

EMPIRE'S GLAMOUR GANG IN 167G NYSS HUGH GRANT PACE
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Friday, June 24, 2016—Yonkers Raceway Friday night welcomed the Empire's glamour division in the \$167,874 New York Sire Stakes Hugh Grant Pace for 3-year-old colts and geldings.

A pair of \$83,937 events comprised this statebred visit.

The first division saw pocketed maiden-no-more Roll Away Joe (Matt Kakaley, \$10.40), from post position No. 3 (in one notch after a scratch) stalk pace-setting Fine Diamond (George Brennan) through intervals of :28.2, :58 and 1:26.1.

"Joe" then ducked inside, whipping Fine Diamond by three-quarters of a length in 1:53.4, with Art Rooney Pace winner Missile J (Jim Morrill Jr.) a belated third as the 3-5 favorite, unable to reach from off the pace.

For third choice Roll Away Joe, a Roll with Joe gelding co-owned by Steve Demeter, Thomas Lazarro and Howard Taylor and trained by Tracy Brainard, he's now 1-for-9 this season (1-for-14 career). The exacta paid \$30.40, with the triple returning \$72.

"He was really good and the trip worked out perfectly," Kakaley said.

Friday's second NYSS grouping had Brennan and pole-sitting Artmagic (\$7.60) pop pocket before the half, widen the advantage down the backside and hang on for dear life.

Concur (Brent Holland) made the lead before a :28.3 opening quarter-mile, then Artmagic took it away coming to the :58.2 intermission. He had a couple of lengths in and out of a 1:26.1 three-quarters and enjoyed an open lead into the lane.

The hooves were getting heavy late in the game, but Artmagic found the end zone when he needed it. He held off a long-uncovered, just-over-even-money fave Craftship (Scott Zeron) by a neck 1:55.1, with Autotune Hanover (Morrill Jr.) third.

The slogging final quarter tightened up the ranks, with the five cashers separated by just a length at the line and the entire octet by just 2½ lengths.

For second choice Artmagic, an Art Major gelding trained by Trond Smedshammer for Purple Haze Stables, it was his first win in five seasonal starts. The exacta paid \$22.20, the triple returned \$53 and the superfecta (Bottom Deals [Brian Sears]) paid \$682.

"It wasn't pretty, but we got the job done," Brennan said.

Friday's \$45,000 Filly and Mare Open Handicap Pace was won by a from-last Mach it a Par (Zeron, \$23.40) in 1:52.2 (note last week's victress and this week's eight-hole assignee Krispy Apple was scratched-lame).