

Southwind Tempo impressive in Betsy Ross

Sunday, April 27, 2008

By James Witherite-Rieg, on-course commentator at Harrah's Chester Casino and Racetrack

After dueling Darlin's Delight for early contention, Jerry Silva's Southwind Tempo (\$2.80) was able to rate a conservative middle half before kicking clear to a 2-1/4 length victory in the \$250,000 Betsy Ross Mares Pace at Harrah's Chester Casino and Racetrack on Sunday (April 27) afternoon.

As the gate folded, Southwind Tempo and Darlin's Delight (Yannick Gingras) both left for a share of the early lead. Darlin's Delight managed to poke a head in front going into the first turn, but quickly retreated to the pocket with My Little Dragon (Brian Sears) an alert and up-close third. "If I let [Darlin's Delight] go, I ran the risk of My Little Dragon popping out of the three-hole and leaving me third on the rail," commented driver John Campbell of his strategy in the race's early stages. "I thought if I could control the race, that she'd be very difficult to beat if I could get the middle half where I wanted."

Continually pressed from behind, the four-year-old Bettor's Delight mare reached the opening quarter in :26.2 (:26.54), but quickly put on the brakes, rating an incredibly soft second quarter and reaching the half in :55.4 (:55.90) despite My Little Dragon being flushed out by Street Dancer (Andy Miller) just into the bridge turn.

Facing mild pressure from My Little Dragon—who was at the leader's throatlatch—up the backstretch, Southwind Tempo was forced to pick up the pace to a three-quarter split of 1:23.2 (1:23.44). "My Little Dragon didn't come that hard up the backstretch, so I was still rating the third quarter," added Campbell. With Illusionist (Ron Pierce) and Life of Luxury (Tim Tetrick) making strong bids at the head of the stretch, the Kevin Lare trainee quickly responded. "Then, at the head of the stretch, she just opened up real quick." Southwind Tempo kicked clear to a two-length lead at the head of the stretch and held clear despite late rallies from My Little Dragon and Darlin's Delight, stopping the timer in 1:50.2 (1:50.59).

The winner's share of \$125,000 increases Southwind Tempo's career earnings to \$1,159,004. "It's a benefit to have a horse that handy, and that makes all the difference in the world," concluded Campbell.

The sub-featured Open Pace also saw Campbell visit the winner's circle, partnering Pacific Playboy (\$5.00) to victory in a time of 1:50.0 (1:50.13). Pacific Playboy is an eight-year-old gelded son of Pacific Fella owned by the Summersby Stable and trained by Ernest Adam.

Live racing returns to Harrah's Chester on Monday, April 28, with the first of thirteen races scheduled for a 12:25 p.m. post time.