

Jr. Mint continues brilliant career with Pacing Series win

By **BRUCE MURRAY**
Special to The Champion

As almost everyone expected, highly-regarded Jr. Mint went post-ward as the odds-on favourite entering Friday evening's \$87,000 final of the Mohawk Pacing Series.

The brilliant three-year-old son of Northern Luck entered the event on a seven-race unbeaten string including overpowering triumphs in both his elimination dashes of the series.

In further establishing himself as one of the sport's up and coming bright lights, Jr. Mint didn't only come out on top with a superlative performance, but he also tied the great Gallo Blue Chip for winning his first six consecutive races over the Campbellville oval.

As the field burst off the gate, Execujet and Miltonian Chris Christoforou out-duelled Allamerican Theory and Doug Brown for the front end, leading the field through a blistering :25.4 opening frame. Jr. Mint and driver Paul MacDonell chose to sit a reserved fifth, seven-and-a-half lengths behind heading to the backstretch.

MacDonell pulled the Jack Darling-trained colt off the rail midway through the straight-away and quickly advanced on the pace-setter. Jr. Mint was third and driving as Execujet and rang up the half in :55.3. Jr. Mint continued his advance as Execujet kicked into a higher gear, meeting the challenge going into the final turn.

As the pair of bay colts passed the three quarters in a blistering 1:22.3, Jr. Mint slipped by his determined rival, but the battle wasn't over.

The pair fought right to the wire with Jr. Mint earning the decision by a hard-fought neck in a stakes record 1:50.3.

"He certainly did go an unbelievable trip," said MacDonell. "It's not like we are under perfect conditions out here. The winds are blowing pretty well, but he just continues to amaze me."

MacDonell also spoke about his duel with Christoforou and Execujet as they made the turn for home.

"The second quarter was kind of slow," explained MacDonell of the :29.4 split. "I thought if I could step him up I might be able to sneak around him (Execujet) and get to the front, but Chris' horse went an awfully brave race as well. He made me earn every dime of it."

Jr. Mint's eighth win in a row was also his ninth in 11 starts this year. The lifetime mark also added \$43,500 to the colt's career earnings, which now sit at \$179,360.

"He was getting tired (at the end). He had gone a pretty good trip," continued MacDonell. "He just seemed to dig down and find some more energy. He was fully extended at the end, but you can't ask anything more from him then that."

Darling, who co-owns Jr. Mint with partners Dan Smith of

Dorchester, Ontario and Brittany Farms of Kentucky, will now point his impressive colt towards Indiana for the Hoosier Cup on May 30.

Jr. Mint returned \$3.10, \$2.40 and \$2.10 for the win. Execujet (\$3.30, \$2.50) filled out the bottom half of the \$7.50 exactor, while Tycoon Hanover (\$2.70) rounded out the leader board and the \$20.90 triactor.

Later in the program, Armbro Amoretto, the 2002 O'Brien Award winner as Canada's champion two year-old filly pacer, competed in her first race of her three-year-old campaign.

The standout daughter of Artsplace sat ninth behind stalled cover in the field of 10 until the three-quarters pole, when Milton driver Steve Condren found enough daylight to maneuver the 2002 Breeders Crown champion to the outside. She flashed some great late kick to finish sixth, only one-and-a-quarter lengths back of 82-1 long shot Miss Billie Le Ru. Armbro Amoretto paced her mile in an impressive 1:52.2.

Miss Billie Le Ru (\$166.90, \$40.50, \$16.60) combined with Come Out Running (\$5.10, \$4.20) for an eye-catching \$710.60 exactor. With Devereaux (\$9.30), the triactor returned a lofty \$15,633.90.

The opening of 2003 Ontario Sire Stakes season, featuring two divisions of three year-old trotting colts, highlights Saturday's card of racing. Post time is 7:40 p.m.

Sports Shorts

It's once again time to get in gear for the 2003 Milton Triathlon.

This year's event will be held June 1 — as always, at Kelso Conservation Area.

Part of the Subaru Triathlon Series, Milton's season-opening competition will once again include races for those of all skill levels.

For the beginner, there's a Try-A-Tri introduction featuring a 375-metre swim, 10-kilometre bike, 2.5-kilometre run course. More ambitious athletes will want to tackle either the 1km swim, 30km bike, 7.5km run triathlon, or the 2km run, 30km bike, 7.5km run duathlon.

Event organizers are still looking for volunteers, and any non-profit group that gets 10 or more people together to help out will receive a small portion of the proceeds.

To sign up as a volunteer or participant, or for more information, call Harry Barnes at 1 (519) 823-2173 or e-mail him at hbarnes2411@rogers.com.

The Halton Invictas Football Club of the Ontario Varsity Football League will begin their season on May 23 at 8 p.m. in Cambridge.

The home opener will be at Burlington's Nelson Stadium against the Brantford Bisons on May 31 at 7 p.m.

Three more graduates of the Invictas program were taken in the CFL draft this year, including Joe McGrath from the University of Miami, St. Mary's Joe

Bonnaventura and Kojo Aidoo from McMaster University. This brings six former Invictas in the past two years that have been picked up by CFL teams.

Due to upcoming repairs at Nelson Stadium, two home games have been moved to McCrae Field in Wentworth, Hwy. 8, two miles north of Hwy. 6. All previously purchased tickets will be honoured at McCrae.

