

A Home Run Hambletonian for Cool Papa Bell

2022 saw harness racing return in full force after two years of a crippling pandemic that adversely affected nearly every aspect of the business.

On the traditional first Saturday in August 15,000 people flowed through The Meadowlands gates, seeking autographs, souvenirs, barbeque, music and most importantly, the most exciting and prestigious day of racing in North America.

The 97th Hambletonian was scripted as a potential clash between the 2021 Breeders Crown 2-year-old champions Rebuff and Joviality S, but horses can't read and 52-1 longshot Cool Papa Bell and young Todd McCarthy decide it was their day to headline.

In the two 10-horse \$100,000 eliminations the week prior, one of two fillies entered in the Hambletonian, Jiggy Jog S overcame the other favored filly, Joviality S, with a dazzling 26.2 last quarter over Temporal Hanover with Joviality S finishing third. In the other elimination Tim Tetrick patiently rolled the heavy favorite Rebuff to the front and coasted to a 1:52.2 victory, making him the decisive favorite for the final.

Hambletonian day dawned a steamy and hot August day. The field that assembled behind the gate represented four trainers who had visited victory lane before, and three seeking their first Hambo title. Only three of the 10 drivers had previously won a Hambletonian, leaving a very hungry group (including European superstar Orjan Kihlstrom) in pursuit of the silver trophy and lucrative purse.

Joviality S shot to the lead and held that position through a moderate :28 first quarter before yielding to 3-5 favorite Rebuff, who brushed from third with nine-sixteenths to go. Rebuff faced a pressure sandwich with Temporal Hanover on the outside and as they neared the top of the stretch with an inside challenge from Joviality S — setting up for the much-awaited battle of the sexes. Joviality S succeeded in collaring Rebuff with a sixteenth to go, but 29-year-old Todd McCarthy had methodically worked closer with Cool Papa Bell through the final turn, and when he asked for trot Cool Papa Bell responded in a big way.

The crowd roared as the wire loomed and the timer stopped in 1:51.3, and trainer Jim Campbell, who had just won the Oaks with Fashion Schooner scored a 52-1 upset with Cool Papa Bell over a valiant Joviality S with Temporal Hanover third.

Cool Papa Bell, now a seven-time winner with \$760,999 in career earnings, races for Scott Farber's Runthetable Stables. The stable name was chosen in honor of the millionaire pacer Farber's dad, Sandy, campaigned in the late '80s. Who trained that horse 35 years ago? A young trainer named Jim Campbell.

Cool Papa Bell's \$106 win dividend was the highest in the nearly century-long history of the race, but owner Scott Farber couldn't have been more confident in his trotter's chances in the \$1 million classic.

After an encouraging freshman career that ended with minor knee surgery for the gelding, Cool Papa Bell returned to training at the end of January. He began his sophomore season in May with a pair of wins, including a 1:52.4 lifetime best effort in a New York Sires Stakes at Tioga.

Unfortunately, Cool Papa Bell broke stride before the start of his toughest 3-year-old test before the Hambletonian: the \$310,000 Harry M. Zweig Memorial, on July 9 at Vernon Downs. And although the trotter didn't get a chance to show Farber and Campbell what he could do on the grand stage, the connections opted to give Cool Papa Bell a breather and one final prep race.

"Papa" easily won that last chance race, a Sire Stake contest at Yonkers (on July 19) in by three lengths in 1:54.2 and that win persuaded Campbell and Farber to take the shot and write the \$15,000 starting fee check and enter the Hambletonian. As they say in baseball it turned out to be the shot heard 'round the world. If Hambletonian day 2022 had a theme, it would be loyalty. Jim Campbell won the 1996 Hambletonian for Jules and Arlene Siegel's Fashion Farm in 1996. 26 years later he's still winning big races for Jules, with the same family of trotters Fashion Farms nurtured and developed for decades. The next generation of Farbers stayed in racing, but Scott kept just a handful of horses, all trotters and they have had a remarkable win percentage under Campbell's tutelage.

