

Bax enjoys dream evening at Saturday's Super Finals

By SANDRA SNYDER

Special to The Champion

John Bax raced four horses in three Ontario Sires Stakes Super Finals at Mohawk Racetrack Saturday night and went home with three wins and one second.

The Peterborough horseman opened the \$2 million Gold Series Championship with a one-two finish in the two-year-old trotting filly event, when Natashas Kiss held off stable-mate Pepi Lavec to score the 1:59.4 victory.

Bax trains Natashas Kiss for Al Libfeld of Pickering and Sam Goldband and Marvin Katz of Toronto and shares ownership of Pepi Lavec with Campbellville's Glengate Farms.

"The order was a surprise. I own part of one so I was kind of hoping it would be the other way," Bax quipped after the race.

Bax clearly did not communicate his pre-race thoughts to Milton driver Chris Christoforou, who put Natasha Kiss on the front end just past the :27.4 first quarter. Once she gained command of the race, the Balanced Image lass rolled through fractions of :57.2 and 1:28.3 en route to a three-and-half length win, which shaved more than three seconds off her personal best showing.

Said owner Marvin Katz, "I would have liked to see her sit in the hole a little longer, but Chris knows what he's doing. He said she felt really strong and he was confident the whole mile.

One racer later Bax, Libfeld, Katz and Goldband were back in the winner's circle when Duke Of York captured the two-year-old trotting colt Super Final.

In rein to regular driver Paul MacDonell, the Breeder's Crown champion surprised his connections by reaching the front just past the quarter mile marker and cruising around the Mohawk oval to a 1:59.2 triumph over Whitesand Titan and Lockkeeper.

The win added \$125,000 to Duke Of York's \$546,142 bank balance and may be the last time Ontario fans see the talented trotter before the start of his sophomore season. While a final decision has yet to be made, Bax thinks they may opt out of the Canadian Breeders Championship and rest on their

laurels until 2002.

However, fans will see Bax in the Canadian Breeders event with his third Super Final winner Northern Bailey. The Balanced Image son took full advantage of the absence of Breeders Crown champ Liberty Balance to score his second straight victory in what has been an erratic and frustrating season for Bax and his partners Brian Parkinson of Sharon and William White of Peterborough.

Veteran trotter Goodtimes also made the trip to Mohawk Saturday N spending his evening in the Fuji Film booth inside the grandstand. The \$2 million winner happily posed with more than 300 fans eager to make his acquaintance.

Donven Promise kept sire Balanced Image from sweeping the trotting divisions with an impressive 1:56.4 victory in the three-year-old trotting filly contest. The Promise Catch daughter and trainer-driver Tom Strauss tailed division-leader Yankee Fribble into the final turn and then fired off to score a two-and-a-half length win.

In the pacing events two-year-old filly Precious Delight extended her win streak to 10 with a 1:54.1 victory for owner Peter Heffering of Port Perry and trainer Duane Marfisi while favourite Pacific Titan could not hold off a late rush from early-season star Camystic in the freshman colt event.

Camystic and driver Sylvain Fillion caught the pace-setter at the wire to eke out a 1:54.4 win for Newmarket's Millar Farms.

Fernbank Fiona scored an upset in the three-year-old pacing filly division when she exploded out of the pocket and sprinted by pace-setter Run Around Jate to score a five-length 1:55.4 victory. Stittsville's John Fleischman bred and owns the Camluck miss. As expected, the three-year-old pacing colts delivered an impressive finish with Youmustbekidding prevailing for a 1:53.4 victory on behalf of Black Horse Racing of Lebanon, New Jersey.

The \$2 million Super Final Championship wrapped up the 2001 Ontario Sires Stakes season, which once again showcased some of North America's finest two and three-year-old standardbreds.

Sr. Mustangs toppled in semis by the Ridge

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

The Mustangs could only hold the floodgates shut for so long.

Overmatched in tier two semifinal play against host Iroquois Ridge Friday, Milton District High's senior football team exhausted all of its resources just keeping the opening half close.

Hopes for a comeback victory — or at least a respectable finish — fell by the wayside, however, as the visitors were eventually disposed of 47-14.

Held a brief lead

A short-lived seven-point lead early on was about the only bright spot enjoyed during battle with the heavily-favoured Trailblazers.

"It was quite a good first half from a competitive standpoint," said head coach Keith Pearce, whose team fared much better against the Ridge — losing 28-18 — in regular season play just a month earlier. "But overall they've got a lot of team speed that we just weren't able to contain (for long)."

