

'New York kind of guy' looks to fire with Missile J in Art Rooney Pace

by Ken Weingartner, Harness Racing Communications

Freehold, NJ --- Ken Jacobs has enjoyed his share of success in harness racing, both on the national stage and at home in New York. He has campaigned horses such as Dan Patch Award winner [Heston Blue Chip](#) and stakes-winners Kenneth J, [He's Gorgeous](#), Doctor Butch, Jewels In Hock, and Becca J, not to mention many other successful horses.

He hopes he can add Missile J to the list in the future.

Unraced at age 2, Missile J has won four of seven races this year and brings a four-race victory streak to Saturday's (May 28) \$300,000 Art Rooney Pace for 3-year-old male pacers at Yonkers Raceway. The Linda Toscano-trained Missile J and driver Brian Sears won the single Rooney elimination last weekend at The Hilltop, but will need to fire like a rocket this weekend after drawing post No. 8 for the final.

"On a half-mile track, it's very tough," Jacobs said about leaving from the outermost spot on the starting gate, which wins at a rate of 3.6 percent at Yonkers. "You need some luck.

"He's a pretty fast horse and has a good attitude. He just has to stay sound. I've got the best trainer, so I'm very lucky. Very lucky. Linda and I have been together for 10 years, maybe longer, and she is very honest and loyal. I really like that. It's been a good partnership and we really enjoy each other."



Mike Lizzi photo

Missile J was a 1:53.2 winner in the Art Rooney elimination on May 21 at Yonkers.

Missile J is a son of stallion [American Ideal](#) out of the mare Cantor's Daughter. Missile J was purchased for \$100,000 under the name Newsmaker Bluechip at the 2014 Standardbred Horse Sale. Missile J is a full brother to stakes-winner Brownsville Bomber and his family includes millionaire Cam Swifty and stakes-winner Lonesome Day.

"I picked them all the same way," Jacobs said. "I have my own criteria that I go on. Once they fall into that, I look at their conformation and family. That's how I do it. If the conformation is there, that's the one I try to get. I really liked this horse.

"He trained down real good last year, but he got sore so we just quit with him. He's a pretty nice horse."

Jacobs owns Missile J with Wanda Polisseni's Purple Haze Stables.

"She said that every year I pick out winners, so could she have a piece of this one," Jacobs said, laughing. "She's such a wonderful person; she really is. She's good for the sport. She just loves the business. We're pretty good friends, so it was no problem. I'm happy Wanda is in on this horse."

Missile J debuted with a ninth-place finish on Jan. 2, but since then hasn't been off the board in six races. His first win came in 1:51.1 on Feb. 20 in a conditioned race at the Meadowlands and he lowered his career mark to 1:51 with a victory at the Big M a week prior to the Rooney elimination. The triumph followed a respite of more than two months away from the races.

"I gave him time off because I want him fresh for the rest of the year; we've got races all the way into November," Jacobs said. "That kind of helps him I think, giving him a little rest in between."

Missile J is staked to the top races on the New York circuit and also has the Progress Pace on his schedule.

"I didn't put him in the Breeders Crown or Meadowlands Pace because I wasn't sure how he was going to come back," said Jacobs, who owns a company with multiple locations in upstate New York that distributes electric motors, drives, controls, motor parts and power transmission products. "I thought he was going to be OK, but winning a couple non-winners of two (conditions) you don't know if you can go with the big guys.

"He's got the Empire Breeders Classic and the New York Sire Stakes, races that I enjoy. I'm a New York kind of guy. (Driver) John Campbell calls me 'Billy Joel.' That's my nickname to him. He says I'm just a New York kind of guy. I just enjoy the racing. I have to go against the big guys; little old me, I (own) five or six horses. People think I buy 50 horses every year, but I really don't. I usually get two colts and two fillies. But I'm very passionate about it."

In the Rooney final, elimination runner-up Rodeo Rock will start from post two for driver Daniel Dube and trainer Don Swick. He finished 1-3/4 lengths behind Missile J, who paced in 1:53.2 for the win. Elimination third-place finisher Artmagic, owned by Purple Haze Stables and coupled with Missile J in the wagering, will start the final from post No. 1. George Brennan is listed to drive for trainer Trond Smedshammer.

Saturday's card at Yonkers also includes the \$100,000 Lismore Pace for 3-year-old female pacers. For more, click [here](#).