

# Macho Again just Dandy

By: CHRIS FITZ GERALD, For The Saratogian

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Macho Again with Julien Leparoux in the irons goes to the lead en route to winning the Grade II, \$500,000 Jim Dandy Stakes at Saratoga Race Course on Sunday. (ERICA MILLER/The Saratogian)

SARATOGA SPRINGS - With his hard-fought victory in the Jim Dandy, Macho Again is again living up to his potential.

The same couldn't be said on this day for Belmont Stakes winner Da' Tara, who finished dead last in the traditional prep race for the Grade I, \$1 million Travers.

Macho Again, with jockey Julien Leparoux aboard, seized the lead on the stretch and held off a determined effort by favored Pyro to prevail by one-half length in the 45th running of the Grade II, \$500,000 event Sunday at Saratoga Race Course.

"This is my first stakes win as a trainer at Saratoga, so I am very excited," trainer Dallas Stewart said. "He's a good horse, but he needed to step up."

After recording a victory in the Derby Trial on April 26, the West Point Thoroughbreds-owned Macho Again skipped the Kentucky Derby then placed second in the Preakness on May 7 and a disappointing fifth in the Belmont Stakes on June 8.

"When I won the Derby Trial and I finished second in the Preakness, he was game and he was very good," Leparoux said. "He's not much different; he hasn't changed too much. He is still just a game horse. He tries all the time."

The performance of Da' Tara left his trainer Nick Zito searching for answers. Da' Tara, who drew away to win in convincing fashion in the Belmont under rider Alan Garcia to deny Big Brown's Triple Crown bid, took the early advantage in the Jim Dandy with Garcia aboard. But after dueling for the lead all the way to the final turn, Da' Tara then faded.

"That was a suicide mission," Zito said. "It didn't work. I don't know what that was all about. I'm going to have a talk with Mr. Garcia."

Macho Again saved ground for much of the race, finding the pace to his liking.

"The pace was beautiful; he's a stalker," Stewart said.

"He's game," Leparoux added. "The race before, he had a rough trip. He's been coming out. Today, he ran very good off the layoff. I had to go outside on the stretch and he finished really very good."

Macho Again grabbed the advantage inside the final furlong marker and went on to turn back Pyro, covering the 1 1/8-mile distance in 1:51.16.

"He had a tough go from the quarter-pole on," Stewart said. "Once he got free and kicked on, it looked like he was going to win - and here comes Pyro with that late run. And Pyro is a good horse, as you know."

Pyro, ridden by Shaun Bridgmohan, made a determined bid on the stretch but didn't have enough ground left to catch Da' Tara.

"We finished second," Pyro's trainer Steve Asmussen said. "There's nothing more I can say."

"I thought I had a good trip," Bridgmohan said. "He ran hard."

Tiz Now Tiz Then, with jockey Miguel Mena's urging, sped to the lead on the upper stretch before giving way and finished a strong third.

"I thought it was a nice, third-place finish," trainer Eoin Harty said. "Certainly, we would have liked to win it. He keeps improving. I thought the rider did a good job for his first time at Saratoga. There is certainly a possibility that we will be back for the Travers."

With his Jim Dandy victory, Macho Again will now gear up for the Travers on Aug. 23. The previous three Jim Dandy winners have gone on to win the Travers - Flower Alley in 2005, Bernardini (2006) and Street Sense (2007) - so perhaps this is a good omen for Macho Again.

"That would be really something," Stewart said. "The Travers would be great if he comes out of this good and everything is good."

With his first stakes score at Saratoga, Stewart was sure enjoying the moment.

"I feel blessed to train for West Point," Stewart said. "They are wonderful people and he is a wonderful horse."

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# Macho Again takes Jim Dandy

8-1 shot outruns favorite in traditional Travers prep By [TIM WILKIN](#), Staff writer  
First published: Monday, July 28, 2008

Times Union

SARATOGA SPRINGS -- There was a porch party at the home of Roger and Joyce Locks on Saturday afternoon.