The Invictas are still registering players. For more information, visit www.haltoninvictas.com or call Jack Crawford at (905) 639-5992.

The Golden Horseshoe Touch Football women's recreation division begins June 3. New and experienced players interested in playing this season should contact Sue at (905) 383-6460.

Games are played on Tuesdays in Burlington from June to August.

Players interested must register before May 23. The entry fee is \$100 per player.

The Ringette Association of Burlington is holding early registration for girls' and women's ringette.

Females four-years-old and up are encouraged to sign up. Early registration will be held June 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Burlington's Appleby Ice Centre.

For more information, visit www.eteamz/rab.com, or call Kelly at (905) 681-0135 or Eve at (905) 335-3196.

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Tuesday, June 10 and Thursday, June 12, 2003

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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2515 Wyecroft Road, Oakville (south of QEW at Bronte Road)

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AUDIT AND REVIEW SERVICES

The Halton District School Board and its affiliates, The Halton Learning Foundation and The Centre for Skills, Development and Training, are requesting proposals from qualified auditing firms for the provision of External Audit and Review Services.

Information packages may be picked up at the J.W. Singleton Education Centre, 2050 Guelph Line, Burlington.

An information session will held on Friday, May 23, 2003 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the J.W. Singleton Education Centre. Attendance at this session is optional.

The Request for Proposal, T03-21, closes at 2:00 pm on Friday, May 30, 2003.



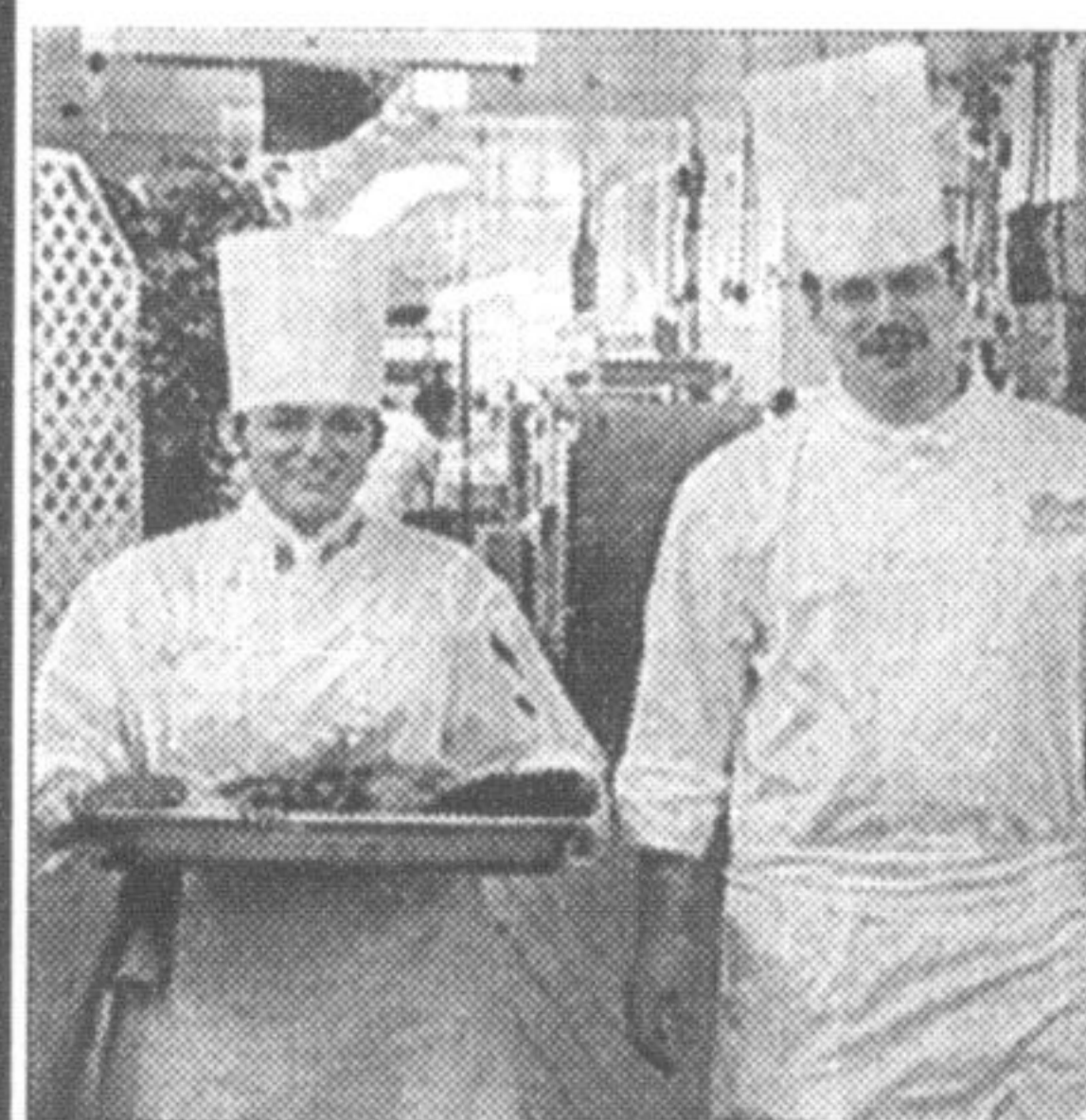
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