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BREEDING NOTES

(Kathy Parker for Hoof Beats)

- With 65 yearlings by Chapter Seven selling for an average price of \$76,169 at public auctions in the fall of COVID 19-affected 2020, the sire's yearling colt named Seven Year Itch fetched a very solid price of \$100,000. But since the top price for a trotting colt by Chapter Seven was \$200,000 that year, Seven Year Itch was obviously regarded by yearling shoppers as a nice horse, just not a flashy one deserving of a bigger price.
- "He wasn't a colt that was a looker," said David Meirs, who raised the colt who became known as Cool Papa Bell at his family's Walnridge Farm in Cream Ridge, N.J., for breeder Vito Cucci, and placed him in the Preferred Equine Marketing, Inc. consignment because he was recovering from shoulder surgery. "He was a medium-sized horse."
- In addition to being sired by Chapter Seven, who has become one of the breed's top trotting sires, Cool Papa Bell's maternal line was full of stakes winners before one of the matrons on the very bottom portion of his pedigree produced a Hambletonian champion.
- Cool Papa Bell's dam, Blk Thai Optional, is a daughter of Muscle Hill who brings the now-coveted cross of Chapter Seven-Muscle Hill to Cool Papa Bell's genes. (This cross has also produced Joviality S and Hypnotic AM for breeder Anders Ström.)
- Blk Thai Optional was bred by Concord Stud but didn't have much success on the track. She missed her 2-year-old season due to immaturity. At age three, she was eventually sent to trainer Ernie Gaskin in Indiana, took a record of 1:58s at Hoosier Park and chalked up a beaten time mark of 1:54.1. Gaskin said the filly "had a lot more speed than her record."
- She was retired from racing after her 3-year-old season and bred. Cool Papa Bell is the mare's third foal. Her second foal is Aela Jamieson 2,1:55.1f (\$116,178), who was beaten by a nose by Iteration—a full sister to Gimpanzee—in the 2020 New York Sires Stakes 2-Year-Old Filly Trot final at Yonkers Raceway.
- His second dam, Inspired Society, has produced Peter Haughton Memorial winner Weingartner 3,Q1:55 (\$293,206) and Martiniontherocks 5,1:55.3f (\$498,658). Going back another generation is Anamosa Han- over 2,1:56 (\$538,942), who finished fourth in the 1988 Oaks and in addition to producing Inspired Society, was also the dam of Mostly Super 3,1:56 (\$234,256)—who finished third to Moni Maker in the 1996 Oaks. Then comes Anders Favorite 3,1:56.2 (\$182,558), also a fourth-place finisher in the Oaks. Cool Papa Bell's fifth dam is Noble Image, who produced two significant stakes winners, Frances Jet Boko 2,1:58.2 (\$287,177) and Nalda Hanover 3,1:59.1f (\$407,008).

ANOTHER CAMPBELLTONIAN

Dave Briggs for HRU

As for another Campbell, Hambletonian Society president John Campbell, he was beaming handing the Hambletonian trophy to his younger brother and Farber.

"I'm so proud of him," John said of Jim. "I know what he puts into it each and every year and to have a day like this, as he said, it's a day that you don't even dream about.

The long loyalty between Scott Farber and trainer Jim Campbell has paid off in the ultimate triumph.

"He's always been so enthusiastic and he's such a hard worker. He always was, even as a kid he was never afraid of work and it certainly paid off for him today. It's just wonderful to see."

As for Cool Papa Bell shocking the world, John just smiled.

"That's why we race them," John said. "(Jim's) been here before when he thought he had good chances and it didn't work out. But it is remarkable and I'm just so proud of him."

As for the odds board, Jim said he pays it no mind.

"I see it, but I never pay attention to it," he said. "By the same token, if I've got one that's 1-5 I always think that there are nine other horses that want to beat my horse. So me, personally, I never feel relaxed or confident going into a race, no matter who I have to a certain point, just because I know that in horse racing anything can happen and this is a perfect example that anything can happen in a horse race.

