

Unbeaten pair win in NYSS at Yonkers

by Frank Drucker, Publicity Director, Empire City at Yonkers Raceway

Yonkers, NY --- New York Sire Stakes continued downstate Thursday night (Aug. 18), with Yonkers Raceway hosting the \$151,624 Jim Meagher Pace for 2-year-old colts and geldings. The pair of races honored the memory of the Raceway's long-time corporate controller.

The outcomes were eerily similar. The winners graduated from the Excelsior ranks, did their damage from off the pace and left town five-for-five to begin their careers.



Mike Lizzi photo

Serious Major was a winner in 1:56.2 in his NYSS division.

Chris Ryder, who now trains the Emerald Highlands Farm homebred. The exacta paid \$9.50, with the triple returning \$80.

The \$75,112 opening event saw favored Serious Major (Scott Zeron, \$4.70) -- from post position No. 2 -- move from third down the backside. He rolled past Chip Walther (Marcus Miller) down the backside, then widened to win by 2-1/4 lengths in 1:56.2. Willie Joe Hill (Pat Lachance) was perched second-over as the second choice, but never came close. He did hold second, with Americanfirewater (Jim Marohn Jr.) a third-over third.

For Serious Major, an [Art Major](#)-Seriously colt making his sire stakes debut, it was his third win for Chris Ryder, who now trains the Emerald Highlands Farm homebred. The exacta paid \$9.50, with the triple returning \$80.

"When they sent him to me, I couldn't guarantee he'd stay unbeaten," Ryder said. "He had proven himself (in the Excelsior), so there was no reason not to try him here.

"He's not fast, but he tries."

Thursday's \$76,512 second division saw another one from the Excelsior finishing school do good work. Eight-baller Funknwaffles (Joe Bongiorno, \$10.80) left for a tuck sixth, then patrolled from third-over. He was actually gapping the outer tier before unleashing a furious wide rally in and out of the final turn.

Funknwaffles, fifth turning for home, whipped a pocketed What's Goin' On (Mark MacDonald) by two lengths in 1:55.4. Very Special Agent (Zeron) was third, while 1-2 choice Miso Fast (Matt Kakaley) could not sustain an uncovered bid and was a non-threatening fifth.

For Funknwaffles, a son of [American Ideal](#)-Hatsoff Hanover owned by Crawford Farms Racing and trained by John Butenscheon, it was his second NYSS win after a trio versus Excelsior company. The exacta paid \$182, with the triple returning \$606.

"He was very good," Bongiorno said. "He did it wrapped up."