Chances were pretty good that their home on Union Avenue, just a few doors from Saratoga Race Course, was jumping again Sunday night.

The Locks have themselves a Travers horse.

Macho Again vaulted into the Midsummer Derby picture Sunday when he rallied to win the Grade II, \$500,000 Jim Dandy Stakes in front of a small giveaway crowd of 38,748 at Saratoga Race Course.

Macho Again, trained by Dallas Stewart and ridden by Julien Leparoux, won the traditional Travers prep by a half-length over Pyro, the 3-2 favorite.

Macho Again, last seen finishing fifth in the Belmont Stakes, went off at 8-1 and paid \$18.40, \$5.30 and \$3.40.

"I think my wife bet \$100 across the board," Roger Locks said with a grin after the winning circle celebration had subsided.

The couple is part of a 14-person syndicate called West Point Thoroughbreds. The gray colt is the first horse it purchased. The Lockses aren't really part of the blue-blood horse royalty set, at least not yet.

They didn't watch their horse win the Jim Dandy from one of the ancient box seats in the Spa clubhouse. They were down on the apron, the area right behind the winner's circle. They were jumping up and down like the rest of the betting public, trying to catch a glimpse of their horse. And they caught him, right when he glided across the finish line.

"I am on cloud 59," Joyce Locks said. "I am so high up there that I can't find myself."

Da' Tara, upset winner of the Belmont Stakes, and Mint Lane were engaged in an early speed duel that spelled doom for both. After going the first quarter-mile in 23.51 seconds and the half-mile in 46.94, it was pretty obvious they weren't going to be around at the end. Mint Lane finished sixth and Da' Tara last in the seven-horse field.

Now it was just a case of which closer was going to win. Tale of Ekati took his run and was overtaken by Tiz Now Tiz Then. Macho Again came storming down the track and was the best of this bunch.

The final time of 1:51 was the slowest Jim Dandy time since Awesome Again was clocked in the same time in 1997.

"The pace was beautiful; he's a stalker," said Stewart, who won his first stakes race at Saratoga. "Once he got free and kicked in, it looked like he was going to win."

Pyro, ridden by Shaun Bridgmohan, came to the outside of Macho Again but could not get past. He was three-quarters of a length in front of Tiz Now Tiz Then. Steve Asmussen, who trains Pyro, didn't want to talk to anyone when the race was over.

"We finished second; there is nothing more I can say," he said. "Go talk to the winner."

And, of course, the winners were more than ready to gab. West Point Thoroughbreds founder Terry Finley was grinning ear-to-ear as he watched his syndicate act a little loony in the winner's circle.

"This is really la-la land," he said. "We've probably had 100 horses with Dallas, and I've never seen him as confident as he was today. He said he got this horse as good as he could get him, and there would be no excuses. He said all week if we get beat it would be because we're not the best horse."

Macho Again was the best horse on Sunday. His entourage has to hope he'll have the same look in a month when they run the \$1 million Travers.

History will be on his side. The past three Jim Dandy winners -- Flower Alley, Bernardini and Street Sense -- all came back to win the Midsummer Derby.

Tim Wilkin can be reached at 454-5415 or by e-mail at [twilkin@timesunion.com](mailto:twilkin@timesunion.com). Visit his blog at <http://blogs.timesunion.com/horseracing>.

July 28, 2008: **Thoroughbred Times Today**



Macho Again capitalized on a swift early pace by outfinishing multiple graded stakes winner Pyro to win the \$500,000 Jim Dandy Stakes (G2) by a half-length on Sunday at Saratoga Race Course. Runner-up in the Preakness Stakes(G1), Macho Again surged past TizNow Tiz Then in early stretch and fended off a late bid from Pyro to register his first graded stakes win. The Macho Uno colt completed 1 1/8 miles on a track rated as good in 1:51.16 under Julien Leparoux. "This is my first stakes win as a trainer at Saratoga, so I am very excited," said Macho Again's trainer, Dallas Stewart. "He's a good horse, but he needed to step up. The pace was beautiful; he's a stalker. The Travers [Stakes (G1) on August 23] would be great if he comes out of this good and everything is good." Each of the three previous Jim Dandy winners—Street Sense (2007), Bernardini ('06), and Flower Alley ('05)—went on to win the Travers.

