

The Meadowlands • August 7, 2010 • Purse \$1,710,000



“Massive” Muscles His Way To Victory

The 2010 Hambletonian went to post a wide-open affair, with three different elim winners vying for the role of favorite. At the wire, Muscle Massive, beaten a half-length in his \$70,000 Hambletonian elim by Pilgrims Taj, turned that same half-length distance to his favor, prevailing over Lucky Chucky in the second fastest clocking in Hambo history.

Trainer Jimmy Takter scored his second Hambletonian victory with a blue-blooded colt sired by 1998 Hambo winner Muscles Yankee.

"This is a race everyone dreams of winning," said a jubilant Takter post-race. "I always had faith he could win it."

Drive Ron Pierce shared that same faith, turning in a sharp steer as he guided Muscle Massive through a perfect tour of the one mile Meadowlands oval.

"I knew when he warmed up nobody could beat him," said Pierce. "He was so good scoring down I knew it was up to me to get the job done driving."

Pierce got the job done in textbook fashion, zipping out of the gate at the start to drop in the two hole, then letting the race unfold as elim winner Cassis and Tim Tetrick cut fractions of :27.1 and 54.3. When race favorite Lucky Chucky and John Campbell went on the attack approaching the last turn, Pierce had Muscle Massive perfectly poised to pursue them. Lucky Chucky seized the lead from Cassis with three-quarter pole time unwinding in 1:22.2 and Pierce slipped out from behind the fading Cassis, drafting behind Lucky Chucky as Campbell geared him up to sprint away in the stretch. It was at that point that Pierce made his move, counting on Muscle Massive to run down Lucky Chucky in the straightaway. Pierce took dead aim on Lucky Chucky's two length lead and let his colt roll, wearing down Lucky Chucky till Muscle Massive surged to the fore a mere 50 feet from the wire. Lucky Chucky was second and Wishing Stone closed well for third with George Brennan in the bike..

A Hambletonian victory is a stand-alone triumph in a career, let alone on the day. For Jimmy Takter it was the crown jewel in a day that saw him start nine horses, win three races and take home \$1.1 million in purses. For driver Ron Pierce it was Hambletonian No. 3, following a 1993 win with American Winner and Donato Hanover's 2007 victory.

The Muscle Massive ownership group was comprised of four Canadians and two Swedes, all standing in Hambletonian victory lane for the first time – most on their first try! Marvin Katz, Al Libfeld and Sam Goldband, (brothers-in-law and business partners respectively) have long shared ownership on race horses and one of the finest trotting broodmare bands in the sport. They won the 2008 Hambletonian Oaks with Creamy Mimi, and were second in the 2002 edition with Duke Of York.

"Muscle Massive was a joy to be involved with," Libfeld said. "From purchasing him for the highest price two years ago, to his successful three-year-old season, capped off with the thrilling Hambo win." Libfeld gave thanks to Muscle Massive's trainer, Jimmy Takter, and his daughter, Nancy, for their stellar job of realizing his potential.

Louis Camara teamed up with Takter in 2006 on the top pacing filly Armbro Dancer but experienced his first Hambletonian winner with Muscles Massive (he also shared ownership on On The Tab, who was ninth).

Stefan Balaczi (Order By Stable) and Anders Agerup [Brixton Medical AB], both Swedish natives, were making their first start in a race that is sought after by trotting enthusiasts around the globe.

Hambletonian 2010 was also watched and wagered on around the world, and despite the six-hour time difference continues to grow as a global event. Record European wagering helped produce the third highest harness handle in history. Total all-source wagering on the 15-race card was \$8,391,600, trailing only the \$8.8 million wagered in 2002 and \$9 million wagered in 2005.

International wagering was nearly \$2.4 million, up sharply from the \$1.97 million wagered on the 2009 simulcast. The Hambletonian was part of a seven-race bundle beamed to France, Monaco, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The first 10 races from the Meadowlands were sent to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia and Malta.

