

Hey Blondie (Cantab Hall-Winbak Blondie-Muscles Yankee)



Hey Blondie was third after a first-over trip in the Hambletonian Oaks elimination won by Manchego, finishing four lengths back and trotting her mile in 1:52, with a 27.1 last quarter.

Hey Blondie has six wins, two seconds, and five thirds from 18 career starts, and she shows earnings of \$355,256. Her lifetime mark is 1:53.1, which she claimed in winning a Grand Circuit event at The Red Mile last year. Her biggest career win was last year's \$198,000 Kindergarten Classic final at the Meadowlands, and she also took a Tompkins division over the one-mile East Rutherford, New Jersey, oval this year.

"She's doing all she can do. She's just a nice mare," said trainer Chuck Sylvester. "She's honest; she'll get what she can. If they mess up, she can pick up the pieces. She's not a great mare, but she's a nice mare.

"She found out she wasn't in with the same bunch (in the Tompkins). She figured that out at the head of the stretch, they weren't going quite as fast, which was to her liking.

"She's got great manners. She's made a couple breaks, but most of the time it was my fault. She's just a pleasure to be around and drive. And not much vet work at all. She's OK.

"She didn't grow that much (over the winter). I was hoping she would grow more. She frets in the stall. She takes a lot out of herself."

Breeding Notes

Hey Blondie is by Cantab Hall, who was third in his elimination and second in the final of the 2004 Hambletonian. Her dam, the Muscles Yankee mare Winbak Blondie, is a full sister to 2009 Hambletonian winner Muscle Hill. Hey Blondie is her first foal.

A \$125,000 acquisition at the 2016 Standardbred Horse Sale in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Hey Blondie was bred by Hanover Shoe Farms Inc. Hanover has been the winning breeder in the Hambletonian Oaks on three previous occasions (2002 – Windylane Hanover, 2001 – Syrinx Hanover, and 1974 – Berna Hanover). That total is the third-most in history, trailing only Castleton Farms (six) and Brittany Farms (four).

Driver – Andrew McCarthy

Born: 3/31/1986 – Birthplace: Bathurst, Australia – Resides: Swedesboro, NJ

Andrew McCarthy, 32, drove in the Hambletonian Oaks final last year, finishing seventh with Caviart Wonder.

McCarthy has seen his purse earnings increase annually since the start of 2013, reaching \$5.52 million in 2017. His campaign last season was bolstered by successes on the Grand Circuit, winning events including the Jugette with Caviart Ally and Spirit of Massachusetts with JL Cruze, as well as in state-restricted stakes. McCarthy won seven stakes worth at least six figures in 2017, compared to three in 2016 and one in 2015.

On July 6, McCarthy got career win No. 2,000 when he drove Mother Bonnie to victory in a New Jersey Sire Stakes division at the Meadowlands.

A chance meeting with trainer Noel Daley inspired McCarthy to leave Australia and head to the U.S. in 2007. In his third lifetime drive in the States, McCarthy piloted Daley's Took Hanover to a 1:49 win in the open at the Meadowlands.

McCarthy is a third generation horseman. His brothers Todd and Luke, who raced in the U.S. in 2009, are successful drivers in Australia and his father John is a highly-regarded trainer. The McCarthy family was selected by the Bathurst Harness Racing Club as its 2016 Gold Crown honoree.

Luke McCarthy drove in the U.S. briefly in 2009 and is remembered for filling in for Brian Sears and winning the World Trotting Derby with Hambletonian champion Muscle Hill. Interestingly, Sears did not drive Muscle Hill only twice in the Hall of Fame horse's 21-race career. The other occasion occurred at Lexington's Red Mile in 2008 when Muscle Hill was a 2-year-old. The driver that day was Andrew McCarthy, who also won with the colt.

Trainer – Chuck Sylvester

Born: 6/18/1940 – Birthplace: Toledo, OH – Resides: De Leon Springs, FL

Chuck Sylvester, 78, has trained four Hambletonian winners, which is tied with Jimmy Takter for second most in history. Stanley Dancer, Billy Haughton and Ben White each has won five times.

Sylvester's Hambletonian winners were Mack Lobell in 1987, Park Avenue Joe (dead heat with Probe) in 1989, Muscles Yankee in 1998, and Chip Chip Hooray in 2002.

Sylvester has won the Hambletonian Oaks once, that coming in 1993 with Winky's Goal.

Mack Lobell was a two-time Horse of the Year, in 1987 and 1988. Sylvester also won Sweden's famed Elitloppet with Mack Lobell, in 1988.

A native of Ohio, Sylvester began in the sport in the mid-1960s, campaigning at Raceway Park and Detroit area tracks. Among his numerous stars was two-time Trotter of the Year Pine Chip.

Sylvester was the sport's Trainer of the Year in 1985 and 1987.

He was inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 1998.

Owners – Steve Jones, Mary Kinsey Arnold, Paul L. Bordogna, and David H. McDuffee

Of the ownership group, only McDuffee has won a Hambletonian Oaks previously as he was a partner on 2013 champion Bee A Magician.