—Mike Curry

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Daily Gazette article

Monday, July 28, 2008 (features some Locks quotes)

By Phil Janack

## **Macho Again pulls off upset in Jim Dandy**

SARATOGA SPRINGS — With 16 partners, their family and friends, it was easy to spot the connections of Macho Again in the paddock before Sunday's Jim Dandy Stakes.

It was even easier after the race. They were the ones standing — and screaming — in the winner's circle.

Macho Again battled his way to the front in midstretch, and held off a strong late challenge from favored Pyro to win the Grade II \$500,000 Jim Dandy by a half-length before a giveaway-inflated crowd of 38,748 at Saratoga Race Course.

Winner of the Derby Trial who ran second in the Preakness and fifth in the Belmont Stakes, Macho Again (\$18.40) ran 11/8 miles in 1:51.16 for his first graded stakes victory.

It was also the first for Roger and Joyce Locks of Saratoga Springs, part of the ownership group through the West Point Thoroughbreds syndicate. Roger, an accountant, and Joyce, an interior designer, live three houses from the racetrack.

"I can't explain the feeling right now," Joyce Locks said. "I'm just welled up with everything anyone could ever want. It's amazing. This is my hometown. I have all my family and friends here, and I am just on a high that I can't tell you."

The Locks' hosted a West Point gathering at their home Saturday night, which turned out to be pre-victory party.

"We had a big porch party, and everybody was there," Roger Locks said. "We all felt very confident. We were very pleased with the reports that we were getting concerning how well he was doing. This is the only horse we've ever owned. He's one in a million."

Trained by Dallas Stewart,

Macho Again broke on the outside of the seven-horse field, lunging at the start. Jockey Julien Leparoux saved ground for six furlongs, then moved out midway on the far turn.

Leparoux had to wait for room as Belmont Stakes winner Da' Tara began to fade after setting a pace of :23.51 and :46.94 in a duel with fellow frontrunner Mint Lane.

Macho Again picked off Tiz Now Tiz Then in the stretch, took the lead at the eighth pole and dug in to the wire.

"He had a tough go of it from the quarter pole on, I thought," winning trainer Dallas Stewart said. "Once he got free, he kicked on, and it looked like he was going to win very convincingly, and he came Pyro with that late run. He's a very good horse, as you know, and we were able to sustain that run."

Leparoux was replaced by Garrett Gomez in the Belmont, but was aboard in both the Preakness and Derby Trial, as well as an allowance victory in February at Fair Grounds.

"He's not much different. He hasn't changed too much," Leparoux said. "He is still just a game horse. He tries all the time. I had to go inside in the stretch, and he finished very good."

Saratoga's hometown prep for the \$1 million Travers on Aug. 23, the Jim Dandy was the seventh start this year for Macho Again, and first since the 1 1/2-mile Belmont June 7.

"He's so tough. He stepped up in the Preakness, and he ran great in the Belmont," Stewart said. "He ran to the quarter pole, and just had enough. We gave him some time off, and only worked him two or three times real easy. He's a very nice horse. He's not very big, but he's got that heart."

It was the second stakes victory of the meet in as many days for Leparoux, who won the Grade I Diana aboard Forever Together on Saturday.

For Stewart, it was his first stakes win ever at Saratoga. A former assistant to Hall of Famer D. Wayne Lukas, he went out on his own in 1997.

"This is great," he said. "I feel great. I feel blessed to be able to train for some wonderful people, and this is a wonderful horse. It's a great day."

