

2022 PA FAIR CIRCUIT OPENS SEASON AT BUTLER

June 30, 2022 – Pennsylvania Fair Harness Horsemen’s Association, Pennsylvania Harness Horsemen’s Association, and Meadows Standardbred Owners Association partnership

PROSPECT PA – The Pennsylvania fair harness racing circuit got its 2022 start on Tuesday and Wednesday at the Butler Fairgrounds in this west central Pennsylvania borough, with newcomers taking much of the spotlight in the Pennsylvania Fair Sire Stakes races.

The season was two races old when the Father Patrick – Global Desire trotting colt Big Baller Beane, in his purse debut, overcame the outside post six in a field of seven in a mile with fractions of :30.3, 1:01, 1:31.4, and 2:02.1 – a final clocking which knocked 3 2/5 seconds off the previous divisional track standard, set by Toolbox Tuesday in 2016. Steve Schoeffel trains and drove the precocious youngster, named after the general manager of the NFL’s Buffalo Bills (it’s just a coincidence that Schoeffel’s nickname is “Beaner”), for Virginia and Kathy Schoeffel, James Reuther, and Roger Romesser.

The very first race of the season saw the in-laws of driver Dave Brickell and trainer/owner Mitchell York score with another in their long line of successful pacing fillies, Little Lady J. The daughter of A Rocknroll Dance – Monet’s Lilly traveled the mile in 2:01.3 to make her the fastest two-year-old at the Butler meet and keep her record perfect after three purse starts.

Wednesday was three-year-old day, and among the winners was the Explosive Matter trotting gelding Shock Proof in 2:07.2. It was the 26th start in the career of Shock Proof – and it made the very first charted line (no qualifiers, no matinees) a successful one for driver Amanda Shaw, of the famed PA fairs’ Shaw family. Jason Shaw trains the winner for Calvin Hoover.

Also achieving his first driving victory was 29-year-old Hugh O’Neil, who guided the Western Ideal filly Gray Skies to victory in 2:01.2. O’Neil is a native of Scotland, not exactly prime breeding ground for harness horsemen, but however he got to western Pennsylvania, Hugh got the job done for trainer Scott Betts and owner Timothy Betts.

As could be expected, the meet’s fastest miles came in the two three-year-old colt paces, which started the Wednesday program. The Betting Line gelding Southwind Memphis went in 2:01 to win for driver Aaron Johnston, trainer Nathan Bresnahan, and owners Adam and Mark Bresnahan; just a tick behind while taking his division was the Somebeachsomewhere gelding Honali for driver/trainer Brandon Presto and owner Larry Parlin.

Aaron Johnston drove three winners to lead the sulky colony, while Steve Schoeffel horses made three visits to Victory Lane for him to top the trainers group. The success was spread around very evenly at Butler – thirteen different drivers won in the twenty races over the two days, and seventeen trainers.

The PA Fair Circuit shifts direction right away, traveling 255 miles southeast for racing at the York Fair on Thursday and Friday, first post coming at 1 p.m. both days.