Thunder Bay makes big noise at Mohawk

Hoof Beat
with BRUCE MURRAY

The loudest thunder coming through the sixth race at Mohawk Friday night was courtesy of Thunder Bay.

The three-year-old son of Presidential Ball picked off horses one by one until reaching the front just before the wire in the only division in the third leg of the Youthful Pacing Series.

Driven by Randall Waples, the home-bred of owner John Basllio of Ancaster, covered the mile in a career best 1:53.4 for his first win in just two season starts.

"He was ready to race. Brett (Robinson) gave him a good drive last week and didn't hurt him a bit," said Waples.

"He just blasted home for me. He has so much go to him."

Fierce finish

Waples said the victory was all the more impressive considering the moderate fractions of :28, :57.2 and 1:26 — as well as where Thunder Bay was situated through much of the race after starting from post nine.

"He was parked the whole mile and I didn't want to be that far back," said Waples.

"But I wasn't really concerned. He's built like a tank. I think the final next week will come down to post position. Locksmith Hanover has a ferocious late kick to him."

Thunder Bay, out of the fine producer O.J. Almahurst, is a three-quarter brother to standouts John Street North (1:50.2, $895,912) and Paling Avenue (1:52.2, $677,990).

At two, he won twice in 10 starts, including a speed tab of 1:54.1.

Sent off as the 6-5 favourite, Thunder Bay returned $4.80 to win and topped a $193.40 triactor with Gehrig and Giggle At Life.

Locksmith Hanover, a winner in the first two legs, opted to miss the third leg, but is expected to be back for the $53,000 final this Friday.

The Youthful Series was open to three-year-olds who were non-winners of three races or $15,000 as of December 31, 1999.

Added attraction

Racing fans were treated to one of the best stretch drives of the year in the weekly $38,000 Fillies & Mares Open. Four of the circuit's finest females were spread across the track nearing the finish with Canada's pacing darling, Odies Fame, emerging victorious in a Herculean 1:52.1 mile.

It was the first victory since last October's Breeders Crown for the world champion daughter of Apaches Fame. Paula Seelster was second with Nines Wild and PanYankees third and fourth respectively.

"She's just learning to race like that," said driver Dave Wall, referring to Odies Fame adjusting from her front and style of her two and three-year-old campaigns.

"(At two and three) she was never in against the likes of these mares so it was easy for her to race like that but these old mares are so smart, they'll save enough for later in the mile.

"You have to race her different but she'll race anything. She's just a great horse."

Trained by co-owner Harold Wellwood for his partner Dr. Norm Amos, Odies Fame's 20th career win boosted her career bankroll to nearly $1.2 million.
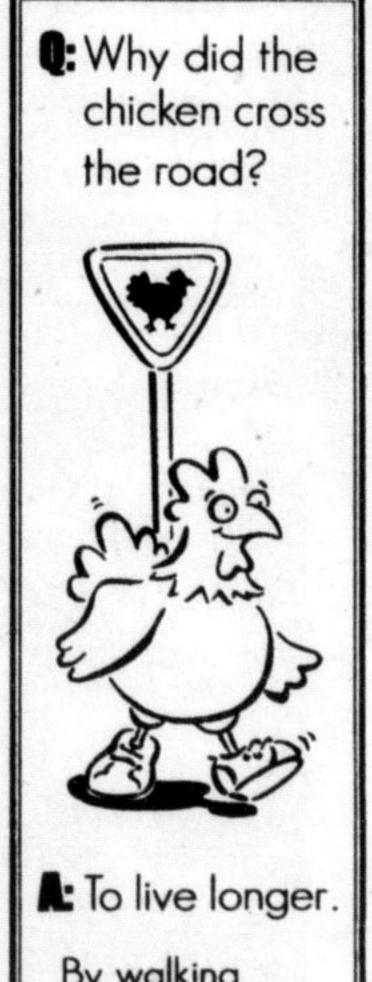
Sign up for hockey clinic

Registrations are now being accepted for Mike Schutte's Defenceman's Training Camp/Cross Border Hockey — which once again will operate in two one-week sessions through late August at Burlington's Appleby Ice Centre.

The camps run from August 14 to 18 and from the 21 to 25.

Intermediate and elite camps feature several area OHL and NCAA guest demonstrators.

Tuition — which includes five full days of drills and competition — is $129 per play.

For more information or to receive an application form, call 335-1504.

Olympic trials to run locally

The road to Sydney, Australia will lead through Milton, Ontario this summer.

Milton has been selected as one of five locations for the Olympic Selection Trials of the Canadian Show Jumping Team.

Halton Valley will host the fourth leg of the trials on July 23, after a stop in Alberta and two in Quebec. The fifth and final qualifying event will be held in Bolton, Ontario.

The top two riders in the overall standings after the five events will be selected to the Olympic team. Two additonal horse/rider combinations will be named by the selection committee to make up the team of four, with one more added as an alternate.

Two local riders, Ainsley Vince, and Heather Manbert-Serniuk, will be among the competitors, along with Pan-Am gold medallist, Ian Miller.

The night before the competion, Halton Valley will be hosting a Black and White gala ball to help with fundraising for the team. For more information you can call 905-827-2234 and speak to Sandy Holst.