

## BREEDERS CROWN 2-YEAR-OLD FILLY TROT

VALENTINA BLU (Chapter Seven-Corazon Blue Chip-Muscle Hill)



Finished fifth in her Breeders Crown elimination to Lilbitalexis, which kept her record perfect in bringing home a check in all nine of her career starts, although she has won just once. Raced once in a New Jersey Sires Stakes leg in early July at The Meadowlands, finishing second, and also raced three times on the New York Sires Stakes circuit, including a second-place finish in the \$200,000 final on Sept. 10 at Yonkers. Her 1:58.1 win in a New York Sires Stakes leg on Aug. 19 at Yonkers is her only winner's circle trip this year. In fact, when she put her head first at the wire it still is the only time she has been in the lead in any of her races. Off her runner-up outing in the NYSS final, trainer Tony Alagna sent the bay filly to Woodbine Mohawk Park for the Sept. 25 Mohawk Million where she finished third at longshot odds of 55-1 in a field of mostly males (the race was won by the filly Venerable, who made a break in her Breeders Crown elimination and failed to advance to the final). Her start in the Breeders Crown final was the first in a month since the Mohawk Million.

"She caught a virus coming out of Canada, so we scratched her the first week at Lexington. I hoped to race her the second week, but she just wouldn't shake it, so we didn't enter her back," Alagna explained of the month-long absence from racing. "She has literally trained two times since the Mohawk Million, and she was able to put in a good enough effort to be fifth (in her Breeders Crown elimination). She definitely needed the race and it should make her that much better for the final."

SELFIE QUEEN (Muscle Hill-Lady Lakewood-Kadabra)



Finished second by 1 3/4 lengths to Lilbitalexis in their Breeders Crown elimination after leading at every call through three-quarters. Made a break in the New Jersey Sires Stakes final as a longshot outsider, but then got on track at The Red Mile in the Kentucky Sires Stakes Championship Series where she won three of four preliminaries--including a career-best 1:51.2 on Sept. 5--before posting a 3 3/4-length, 1:53 win in the \$250,000 final on Sept. 19 as the odds on 1-5 betting favorite. Trainer Nancy Takter then sent her to Woodbine Mohawk Park for the Mohawk Million, where she was saddled with the outside post 10. After getting parked early and getting rough, she eventually faded and made another break in the stretch, ultimately crossing the wire eighth but placed ninth. She then returned to The Red Mile where she finished second in an Oct. 9 International Stallion Stake division.

"I was happy with her (in the Crown elimination)," said trainer Nancy Takter. "She was a little sick in her last start in Lexington, and with the ship home (to New Jersey) had a little bit of sickness, so I wasn't really able to train her as much as I would have liked between the last start in Lexington and (the Crown elimination). So, she needed the race for sure."

With Scott Zeron picking up the drive in Selfie Queen's last two starts, Takter noted: "Scott is getting used to her. He's driven her twice now, so I think it sets up good for the final."

LILBITALEXIS (Walner-Jolie De Vie-Muscle Hill)



With stablemate and heavy favorite Venerable making a break in the final turn to take her out of contention in their Breeder Crown elimination, Lilbitalexis saved the day for the Nifty Norman Stable as she parlayed a pocket trip for driver Dexter Dunn behind front-stepping Selfie Queen into a 1 3/4-length, 1:53.3 victory. The Walner filly comes into the Breeders Crown final with seven wins and one second in nine starts. That lone second-place finish came at The Red Mile on Oct. 9 in an International Stallion Stake division when she got caught in deep stretch by Raised By Lindy, who captured the other Breeders Crown elimination. Her career best of 1:52.2 came in a Sept. 17 Kindergarten leg at The Meadowlands. She also has a 1:52.4 score in a Bluegrass division at The Red Mile, romping home by 5 3/4 lengths ahead of runner-up Brickhouse Babe, who is also in the Crown final. She is co-owned by Pinske Stables (with David Hoese), which was voted the 2020 Owner of the Year Award by the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

"She has come along good," driver Dunn said after Lilbitalexis' Breeder Crown elimination score. "A little tricky earlier, a little feisty. She is learning how to be a racehorse and has nice speed. When you ask her to go, she really has some speed."