A leading Kentucky Derby candidate this winter, Pyro got pinched back at the start and ran near the back of the back, at one time trailing by more than 10 lengths. He began to move up on the outside leaving the backstretch, and made a steady determined run, but couldn't catch the winner.

"We finished second," trainer Steve Asmussen said. "There's nothing more I can say. Go talk to the winner."

Tiz Now Tiz Then was third,

4 1/2 lengths in front of Grade I winner Tale of Ekati, who was followed to the wire by Anak Nakal, Mint Lane and Da' Tara, who was last by 2 3/4 lengths.

"That was a suicide mission. It didn't work," said Nick Zito, who trains Da' Tara. "I don't know what that was all about."

Stewart said Macho Again will definitely be pointed to the Travers, the centerpiece of the Saratoga season.

"I just knew he was going to win," Joyce Locks said. "He was fresh, he was ready, he was breezing well, and I knew it was his time. I also know there's another time maybe coming up, too."

# Macho Again holds off Pyro in Jim Dandy

By Mike Welsch  
Daily Racing Form

Updated: July 27, 2008, 9:49 PM ET

Jim Dandy Stakes

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. -- The winners of the last three renewals of the Jim Dandy Stakes have all gone on to capture the prestigious Travers four weeks later. Trainer Dallas Stewart is hoping that trend will continue for at least one more summer after his Macho Again outgamed 3-2 favorite Pyro to register a half-length victory in Sunday's Grade 2 Jim Dandy before a crowd of 38,748 at Saratoga.

Macho Again, winner of the Derby Trial and runner-up to division leader Big Brown in the Preakness, had not started since finishing 11 lengths behind Da' Tara in the Belmont Stakes. But the 1 1/8-mile distance of the Jim Dandy and a contentious pace that compromised Da' Tara's chances in Sunday's rematch played right into the hands of Stewart and Macho Again, a son of Macho Uno owned by West Point Thoroughbreds.

As expected, Da' Tara went right for the lead but was quickly joined by Mint Lane, the pair dueling head to head through fractions of 23.51 seconds and 46.94 over a track downgraded from fast to good following a mid-afternoon shower.

Mint Lane won the early battle from Da' Tara on the second turn but was readily overtaken by Tiz Now Tiz Then in upper stretch. Jockey Julien Leparoux reserved Macho Again within easy striking distance of the leaders while saving ground, but found himself blocked in briefly behind horses when trying to launch his bid leaving the quarter pole.

Macho Again finally extricated himself from traffic at the top of the stretch but had to alter course momentarily behind Tiz Now Tiz Then near the eighth pole. He eventually overtook that rival to gain the lead at midstretch, then had enough left to withstand a final surge from Pyro.

Pyro, forced to check when pinched back at the break, swung wide launching his rally leaving the final turn. He appeared to have enough momentum to overtake Macho Again nearing midstretch but could not sustain the bid. Tiz Now Tiz Then gradually weakened, finishing another three-quarters of a length farther back in third, followed by Tale of Ekati, Anak Nakal, Mint Lane and Da' Tara.

Macho Again, who paid \$18.40, gave Stewart his first stakes win at Saratoga.

"He's a game little horse, and that was a pretty good field," said Stewart. "He beat the Belmont winner and the Louisiana Derby winner. The race developed just like it looked on paper, but he had a tough go from the quarter pole in. Once he got free he kicked in and it looked like he was going to win convincingly and then here comes Pyro with that late run. Fortunately he had enough left to hold him off."

Stewart said that as long as Macho Again comes out of the Jim Dandy in good order he'll point for the Travers on Aug. 23.

Da' Tara finished 24 lengths behind Macho Again while also making his first start since his upset victory in the Belmont.

"That was a suicide mission," trainer Nick Zito said, referring to the early pace duel with Mint Lane. "I don't know what that was all about."