A crowd of 26,712 turned out to watch Muscle Massive edge Lucky Chucky in the \$1.5 million Hambletonian. The attendance was an increase of nearly 4 percent over the previous year and the highest since 2006.

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- The time of 1:51 was a 4/5ths of a second off the 1:50.1 stake and world record set by Muscle Hill in 2009.
 - Muscle Massive was fourth choice in the field of ten at odds of 7-1, race favorite was Lucky Chucky.
 - Muscle Massive became just the fourth horse to win the final who did not win his elim since eliminations were moved to the week before the race in 1997. The other three were Glidemaster (2006-2nd in elim), Windsong's Legacy (2004- 3rd in elim) and Amigo Hall (2003-3rd in elim)
 - Since Muscle Massive did not win an elim, he was put in the open draw and drew post six. Both Vivid Photo (2005) and Amigo Hall (2006) started from post six. Five and six are the winningest post positions at the Meadowlands.
 - Jimmy Takter conditioned two other horses in this race, besides the winner. Hard Livin finished seventh and On The Tab was ninth.
 - On The Tab went on to win the second leg of the Trotting Triple Crown, the Yonkers Trot. Muscle Massive did not enter that leg, but was 2nd in the first heat and 4th in the final heat of the Kentucky Futurity, the third leg. It marked the second time Takter won two jewels in the Trotting Triple Crown with two different horses. It has happened only one other time since 1991.
 - The favorite, Lucky Chucky, driven by John Campbell and trained by Chuck Sylvester, was beaten a half length. A win would have increased Campbell's lead in the Hambo standings to an astounding seven wins and given Sylvester his fifth Hambo title, which would tie him with Stanley Dancer, Bill Haughton and Ben White.
 - "My horse raced his heart out," John Campbell said of runner-up Lucky Chucky. "What made all the difference was that the trailing horses couldn't keep up, so that made it too easy for Muscle Massive."
 - The half-length margin of victory was the shortest since 2002, when Chip Chip Hooray got a neck in front of Like A Prayer. Ironically, trainer Chuck Sylvester was on the winning end of that neck margin.
 - Muscle Massive was the highest priced yearling of 2008, commanding \$425,000 at the Standardbred Horse Sale, Harrisburg, Pa. That's the fifth highest sale price ever offered for a yearling trotting colt, with the highest the \$650,000 given for Experience Victory in 1999. The high price given for Muscle Massive in a year that saw the national economy go in the tank was easily justified by his gaudy pedigree. Muscles Massive was bedecked with trotting bluebloods on both his paternal and maternal side.
 - Muscles Yankee, the sire of Muscle Massive, stands at Perretti Farms in Cream Ridge, N.J. for a fee of \$20,000. He claimed three consecutive Hambo winners in Muscle Massive (2010), Muscle Hill (2009)

and Deweycheatumnhowe (2008). No other sire has done so in the 85-year history of the race, though Star's Pride has sired the most winners of the classic race with eight.

