

Striking Sahbra fillies lead way in Gold Final

The key to winning the triactor in Monday night's \$130,000 Gold Final for two-year-old trotting fillies at Mohawk was simple — just select the top three money earners by red hot sire Striking Sahbra.

Birmingham and driver Trevor Ritchie led a parade of Striking Sahbra daughters across the finish line in the fifth race, finishing a nose in front of fan favourite Pure Ivory and three lengths ahead of Highmighty.

The outstanding battle between reigning Gold Final winner and previously undefeated Pure Ivory began as soon as the starting gate swung away from the field of young trotters. From post one, Ritchie and Birmingham left enough to hold their position on the rail, but were content to let elimination winner Lisa's Mission take control of the race and lead the fillies to a :27.3 opening quarter.

Meanwhile, Milton's Steve Condren and Pure Ivory landed in sixth and were sitting on the outside as they swept by the quarter-mile marker.

At the :58.4 half, Lisa's Mission was still in command of the pace, Birmingham was sitting comfortably in second and Pure Ivory had found room on the rail in fifth, but her moment of respite was brief, as Condren sent her after the lead heading toward the 1:28.4 three-quarter station.

By the time the fillies turned for home, Pure Ivory had established a one-and-a-half length margin and her fans were getting ready to cash a win ticket, but Ritchie



Hoof Beat

with JEFF RENTON

turned Birmingham loose heading down the stretch and the talented youngster was able to reel in the favourite — getting a nose in front to claim the victory.

The fillies stopped the teletimer at 1:57.1, just one-fifth of a second shy of Peaceful Way's 2003 Ontario Sires Stakes record over the seven-eighths mile oval.

Pure Ivory jumped up the Super Final points standings with her runner-up finish, while Highmighty sits just below the top-10 with 37 points.

Birmingham now boasts a record of three wins, two seconds and a third through six starts, for earnings of \$184,297. The precocious trotter's previous personal best was the 1:59.1 mile she delivered in her Robert Stewart Stakes win at Mohawk August 16.

Although she was only beaten by three-quarters of a length in last week's elimination round, Mohawk fans overlooked Birmingham Monday evening, sending her off as their sixth choice in the field of 10.

Birmingham will have an opportunity to add a third Gold Final trophy to her collection when the two-year-old trotting fillies head to Flamborough Downs for their fourth Gold Series event September 25.

Veteran minor hockey coach makes jump to Jr. A ranks

Tucker will run defense for Dupont's IceHawks

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Glen Tucker's not exactly a newcomer to the local junior hockey club, although his initial stint was far too short for even hardcore fans to remember.

"Milton was the only way from Henry Carr to Streetsville, so I was only there about a month," said the former junior defenceman.

Now residing in town, the 36-year-old has been coaching ever since he finished playing — both through minor league organizations and with his long-running Shoot to Score hockey school — and recently made the jump to Jr. A as an IceHawks assistant.

Brought in with fellow assistant Mike Taratino — who spent last season as an assistant coach with Bowling Green after four productive years at RIT — Tucker will handle the defensive side of things and is certainly looking forward to the season ahead. "It's a big transition, but I've learned a lot from George (Dupont) already and I think we're all on the same page," he said.

Milton's third-year bench boss agrees, adding, "Glen's a guy who's got the experience and commitment to help make this a better team."

Offering a similar opinion was the IceHawks' lone hometown player, Matt Price, who along with kid brother Jeremy has been part of Tucker's hockey school for several years.

"I think it's awesome him coming here (to IceHawks)," said the sophomore forward. "Glen brings a lot of experience and his shooting techniques should really help us."

Tucker — who's spent the last three years coach-



Photo by KAREN NEWMAN

IceHawks assistant coach Glen Tucker talks strategy with a blueline hopeful during exhibition play against Georgetown Sunday.

ing with the Milton Minor Hockey Association and now sits on its board as a director of player development — admits the IceHawks could use a little more experience on the blueline.

However, he's confident with the defencemen they do have, including recently-acquired Jordan Skinner of the Jr. B Welland Canadians.

"He's got a real physical presence and is strong coming out of his own end."

Tucker and the IceHawks wrap up their exhibition schedule tonight at home against Mississauga and kick off the regular season next Friday at Memorial Arena versus Brampton. Both games start at 7:30 p.m.

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HAC tryouts at Maplehurst park

The Halton Athletic Club is currently holding tryouts for its three baseball teams for 2006 play at Maplehurst Ball Park.

Players can try out for the 18-and-under, 16-and-under and 14-and-under elite clubs on September 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., as well as on other Saturdays

and Tuesday and Thursday evenings later in the month. HAC clubs play tournaments throughout the spring and summer, with a few in the U.S.

Those interested in trying out are asked to contact HAC director of communications Rimas Ulba at (905) 796-8214 or info@hacbaseball.com.

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