DELILAH HANOVER (Muscle Hill-Danielle Hanover-Cantab Hall)



Trained by Nifty Norman, she is a stablemate to Alilbitalexis. Finished fourth in her Breeder Crown elimination behind Raised By Lindy after having to go three wide from sixth in the final turn. And making her way to third, she held position despite driver Todd McCarthy having to grab hold when Joviality S came out of the two hole in front of her, before finishing 4 1/4 lengths behind the winner. She has won twice in 11 starts this year, with her victories coming in a New Jersey Sires Stakes leg on July 9 at The Meadowlands (career-beset 1:54.4) and a Champlain division on Aug. 26 at Woodbine Mohawk Park. She picked up her biggest check of her career--\$37,261--when she finished third to Venerable in the \$326,850 James Doherty Memorial on Hambletonian Day at The Meadowlands.

"I was really pleased with her," Norman said after the Crown elimination. "It was kind of a tough trip there. They were walking (first half in :58.3) and she made a big move and had to check up when (Joviality S) came out of the two hole. I thought that it cost her a couple of lengths. She's getting better and better and seems to be finishing the year off good."

RAISED BY LINDY (Walner-Birthright-Credit Winner)



Won her Breeders Crown elimination in 1:54.4, leading gate to wire for driver Yannick Gingras despite having been raced from behind in her previous eight attempts. The win was her third straight and

followed up a career-best 1:51.3 effort in an International Stallion Stake at The Red Mile. After coming up victorious in her debut in a New Jersey Sires Stakes in early July at The Meadowlands, she hit a lull and posted three consecutive off-the-board finishes, including a sixth in the James Doherty Memorial. But she then turned it around and has since posted four wins and a second in her last five starts.

She is driven by Yannick Gingras, who is a five-time winner of the Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Filly Trot, including a stakes-record 1:51.4 win with Mission Brief in 2014.

She is trained by Domenico Cecere, the private trainer for Lindy Farms, which bred and owns the daughter of Walner, who won the 2016 Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Colt Trot final. Lindy Farms was co-breeder and co-owner of the 1997 Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Filly Trot champion My Dolly.

"This, I think, is the second time she raced on the lead, and she's been learning a lot," said trainer Cecere after the Crown elimination. "It looks like she has developed into a very nice filly. In the beginning when we started, she was anxious to do everything quick. But we did a good job to get her to settle down. When you have the head, the brain, in the right place, we see the speed is there, that's the best thing."

JIGGY JOG S (Walner-Hot Mess Hanover-Cantab Hall)



One of two entries from trainer Ake Svanstedt, she finished third by 1 1/2 lengths in her Breeders Crown elimination behind Raised By Lindy. Opened up her career with a fourth and a second in New Jersey Sires Stakes preliminaries, and then finished second in the \$200,000 final behind Venerable. She then finished second behind Joviality S in a James Doherty Memorial elimination before getting parked the entire mile in the \$326,850 final after starting from post seven and finishing eighth to Venerable. Svanstedt then sent her to The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono for an overnight on Sept. 7 that was a hefty drop in class where she won the \$11,000 contest by 6 3/4 lengths in 1:56.2. In her next start on Oct. 2 in a Bluegrass division at The Red Mile, she was again an open-lengths winner in a career-best 1:52.2. She was then second the second stakes start in Lexington in an International Stallion Stake split, which led into the Crown eliminations.

"Her first race in Lexington she was very good, the second race she was a little off," said Svanstedt. "But now she is good again. I don't think she liked it in Lexington, staying in the stall and jogging every day on the racetrack. She wanted to be home and go in the paddock every day and relax. She likes that better. So I hope she can be good (in the final)."

EBBIES LADY (Southwind Frank-Ebbtide Hall-Cash Hall)



One of two entries from trainer Ake Svanstedt, she finished fifth in her Breeders Crown elimination behind Lilbitalexis. She has won just once in nine starts this year, that coming in a Pennsylvania Sires Stakes leg of Aug. 16 at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono when she trotted in 1:55.2. She was then sixth in the \$253,000 final at The Meadows, which led into a second and third in stakes action at The Red Mile.