- Muscle Massive's maternal family has produced in excess of 10 \$100,000 yearlings and five \$250,000 yearlings including Muscle Mass (\$100,000) and Touchdown Town (\$320,000).
- Muscle Mass was an undefeated seven-for-seven two-year-old, who retired as the fastest freshman son of Muscles Yankee, setting a world record 1:53.4 in just his second lifetime start. Muscle Mass stands stud in Ontario.
- The next foal out of Graceful Touch after Muscles Massive was a filly named Thatsnotmyname, by 2004 Hambletonian winner Windsong's Legacy. She was also purchased by Takter (for Order By Stable) at a price of \$250,000. Thatsnotmyname won the \$437,000 Merrie Annabelle stakes on Hambletonian Day, boosting Graceful Touch's progeny earnings by nearly \$1 million in a single day.
- Graceful Touch (Pine Chip) is one of only two foals and the only daughter of \$400,000+ winner Act Of Grace, who was driven by John Campbell in the 1996 Hambletonian for trainer Stanley Dancer. Though she finished second in the first heat behind superstar filly Continentalvictory, Act Of Grace made a break behind the gate in the final heat and finished ninth. Her first foal, a colt named Cobol, sold for \$290,000 in 1998. Two years later her filly Graceful Touch was hammered down for \$285,000. Act Of Grace died at age seven, but left behind a rich trotting legacy.
- With so much money at stake for his expensive purchase, Takter showed extraordinary patience and faith in the colt, who suffered an injury during winter training that delayed his freshman debut. Muscle Massive ended his two-year-old year with just two wins in six tries, a mark of 1:57 and earnings of \$25,527. Muscle Massive did not make the Breeders Crown final at age two after breaking stride in his elimination at Woodbine, which was won by Lucky Chucky. Pilgrim's Taj won the '09 Crown final. All three returned to be in the Hambletonian at age three. The pressure was on for Takter to produce a stellar sophomore year.
- Muscle Massive entered the Hambletonian having hit the board in six of his seven starts, with wins in a leg of the New Jersey Sire Stakes and a division of the Stanley Dancer Memorial, the final prep for the Hambo.
- Much of the divisional attention centered around Lucky Chucky, defending Dan Patch divisional champ, and 2009 Peter Haughton winner Holiday Road. Holiday Road had won two of three starts [Dickerson Cup and a division of the Stanley Dancer] before finishing second to Lucky Chucky in their Hambletonian elim. Ray Schnittker, who won the 2008 Hambletonian with Deweycheatumnhowe, also had a top contender in Cassis and won the fastest Hambletonian elim.
- Cassis was the 39th Hambletonian starter raced by the Gerry family's Arden Homestead Stable of Goshen, N.Y., beginning with a two-horse entry in the Hambletonian Stake No. 1 in 1926. Their winners include Deweycheatumnhowe (08), Flirth (1973) and Titan Hanover (1945).
- What a difference a year makes...Trainer Greg Peck made his first appearance in the Hambletonian in 2009 wining with Muscle Hill. His 2010 contender, Holiday Road, won his elimination but made a break and was tenth in the final.
- Both Takter and his four-legged charge suffered from back problems. Takter saw several doctors before he found one who helped, and also persevered with Muscle Massive, crediting Dr. Patty Hogan with trying a cortisone treatment on Muscle Massive to relieve soreness.
- Though Muscle Massive was perfect on Hambletonian day, he only won one more race, the \$122,829 Simcoe in Ontario, before ending his campaign in October. The divisional lead continued to change hands, as Muscle Massive finished third behind Lucky Chucky and Break The Bank K in the \$1 million Canadian Trotting Classic. Next came the Breeders Crown at Pocono Downs, which featured the first

four finishers in the Hambletonian, but that race was won by Break The Bank K. Wishing Stone won the last few races of the season – the Kentucky Futurity and the Matron.

