

Tight finishes and upsets highlight Super Finals at Mohawk Saturday

By SANDRA SNYDER
Special to The Champion

Tight finishes, upsets, triumphant champions — the first ever Ontario Sires Stakes Super Final Night offered enough drama to keep Mohawk Racetrack fans spellbound for hours on Saturday night.

Sharise Seelster kicked off the \$1.6 million night with a popular win in the Two-Year-Old Trotting Filly Final. The Brisco Hanover filly is trained and driven by George Kirmis of Elmira, and when the duo crossed the wire in 1:59.4 the roar from Kirmis' hometown could be heard in Campbellville.

Zirmis shares ownership of the winner of \$339,757 with Nancy Holmes of Clinton, Dennis Fairall of Windsor and Spero Mavrou of Islington. The partners paid \$10,000 for Sharise Seelster at last fall's yearling sale and she rewarded them with the season of a lifetime — winning two Gold Finals, the Robert Stewart Stakes and three Trillium Series events. She was the only horse on Saturday night to record a win in the first Gold Final of the year and the season ending Super Final.

Owner left speechless

"To have one like this is just, words can't express it," said Holmes. "It was a thrill of a lifetime."

Another horse that capped a stellar season with a Super Final win on Saturday was two-year-old trotting colt Banker Hall, who ran off on the field through the stretch to a 1:57.3 triumph. Tommy Andersson of Gotene, Sweden owns the Balanced Image colt, who captured six of his last seven starts of the season including the Breeders Crown last weekend at Mohawk.

Red-hot driver Trevor Ritchie of Acton piloted the colt to the easy win for Andersson and trainer Harald Lunde and said the colt was even sharper than he had been for the Breeders Crown Final.

"He was much sharper as a matter of fact," said Ritchie. "He was real strong. Every time I squeezed the lines over him he just dropped his rear and went a little faster."

The win was the first of two for Ritchie, who also piloted Hambletonian winner Yankee Paco back to the top of the three-year-old trotting colt division in the sixth race. After going off stride in the Breeders Crown Elimination and failing to make the Final, questions were raised about the Balanced Image colt's season-ending stamina, but the handsome chestnut colt thumbed his nose at detractors with a commanding five-length 1:56.2 victory.

"It was kind of gratifying that he redeemed himself after all the controversy. He was very good, he won easy," said trainer Doug McIntosh. "I was confident tonight, but after something happens like the Breeders Crown, I guess you get skeptical. Once a horse gets jammed they lose their confidence a little bit, but he's a warrior."

The biggest upset of the night occurred in the Three-Year-Old Trotting Filly Final when Ob La Da stuck a head in front of Casual Breeze, who had gone undefeated in Ontario Sires Stakes action all season. Ob La Da finished 11th in the point standings and squeaked into the Super Final when the fifth-place point earner did not enter.

Picture perfect performance

Trainer Roger Mayotte gave the New Victory driver a picture perfect drive behind pacesetter Armbr Troika and then pushed past horses in the stretch to score her first win of the season in 1:56.2. Fern Stables of Willowdale own the filly, who returned \$142 for the win.

Two races later Legacy Of Fame completed her domination of the Three-Year-Old Pacing Filly division with a 1:54.4 win that prompted driver Luc Ouelette to say a mannequin wearing his race colours could have driven the filly and posted the same result.

Gregg McNair trains the talented filly for breeder Bob Chapple of Chatham. Chapple also bred and raced her sire Apaches Fame, who led the post parade for all of the pacing Finals.

Intrepid Seelster and Miltonian Steve Condren made an impressive three-wide sweep of the field to score a 1:52.4 win in the sophomore pacing colt class. The Camluck colt is trained by Windsor's Bob McIntosh for his partners Don MacDonald of Amherstburg and CSX Stables of Ohio.

After playing bridesmaid to Cupcakeswhipcream all season two-year-old pacing filly Royas Bambi put all the pieces of the puzzle together to score the biggest victory of her career.

Paul Mackenzie gave the Bo Knows Jate filly a textbook come-from-behind steer as the leaders clocked hot early fractions and then zipped by in the stretch for the 1:55.3 victory.

Robert Irving of Mossley and Ed Hathaway of London own the gifted pacer, entrusting her training to Domenico DiCicco.

Another youngster who had been knocking on the door all season finally pried it open and scorched up the stretch to a win in the Two-Year-Old Pacing Colt Final. Five-time runner-up Silent Dex reeled in the leaders with an impressive move through the stretch that propelled him under the wire in 1:55.2 and took four seconds off his personal best.

Gord McDonnell trains the Dexter Nukes son for breeders Glory B Stable, and Miltonian Chris Christoforou gets the credit for the tactical setter that landed the winner of \$123,170 in the winner's circle for the third time this season.

The Ontario-bred stars now enjoy a two-week rest before the Canadian Breeders Championship, which will give them one last opportunity to demonstrate their skill on the national stage.

Juveniles win big over Newmarket

Milton's AA juveniles broke a two-game losing skid in fierce fashion Wednesday night — pummeling host Newmarket 6-0.

Josh Arnold backstopped the locals to victory — their first on the road this season — while anchoring the offense with a pair of goals and an assist was Georgetown native Riley McAneney.

The Winterhawks' other marksmen were Jordan Jeans, Cory Leigh, Ryan Parson and Chad Merritt — who also contributed a couple of assists, as did Derek Mewhinney.

