

## MISSILE J WINS 300G ART ROONEY PACE

BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Saturday, May 28, 2016—It was as uneventful an eight-hole trip as Missile J (Brian Sears, \$2,60, part of entry) could possibly have wished for Saturday night, winning Yonkers Raceway's \$300,000 Art Rooney Pace.

A week after winning the lone, \$40,000 elim for the 26<sup>th</sup> Rooney, Missile J was blind-drawn behind the eight-ball in a field of two 3-year-old colts and six geldings.

He was in play early over a track that was moisturized by a fair amount of pre-card rain. Missile J fell into an open three-hole behind pole-sitting entrymate Artmagic (George Brennan) and Rodeo Rock (Dan Dube), who left a bit wide from post position No. 2 to make sure Missile J couldn't get around him early.

Artmagic had things his own way over the "good" surface, getting a :27.3 opening quarter-mile and :56.1 intermission.



The leader then lost his closest pursuer, as Rodeo Rock gave up the ghost chasing a :27.2 third quarter (1:23.3). Missile J had taken out of third by then, getting into second and picking up the scent of the leader.

Artmagic owned a length-and-a-half lead into the lane, but his night was about to end. Missile J and a handful of closers rolled by, with Missile J drawing out to win by 2¼ lengths in 1:53. Second—at 37-1—went to a much-improved Tailgunner Hanover (Ray Schnittker), with Yankee Artillery (Jordan Stratton), Artmagic and Manny (Brent Holland) settling for the smaller remainder.

No Shame Blue Chip (Tyler Buter), Rodeo Rock and a breaking Tap into Power (Jason Bartlett) completed the order.

For Missile J, an unraced-at-2, \$100,000 American Ideal gelding co-owned by Ken Jacobs' KJ Stables and Wanda Polisseni's Purple Haze Stables and trained by Linda Toscano, it was his fifth (consecutive) win in eight seasonal starts. The exacta paid \$51.50, with the triple returning \$194.50.

“Last week was his first (half-mile) start and he was a bit aggressive,” Sears said. “Tonight, he was more relaxed and the trip, from an eight-hole, certainly worked out. I was happy with him in the elimination and happier tonight.”

“He just wasn’t ready (last season),” Toscano said. “We had to take our time with him, and it’s begun to pay off. The Rooney was always where we wanted to try him. He has (New York) sire stakes and open stakes on the schedule, and tonight was a good first step.”

Sears won the Rooney for a fourth time (Badlands Hanover-2008, Pet Rock-2012, In the Arsenal-2015), matching the number of one John Campbell.

The race began in 1989, one year after the death of Art Rooney Sr.

(photo-Mike Lizzi-accompanies)

(FFI...Frank Drucker, Yonkers Raceway Publicity Director, 914-968-4200)