Mambo in Seattle also likely earned himself a spot in the Travers with a game neck triumph over You and I Forever in the 1 1/8-mile Henry Walton Stakes just prior to the Jim Dandy. It was another 12 1/2 lengths farther back to Amped, who finished third.

The victory was the third in a row for Mambo in Seattle, a homebred son of Kingmambo trained by Neil Howard for Mrs. William Kilroy and William Farish.

### **Saratoga, 10th Race - July 27, 2008**

\$500,000 Jim Dandy S. (G2)

Pgm	Horse	Win	Place	Show
7	Macho Again	18.40	5.30	3.40
4	Pyro		3.40	2.90
1	Tiz Now Tiz Then			4.70

\$2 Exacta (7-4) Paid \$49.00, \$2 Trifecta (7-4-1) Paid \$292.50

# Macho Again ready to take another shot at Big Brown

By [Tom Pedulla](#), USA TODAY (7/28)



Macho Again, center, ridden by Garrett Gomez and Big Brown, right, ridden by Kent Desormeaux race at the Belmont Stakes in June. The horses may be headed for a rematch in the \$1 million Travers on Aug. 23.

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. — Anyone for a rematch?

Macho Again, who placed second to Big Brown in the Preakness Stakes, is primed to take another shot at the failed Triple Crown hopeful after fending off Pyro by half a length in the \$500,000 Jim Dandy Stakes on Sunday at Saratoga Race Course.

Macho Again used the Jim Dandy as a sharpener for the Aug. 23 \$1 million Travers, which might also showcase Big Brown, depending on how he fares in the Haskell Invitational at Monmouth Park next Sunday.

"I wouldn't mind seeing Big Brown," said Terry Finley, who formed the partnership that owns Macho Again under the banner of West Point Thoroughbreds. "He won the Kentucky Derby, and he was awesome in the Derby. He was awesome in the Preakness. But we think our colt is better than he was in the Preakness."

Big Brown routed the son of Macho Uno by 5¼ lengths in the middle leg of the Triple Crown. Macho Again was no match for the 1½-mile distance in the Belmont Stakes, taking fifth. Big Brown was eased by Kent Desormeaux when it became apparent he was beaten and endured the worst finish in the race's history by a Triple Crown hopeful.

The fortunes of the Kentucky Derby and Preakness champ may be rising again. Big Brown sizzled 6 furlongs in 1 minute, 10.8 seconds Saturday at New York's Aqueduct Racetrack in his last major workout for the Haskell.

‘MACHO’ WINS JIM DANDY Macho Again held off a late bid by favored Pyro to win the \$500,000 Jim Dandy Stakes for 3-year-olds by a half-length on Sunday at Saratoga Race Course in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Macho Again, ridden by Julien Leeparoux, was the fifth, and last, of seven starters to hold the lead during the one-and-an-eighth-mile race, which is a major prep race for the Travers on Aug. 23.

He overtook the long shot Tiz Now Tiz Then with one-sixteenth of a mile remaining and held off Pyro in a mild upset, winning in 1:51.60. Macho Again paid \$18.40 on a \$2 bet to win, earning \$300,000 for [West Point](#) Thoroughbreds. (AP)

## Truman grad Finley gets Jim Dandy win with Macho Again

Posted By [Courier Times sports writer Joe Jones](#) On July 29, 2008 @ 8:07 pm In [Sports](#) | [No Comments](#)

Macho Again, owned by 1982 Harry S Truman graduate Terry Finley's West Point Thoroughbreds, earned his first graded stakes win when he held off Pyro by a half length in Sunday's Grade II \$500,000 Jim Dandy Stakes at Saratoga.

Macho Again was runner-up to Big Brown in the Preakness and finished fifth to Da'Tara in the Belmont. Da'Tara battled with Mint Lane up front during the early stages of the Jim Dandy before fading to last in field of seven.

Macho Again was 8-1. Pyro was the 3-2 favorite.