Milton scored four goals in the opening frame and overall delivered a robust performance en route to victory.

The win squared the team's regular season record at 3-3.

Saturday's home game against Stouffville was cancelled when the visitors could not ice a full squad.

Milton is in Peterborough tonight at close out the week at home against Penetag Saturday. Game time is 8:30 p.m.

On a hot streak

Milton's AA minor peewee's extended their current win streak to four games by knocking off first-place Georgetown 3-1 October 30.

Luc Hartwick deposited the game-winner for the

Rep Hockey

Herman Miller-sponsored crew nine minutes into the first period, shortly after Jake DeMarsh put the team ahead with an unassisted shorthanded marker.

Providing the insurance goal in the third was Jeremy Brown. Assists went to Andrew McLean and Graham Sharp.

Netminding partners Brendan Duke and Devin Plater have been rock solid between the pipes throughout the local's recent hot streak.

Decisive first win

Milton's A minor peewees earned a little payback for a previous loss to Hespeler, toppling them 5-2 at home October 29.

The win, the club's first this year, was highlighted by an explosive start and topflight cage work from Paul Herder.

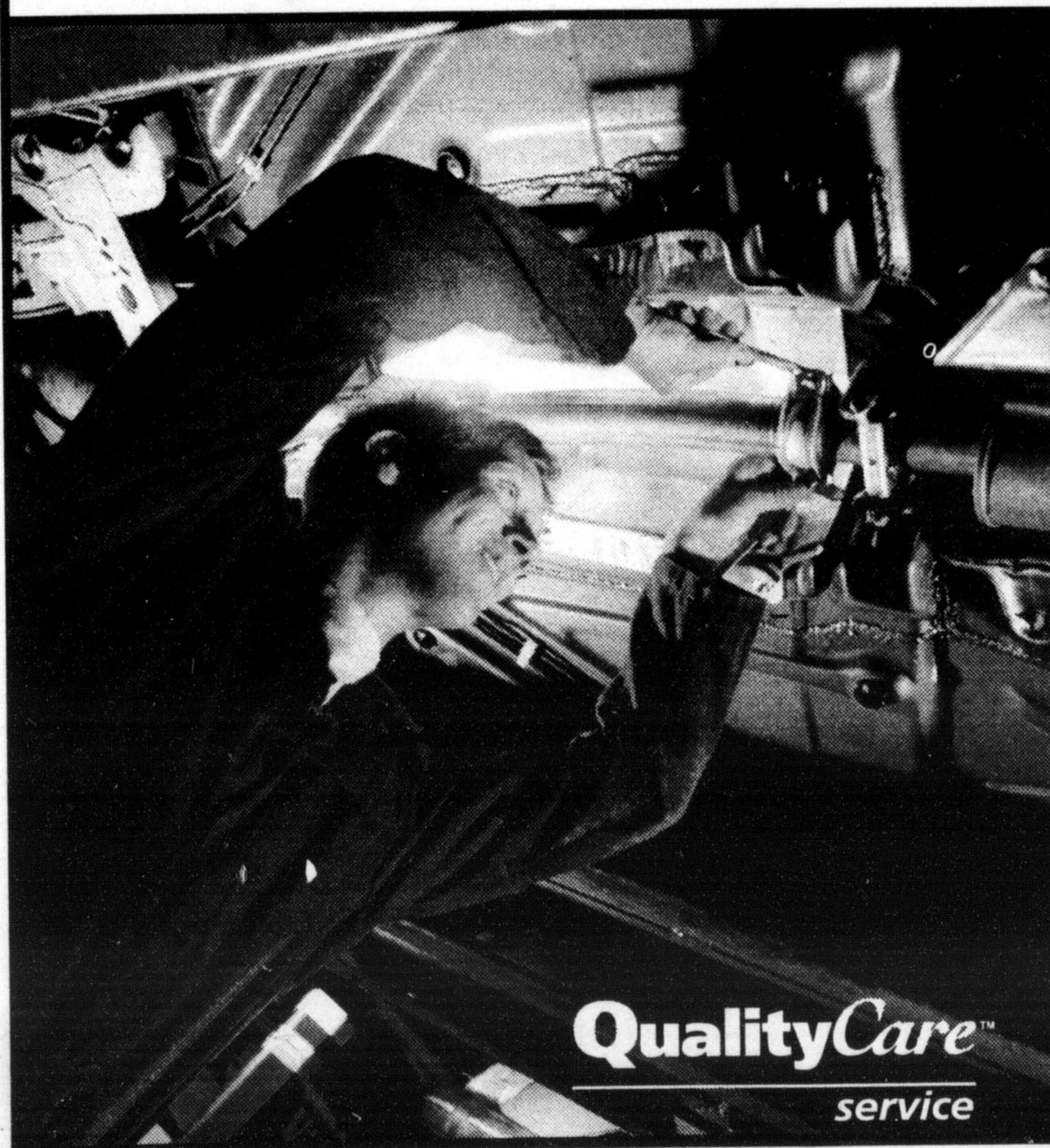
The Millweld Enterprises sponsored crew received two goals from Chris Short and singles from Michael Bruno, Joey Czikk and Mike Melo.

Shea Deli and Lindsey McFarlane picked up assists off a couple of well-marked point shots.

Hespeler's goals came late in the game when the verdict had already been decided.

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