Defensive half-backs Ryan Page and Josh Suter gave credible efforts in this department and accounted for the lion's share of tackles.

By and large though, their team just

didn't measure up to the versatile and often explosive hosts.

A 27-0 whitewash after half time put things way out of reach for the underdog Mustangs. Iroquois Ridge scored just minutes into the third quarter and from there turned up the heat for the balance of the afternoon clash.

One more TD for Delpratt

MD's back-to-back touchdowns in the opening half were capped by a lengthy completion by pivot Mark Grimwood to receiver Lewis Delpratt — who scampered into the end-zone for a team-leading sixth time this year.

Brandon Byers delivered the initial major on a short run to complete an impressive drive fueled by reliable rushers Greg Van Es and Lee Frittenburg.

Both extra-point kicks came from Justin Preece.

Friday's semifinal loss, which followed three straight wins including a 24-7 quarterfinal decision over White Oaks, evened the seniors' season record at 4-4.

"Overall, we're pleased with the season. Both the seniors and juniors making it to the semifinals is definitely something," said Pearce.

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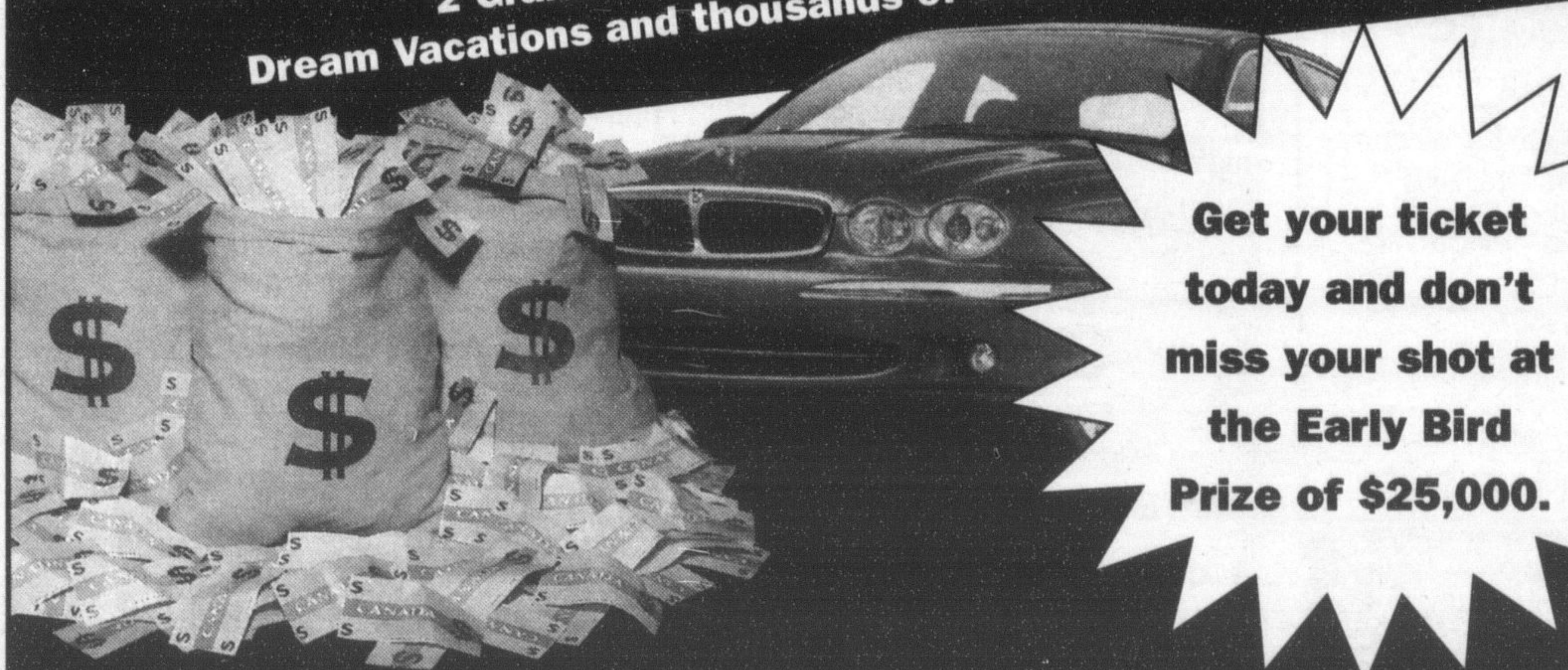
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