

Royal Deceptor has given his owners plenty of thrills

by Kimberly French, USTA Web Newsroom Senior Correspondent

Louisville, KY --- There certainly are not many horses that break a track record in their very first pari-mutuel engagement, but that's exactly what the trotting colt Royal Deceptor did. That situation, however, is not the only reason he is the best horse Chip Foster has ever owned during his three decades of involvement in the industry.

"This horse has been an absolute thrill for me and my partners Mike Sentiwany and Mike James," he said. "I've bred and bought horses to race for 30 years. We never had one good enough to even start in a New York Sire Stake race, let alone break a track record. I told everyone after he did that it would not matter to me what he did the rest of the year, but he went out and earned more than \$70,000 as a 2-year-old.

"Now we have the opportunity to compete in the Empire Breeders Classic which has a \$250,000 purse. I'm tickled just to be there as this horse only (sold for) \$11,000 as a yearling and he will be racing against horses like Crazy Wow and Habitat. He is very special to us in many, many ways."



Foster is referencing the next engagement for the son of RC Royalty and the Malabar Man mare Art Of Deception, which is on Sunday (June 21) at Vernon Downs. Carded as the ninth race, the Empire Breeders Classic sports a purse of \$255,325 and has an 11-horse field. Royal Deceptor, who is driven by Mike McGivern and conditioned by his wife, Cheryl, will commence his mile journey from the third post position and will seek to collect his fifth win from seven starts on the season. He possesses a resume of 14-6-2-2 for his career, has earned \$113,350 and owns a lifetime mark of 1:58h.

Mike Lizzi photo

Royal Deceptor has earned \$113,350 in his career with six wins in 14 lifetime starts.

"He is very spoiled," Cheryl McGivern said. "We fell in love with him the day we brought him home and fully expected he would go for a much higher price.

He has quite the personality and loves to talk. He really enjoys his turnout time each day in the paddock. We bring him to the track only to race him and then take him right back home. We are just so very pleased to have him."

Royal Deceptor was purchased by his connections at the 2013 Morrisville Sale and has performed only on the New York circuit. His dam was unraced and her first three foals earned just over \$60,000 between them. Art Of Deception, however, is a daughter of Keystone Delicious, who herself is a daughter of American Winner with Speedy Crown as her broodmare sire. Keystone Delicious also did not make it to the races, but she produced Marian's Man (Malabar Man, 4,1:56.3s, \$468,060) and Mr Tasty (Malabar Man, 4,1:53.2s, \$462,209).

"We can't afford to buy \$100,000 yearlings and definitely had a budget going into the sale," Foster said. "We thought Royal Deceptor would go for more money, as Royalty For Life won the Hambletonian and RC Royalty did not breed many mares. We were prepared to go to \$20,000 for him and Mike (McGivern) thought he was the best horse in the sale.

Fortunately, he came into the ring right after the sales topper, which I really liked, but he went for \$59,000.

"The bidding opened on this horse at \$10,000 and then we bid \$11,000. We sat there waiting for another bid, but there was silence and then he was ours. We were in shock we got him for that price and we were very lucky. We realized his dam hadn't foaled anything really at that point, but we felt that she would and he had the potential to be a very nice horse."

The McGiverns, who have also been in the business for about 30 years, operate a small stable in Gansevoort, N.Y., and always had faith in Royal Deceptor's ability. In fact, they talked him up considerably to Foster and his partners.



Steve Roth photo

Royal Deceptor lowered the Buffalo Raceway track mark in his career debut on July 9, 2014.

That faith was rewarded when the world witnessed Royal Deceptor's debut at Buffalo Raceway on July 9, 2014. That was when the colt captured a \$27,750 New York Sire Stake contest in a new track standard of 1:59.3 with a last quarter in :28.4. The previous record was 2:01.2, which was established in 2012 and tied in 2013.

"Mike James and I drove to Buffalo to watch him, unfortunately my other partner had to care for his ill wife and could not attend," Foster said. "Mike and Cheryl kept telling us how good this horse was, but having been in the business for awhile I had a wait and see approach. My jaw was on the ground that he broke two minutes for the mile, let alone set a new track record. That's when I told everyone he didn't have to win another race all year, because that was enough for me."

But Royal Deceptor did visit the winner's circle again in his next start and subsequently picked up checks in his next five races before finishing sixth in the \$225,000 New York Sire stakes final.

This year, the colt won his first three starts, which were all in overnights at Saratoga, prior to a fourth place effort in a NYSS race at Monticello Raceway. He posted another triumph in a NYSS contest at Yonkers Raceway and was fifth placed eighth for breaking at Vernon Downs in his last start, also in NYSS competition.

"Mike had to take him up a little bit in that race and he took a step, but he got right back on stride," Foster said. "I'm very happy with the third post for this upcoming race and I know we have to have the perfect trip. Habitat and Crazy Wow are great horses, but anything can happen in horse racing. We are very fortunate just to be racing for that kind of money and to have a nice chance."

"All the credit has to go to Mike and Cheryl. They are very patient and are excellent with trotters. I'm also happy for them they have a horse like this. They have a very small barn and had a horse named Cash Me Out ([Cash Hall](#), 3,1:56.4h) that won more than \$350,000 on the New York circuit over the last couple years. To have another horse do the same thing on a relatively small investment is truly an accomplishment for them and they really deserve it."

For the time being, Royal Deceptor will continue to compete in the Empire State and although he is not eligible for the Hambletonian, he is staked to the Yonkers Trot.

"We don't usually stake our horses," Foster said. "Even with this horse as he only was \$11,000, but he deserves the chance to see what he can do against the top horses. I really can't explain what a thrill it is either to have a horse to enter in a classic race like that. Actually, this race on Sunday is the highest purse we all, including Mike and Cheryl, have ever raced for."

Cheryl also cannot say enough good things about Royal Deceptor.

"Our job is simply to keep him happy," she said. "It is an absolute pleasure to be associated with him and words cannot express how much gratitude we have to just be around him."