



Northern California Report

by JERRY KLEIN

A long van ride usually is not the best way to soothe a Thoroughbred, especially a promising but headstrong filly who has been her own worst enemy on a few occasions. However, much to the relief of trainer Jenine Sahadi, who sent Toby Turrell's Jill's Sky to the Bay Area for the \$82,750 Moment To Buy Stakes on Nov. 12, the daughter of Sky-walker was relaxed during both trips and the result was her first stakes victory, a half-length triumph in the 8 1/2-furlong turf race at Golden Gate Fields.

"Sometimes she's too keen to get to the front," Sahadi said afterward. "In her September race at Santa Anita Park she went much too fast, but in her last race she was fine."

She was better still in the Moment To Buy, taking command under Jose Valdivia Jr. leaving the infield chute and zipping clear on the first turn while still in hand. No others in the 11-horse field of three-year-olds showed similar eagerness, so Jill's Sky ambled through six furlongs in 1:13.16 and spurted clear in upper stretch.

"I rode her when she broke her maiden and she was rank, but she was relaxed today," Valdivia said. "Leaving the turn, I asked her to quicken and when she did right away I knew she'd be tough to beat." Private Banking made the strongest surge but fell short. "I just hand-rode her the last sixteenth," Valdivia added. "There was a lot left in the tank." Final time was 1:44.52 over good ground.

Jill's Sky made two previous trips to the Bay Area, finishing second in the Bay Meadows Oaks but far back in a subsequent stakes at Golden Gate. "The second ship might have been too much," Sahadi explained. "She was very nervous before that race but this time, she shipped better than ever. I sent her up a day early and she schooled in the paddock. My assistant said she was perfect, so maybe I'm figuring her out."

Jill's Sky is a half-sister to The Yellow Sheet, also a stakes winner for Turrell. "She has the same mental quirks," Sahadi noted. "They're both hard on themselves." For her third win

Cal-Breds Fly High In The Bay Area

in eight starts, Jill's Sky banked \$49,000, raising her earnings to \$135,400.

Another Stirring Success

Dirt or turf, one turn or two? Trainer Jerry Hollendorfer and Halo Farms' Ted Aroney may be in a quandary about what kind of horse they have in Thrilling Victory, but one thing is for sure—she's a runner. The sophomore filly proved that again on Oct. 23, when she won the \$58,275 Albany Stakes by a neck over Hollendorfer's favored Heavenly Humor and four other rivals. The victory in the six-furlong race was her first since she won last April's Bay Meadows Oaks at 1 1/16-miles on the turf.

Winning rider Chad Schvaneveldt took advantage of a brutal (:21.53 and :43.72) pace duel by saving ground, coming out in the stretch and catching his stablemate, who had escaped her pursuers at the sixteenth-pole, a few strides from the wire. "She's small but she runs big," he said afterward. "They were going awfully fast and that helped. When I got her clear, she really came with a good run."

In the winner's circle, Hollendorfer acknowledged that Aroney called this shot. "Ted keeps telling me she's a sprinter," he said. "He's been around longer than I have and knows what he's talking about, so it's time I started listening."

You can't blame Hollendorfer for thinking distance racing was her forte. In her first race around two turns, she responded with a gate-to-wire performance, starting a three-race winning streak that culminated with the Oaks triumph. When the turf stakes in Southern California proved too difficult, Thrilling Victory was freshened before returning in October, this time with one-turn races on her schedule.

Golden Shadows, the dam of Thrilling Victory, sold for \$40,000 at the recent Barretts October Mixed Sale, the same venue where Halo Farms bought Thrilling Victory as a two-year-old for \$35,000. In-foal to Event of the Year, Golden Shadows was carrying a full sibling to the Albany winner, who earned \$36,650 for the win to boost her bankroll to \$143,120 from a lifetime record of 10-5-1-2. 🐾



Jill's Sky (#10)
Moment to Buy Stakes—November 12, 2005



Thrilling Victory (#3)
Albany Stakes—October 23, 2005