It was yet another example of why they don't hand out trophies based on pre-race prognostication. And thank goodness for that.

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WAGERING HANDLE NOTES

Meadowlands Racetrack

- The players were out in force on Hambletonian Day at The Meadowlands, as the total handle was \$7,656,054 on the 16-race program, eclipsing last year's action by more than \$1 million. The total handle and the average per race of \$478,503 were both by far 2022 bests.
- The betting from foreign organizations – such as the PMU (Pari Mutuel Urbain of France) and ATG (the Swedish entity) – are unavailable for several days, but these figures are likely to push the grand total handle near or past the \$9-million mark, a barrier broken only once in Hambo history, when wagering in 2005 (North American and foreign) totaled \$9,015,019.
- On Saturday, betting on 11 races bettered the \$400,000 mark, while five races saw at least \$500,000 pushed through the windows. Wagering on The Hambletonian fell just short of \$1 million, as a total of \$979,627 was put in play, by far the biggest total for any single race during 2022 at The Big M.

COOL PAPA BELL, bay gelding 3, by Chapter Seven-Blk Thai Optional by Muscle Hill
 Driver: Todd McCarthy
 Trainer: Jim Campbell
 Owners: Runthetable Stables
 Breeder: Belmar Racing & Breeding LLC

JOVIALITY S, bay filly 3, by Chapter Seven-Pasithea Face S by Muscle Hill
 Driver: Brian Sears
 Trainer: Marcus Melander
 Owners: Courant Inc
 Breeder: Am Bloodstock Inc

TEMPORAL HANOVER, bay colt, 3, by Walner-Think Twice by Cantab Hall
 Driver: Orjan Kihlstrom
 Trainer: Marcus Melander
 Owners: Amg Stb, K. Kjellgren, RT Wahlstedt, Heights Stb
 Breeder: Hanover Shoe Farms

