

Missile J and Morrill score big at Buffalo Raceway

by Brian J. Mazurek, for Buffalo Raceway

Hamburg, NY --- A pair of track records, seven victories and a New York Sire Stakes win. It was just another day at the office for driver Jim Morrill Jr. at Buffalo Raceway on Wednesday night (June 15).



Steve Roth photo

Missile J set a new track mark at Buffalo Raceway in a NYSS win.

Morrill captured a \$58,000 division of the New York Sire Stakes for the 3-year-old pacers as he guided Missile J to a neck victory over Manny in a track record of 1:53.1 which eclipsed the gelding mark of 1:53.4 set by Murder He Wrote in 2014.

Earlier in the program, Morrill and Terrorcam set a new track standard for the 4-year-old pacing mares with a 1:54.1 time in a filly and mare optional claiming race. It crushed the old time of 1:55 established by Bet The Ranch in 2009 and Skyway Tia in 2015.

It was the fourth time this season Morrill has posted seven wins on a program at Buffalo Raceway as he also accomplished the feat on March 3, March 25 and April 15. Kevin Cummings still holds the Buffalo Raceway mark with eight wins.

Fine Diamond and driver Joe Bongiorno won the \$59,100 first division of New York Sire Stakes with a half-length decision over Craftship in 1:56.

Missile J (\$2.20), the winner of the \$300,000 Art Rooney Pace at Yonkers earlier this season, opened up a six length edge with a quarter-mile to pace, but just had enough left to beat the hard-charging Manny (Chris Lems) by a diminishing neck in 1:53.1. Manny finished in second with JK Heaven Sent (Bongiorno) taking third.

A blistering :26.2 second panel which set up a :54 half for Missile J wasn't what Morrill was hoping for, stating, "He was all wound up. He just wanted to go."

And go he did. Missile J tipped the timer in 1:23.1 to three-quarters and was begging for the finish line.

"He was certainly tired at the end, especially with those fractions," Morrill said after the race.

Owned by KJ Stables LLC and the Purple Haze Stables LLC and conditioned by Linda Toscano, it was the sixth win in 10 starts this season for Missile J ([American Ideal](#)-Cantor's Daughter). It increased his season's earnings to \$232,675. Missile J was unraced in 2015.

In the other NYSS division, Fine Diamond and Bongiorno sat back and watched the front end battle between Craftship (Morrill) and Bottom Deals (Lems). The speed duel did the pair in as Fine Diamond scooted down the passing lane to register the half-length decision. Craftship took the place position and Autotune Hanover (Dobson) was third.

"With Bottom Deals and Craftship pushing the fractions, it set it up pretty well for me," said Bongiorno. "Fine Diamond was excellent."

A Meadowlands regular, the 22-year-old Bongiorno said "It's my first time here (at Buffalo Raceway) and it was a great experience."

It was the fourth win in six starts for Fine Diamond (Rock N Roll Hanover-Yellow Diamond). The decision pushed his seasonal bankroll to \$63,635 and \$209,145 lifetime. He is trained by Ron Burke and owned by the Burke Racing Stable, Weaver Buscemi and The Panhellenic Stable.

In the Excelsior A Series, with each leg carrying a purse of \$15,000, the winners were Hash-Tag Chrome (Sam Schillaci), Readyssetletsroll (Billy Dobson) and Here's The Scoop (Morrill).

The non-betting Excelsior B Series race, worth \$6,200, went to Americanation (Dobson).

Wanna Rock N Roll (Lems) captured the \$9,500 Open Pace for the fillies and mares in 1:56.1 and returned \$4.20.

Racing will continue on Friday night at 5 p.m. with a 10-race card scheduled.

For more information including the latest news, upcoming promotions, race replays and results, go to www.buffaloraceway.com.