- Muscle Massive was retired to stud after finishing second and fourth in the Futurity, with earnings of \$1,239,138) and his Hambletonian record of 1.51. He was syndicated by Hanover Shoe Farm of Pennsylvania to stand for a fee of \$10,000.
- Lucky Chucky was named Dan Patch divisional champion among his peers. He received 108 votes, Muscle Massive garnered 16 votes, Kentucky Futurity winner Wishing Stone got five votes and Breeders Crown winner Break The Bank K received two votes.
- Takter was recognized as the sport's top trainer with the Glen Garnsey Award from the U.S. Harness Writers' Association. It was a record third title for him, having won in the honor in 2000 (co-winner with Mark Ford) and 1996.
- Takter also trained 1997 Hambletonian winner and Horse of the Year Malabar Man.
- For Takter, Hambletonian day was the apex of an extraordinary year. The green and black colors of the Takter stable were constantly seen on the track as his nine starters in harness racing's richest day warmed up, post paraded and went to the gate. Three of those starters made a trip to the winners circle - and unbelievably a fourth also won but was disqualified.
- Two-year-old trotting filly Thatsnotmyname won first, in the \$437,000 Merrie Annabelle, followed by Pastor Stephen's victory in the \$500,000 Peter Haughton. Pastor Stephen was disqualified and placed sixth for interference - a call that would be disputed by the owners but eventually upheld – making Muscle Massive responsible for erasing that unpleasant experience with a Hambletonian victory. A win by sophomore pacer Rockin Image (by a head over eventual Horse of the Year Rock N Roll Heaven!) was the capper, and the Takter stable earnings tallied up at \$1,108,450. Not bad for a day's work.
- Jimmy Takter set personal records in 2010 of 119 wins, and earnings of \$7.8 million. This ranked him second in the standings, behind Ron Burke's mammoth operation, which started 3,700 horses compared to Takter's 540 starts. Overall, the Takter Stable won 21 races worth at least \$100,000. He had 13 different horses – seven trotters and six pacers – get to the winner's circle in those events.
- Takter stable stars also included 2-year-old filly pacer Dan Patch champion See You At Peelers (undefeated in 13 races), Vintage Master, Dan Patch award winner Pastor Stephen, Rockin Image, Thatsnotmyname, Costa Rica, Leader Of The Gang, and So Perfect.
- The 85th outcome of the trotting classic was truly a family affair – both human and equine. Trainer Jimmy Takter and his wife Christina, barely out of their teens, emigrated to the U.S. from Sweden for good in 1982, with year-old daughter Nancy. 28 years later the trio met in the Hambo winners circle, with a few additions: Nancy's siblings Jenny, Tiffany, and Jimmy Jr., her husband Marcus Johansson and their children Ella and Anthony.
- Graceful Touch was named Trotting Broodmare of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers for her stellar production record in 2010. Perretti Farms, who bred both the winner, Muscle Massive and the runner-up, Lucky Chucky, was voted NJ Breeder of the Year by the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey. The farm, owned by William Perretti and his son Anthony is located in Cream Ridge, NJ. In 2010, Perretti Farms ranks third nationally with 245 winners and \$13.3 million in earnings, standing top trotting stallion Muscles Yankee and top pacing stallion Rock N Roll Hanover. They also bred older Dan Patch trot winner Enough Talk.
- The \$750,000 Hambletonian Oaks was won by Bar Slide, a daughter of Yankee Glide-Marla Bar, by Malabar Man, owned by Fredericka Caldwell and Bluestone Farm. Caldwell is the daughter of Frances Dodge Van Lennep, founder of Castleton Farms, one of the most storied racing and breeding concerns in the sport. Castleton bred the very first Hambletonian Oaks winner Gay Blossom in 1971, and

Caldwell was in attendance. They are the only mother-daughter combo to have won the Hambletonian Oaks. Caldwell bred and owned 1988 winner Nan's Catch and her daughter 1996 winner Moni Maker.

- Both the Hambletonian (Perretti Farms) and the Oaks winner (Fair Winds Farms) were bred and sired in New Jersey.
- Bar Slide was trained by Joe Holloway, making his first appearance in the Oaks winner circle. Tim Tetrick has now won two of the last four Oaks. Bar Slide's dam, Marla Bar, was eighth in the 2002 version of the Oaks.
- Much like their male counterparts, the three-year-old filly division could not keep an established leader for long. Bar Slide went on to win a Bluegrass division at Lexington, but did not score get another major race victory in 2010. Defending Dan Patch champ Poof She's Gone could not return to her freshman form, Ultimate Cameron won the Elegantimage, Impressive Kemp won the Breeders Crown, Fashion Feline won the Kentucky Futurity, Costa Rica the Bucketette and Matron – the voters had a tough choice come year-end honors time.
- But Bar Slide, on the strength of an Oaks win and a consistent seasonal score of 14-5-2-1, 1:52.4 (\$568,529) got Dan Patch divisional honors with 69 of 131 votes, with the rest split among several other fillies.
- 2005 Hambletonian winner Vivid Photo with co-owner, trainer and driver Roger Hammer in the bike, led the Hambletonian post parade. The gelded son of SJ's Photo is the only Hambletonian winner still racing, and has amassed career earnings of more than \$3.2 million.
- The Hambletonian is the only event in harness racing to carry a \$1 million purse for 28 straight years.