FINAL TIME BY QUARTERS	1/4	1/2	3/4	MILE
FINAL	28.0	55.4	1:24.0	1:51.3

Final Payouts

COOL PAPA BELL	106.00	25.40	10.20
JOVIALITY S		4.40	3.20
TEMPORAL HANOVER			6.60



Cool Papa Bell

- Farber paid \$100,000 for Cool Papa Bell at the 2020 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale, the most he ever paid for a yearling. The colt was bred by Vito Cucci's Belmar Racing and consigned under the name Seven Year Itch. Farber who played baseball at his alma mater William Paterson University in New Jersey and was also the pitching coach for the college for many years changed
- Farber, who played baseball at also served as his alma mater's pitching coach for 12 seasons, quickly changed Seven Year Itch's name to Cool Papa Bell., the nickname given Negro League player James Bell, better known by his nickname "Cool Papa." In the early days of baseball, though record-keeping was sketchy, Bell quickly became known for his speed and ability to reach base. It was said that "he stole 175 bases in a 200-game season and could round the bases in 12 seconds flat. Even the "fastest man in the world" in the 1930s, Jesse Owens, refused to race Bell." An eight-time Negro Leagues All-Star, Bell was inducted to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1974, and a Hambletonian winner certainly helped carry his legacy forward to a whole new audience.
- Sire Chapter Seven finished fourth in the 2011 Hambletonian won by Broad Bahn. Cool Papa Bell is his second Hambletonian champion – his daughter Atlanta won the 2018 edition. Chapter Seven offspring dominated the day finishing 1-2 in the Hambletonian, while his equally phenomenal son Walner sired the third and fourth place Hambletonian finishers, Temporal Hanover and Jiggy Jog S.
- Campbell's sweep made him just the third trainer in history to sweep the Hambletonian Oaks (with Fashion Schooner, who overcame post 10 and scored in 1:51.2) and the Hambletonian in the same year, joining Jan Johnson and Jimmy Takter. In addition to Jim Campbell also took the Continental victory for 3-year-old trotting fillies with Misswalner Fashion to finish with a trainer-colony best three victories on the card.
- Campbell was voted 2022 Glen Garnsey Trainer of the Year for his rare accomplishment and also placed on the ballot by the U.S. Harness Writers for the 2024 Hall of Fame for his combination of racing achievement, character and integrity that makes inclusion in the Hall so difficult to achieve
- Joviality S (2nd in final) and Jiggy Jog S (4th in final) made 167 fillies to try their luck in the Hambletonian since 1926 with 15 succeeding in besting males.
- It is the second time in three years that multiple fillies head to the Hambletonian. Ramona Hill and Sister Sledge faced the boys in 2020, with Ramona Hill capturing both her elimination and the final. Sister Sledge finished fourth in her elimination to advance to the final, where she went off stride and finished eighth.
- A filly has won two of the past four editions of the Hambletonian, with Atlanta capturing the trophy in 2018, and 15 overall in 96 years.
- Joviality S won the Yonkers Trot, first jewel of the trotting Triple Crown earlier in the year, making her the only Hambletonian entrant with Triple Crown aspirations. She fell just three-quarters of a length short of that feat. No filly has ever won the Triple Crown but Continental victory (1996) won the Yonkers Trot and the Hambletonian while Emily's Pride (1958) won the Hambletonian and the Kentucky Futurity.
- The Hambletonian eliminations also include King Of The North, who was the 2021 Dan Patch Award winner for best 2-year-old male trotter. He finished 8th after breaking stride. Also entered were Goodtimes Stakes winner Fast As The Wind and Stanley Dancer Memorial division winners Rebuff and Slay.
- Trainer Marcus Melander started three horses in the Hambo: Joviality S (2nd) Temporal Hanover (3rd) and Periculum (5th.)
- Australian native McCarthy followed his well-known older brother (and 2020 Hambletonian winning driver) Andrew to America in 2020 and made an immediate impact at The Meadowlands, finishing second in the Fall meet standings.
- The following year, McCarthy completed his first full season in North America adapting quickly to the winner circle at the sport's top venues.
- Todd was voted the sport's Dan Patch Rising Star Award in 2021 by the U.S. Harness Writers.
- McCarthy's won his first start in the Hambletonian on his first try, when he guided Cool Papa Bell to a 52-1 upset, having exploded the tote board earlier in the card at 50-1 earlier in the card with Kobe's Gigi in the Lady Liberty.
- He finished 2022 he took down \$9 million in purses from 273 wins.
- McCarthy's father, John, is a highly regarded trainer in Australia and brothers Luke and Andy are top drivers. Luke spent part of 2009 in North America and is best remembered for driving Muscle Hill to victory in the World Trotting Derby. Todd's accomplishments Down Under included winning the 2016 Australasian Young Drivers Championship and multiple New South Wales state and metropolitan premierships driving titles. He represented Australia at the 2019 World Driving Championship and counts the Inter Dominion as a top victory.
- Todd McCarthy gives the McCarthy brothers a clean sweep of the 2022 world wide million-dollar events — Miracle Mile (Luke McCarthy), North America Cup and Hambletonian (Todd McCarthy) and 2020 Hambletonian (Andy McCarthy).
- The three youngest drivers all got money. Todd McCarthy, 29, was first. Dexter Dunn, 32, was fourth with Jiggy Jog S. Mattias Melander 26, was fifth with Periculum.
- Television coverage was extensive. The Meadowlands live feed was simulcast throughout the globe, and streamed on YouTube and Facebook. An additional four hours of live Facebook streaming by the Central Standardbred Owners Association of Canada carried a behind the scenes perspective. TVG had a presence with analyst Dave Weaver on site all day and an hour-long CBS Sports retrospective was recorded that will be broadcast on Sunday, August 21 from 5:30 to 6:30PM.
- Star studded national coverage continued on Fox Sports in a collaboration with NYRA's "America's Day At The Races."