seven in the mud but closed very well; beaten by three lengths.

Moremercy Hanover (Rock N Roll Heaven-Mercy Mercy Mercy) 1:50.2, \$112,017 is from the Julie Miller Stable and is one of the more lightly raced fillies in the field. After having only four starts as a 2-year-old, she started this year in the second-tier NYSS Excelsior A series. She won at that level in 1:54.4 at Yonkers before moving up to the top-tier sire stakes with victories in 1:53.1 at Saratoga and 1:53.4 at Monticello.

In the state final at Yonkers, Moremercy Hanover got away third and after not pulling first-over, got locked in and shuffled to fifth before finding racing room at the pylons in the lane. She closed well and was beaten only two-lengths in 1:54 over the sloppy track.

The best of this sex and gait the Empire State has to offer will represent its breeding program well in the 2015 Jugette and having routinely competed over New York's five fast half-mile tracks for the last two years, these fillies bring with them the expertise needed to be successful at Delaware, Ohio.