"Ebbies Lady did good (in the Crown elimination), she finished fifth, which is what I expect of her," said Svanstedt. "It will be tough for her to make money in the final."

BRICKHOUSE BABE (Walner-Royal Assets-Donato Hanover)



After rallying mildly in the stretch, finished fourth in her Breeders Crown elimination behind Alilbitalexis. Also finished fourth to Venerable in the \$200,000 New Jersey Sires Stakes final on July 16 at The Meadowlands. A four-time winner this year in nine starts, she finished second to Venerable in the \$326,850 James Doherty Memorial final to pick up a check of \$77,627. In both the Sires Stakes final and Doherty final she started from the outside post 10. Her career best of 1:54.1 came in a Sept. 24 Kindergarten leg at The Meadowlands.

She is trained by Ray Schnittker, who won the Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Filly Trot final in 2011 with Check Me Out. Brickhouse Babe's dam, Royal Assets, who was also trained by Schnittker and owned by Steve Jones, a co-owner of Brickhouse Babe, finished fourth in the 2012 Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Filly Trot.

"She raced OK (in the Crown elimination)," said trainer Schnittker. "She was a little hot for some reason, so I've got to get her to calm down a little bit. Anyway, with Venerable out (of the final), she probably has a shot. She seems like if we keep her on a helmet she can usually really finish when she's on her game. She got post eight in the (Crown) final, and that probably won't hurt her if she's right."

JAYA BAE (Walner-Mission Brief-Muscle Hill)



Finished third in her Breeders Crown elimination to Lilbitalexis after closing from seventh at the half. The lightest-raced filly in the final, this will be just her fourth start of her career. Trainer Marcus Melander (who also starts Joviality S in the Crown final) didn't debut her until Oct. 2 at The Red Mile where she won an overnight in 1:54.2, and she followed that up with a career-best 1:53.3 score in a similar event one week later. Her third-place finish in the Crown elimination was thus the first loss of her career. Sold at a then-record yearling price of \$725,000 (as Kadena), she is a daughter of Walner out of Mission Brief, who won the 2014 Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Filly Trot in a stakes-record 1:51.4.

"She raced tremendous (in the Crown elimination)," said Melander. "She was a lot quieter than she was the second week of Lexington. She got a little grabby for Brian (driver Brian Sears). He took her back (in the Crown elim) and she was perfect steering-wise and she finished very strong. I'm very excited about her. This was her third start, so this will definitely put her forward.

"She trained down very well and then she ran into some problems," Melander added, explaining the delay in getting to the races. "She had three qualifiers in the summer, and after the last one, me and (owner Anders Strom) decided to step back a little bit. She was growing a lot and just needed some time to develop."

JOVIALITY S (Chapter Seven-Pasithea Face S-Muscle Hill)





She finished second by 1 1/4 lengths in her Crown elimination to Raised By Lindy. Driver Brian Sears sent her to the early lead in in the Crown elimination but then yielded the top to Raised By Lindy before the opening quarter call. With a back half of :56.1 after a front half of :58.3 by Raised By Lindy, she could not catch the winner down the stretch. Overall, she has seven wins and two seconds in 10 career starts, with her biggest checks coming via wins in the \$200,000 New York Sires Stakes final at Yonkers Raceway and the \$200,000 Kentuckiana Stallion Management at Harrah's Hoosier Park. With earnings of \$369,998, she is the richest of the 10 Crown finalists. She trotted her career best of 1:53 when she won a stakes race on Oct. 9 at The Red Mile which led into the Crown eliminations.

A daughter of Chapter Seven, she is out of the Muscle Hill mare Pasithea Face S, who was a star in Sweden before arriving in the U.S. in 2017 as a 5-year-old, where her handful of starts saw victories in the Steele Memorial at The Meadowlands and the Dayton Trotting Derby at Hollywood Dayton. She was entered to race in the Breeders Crown Mares Trot but was scratched.

"She's done everything right," said Melander about Joviality S. "She always tries her best. She's easy to be around, easy to drive. But with post 10 for the final, it is very tough from there."