

MACH IT SO AIMS TO MAKE IT SO WHEN IT COMES TO WINNING

Story: Ken Weingartner/Harness Racing Communications/USTA

Photo: New Image Media

Mach It So was a last-minute addition to the Little Brown Jug field, but trainer Nifty Norman thinks the gelding fits in nicely among the 19 horses entered in Thursday's pacing classic.

Held at the Delaware County Fair in central Ohio, the \$552,551 Little Brown Jug is the second jewel in the Pacing Triple Crown and requires a horse to win twice to be declared the champion.



The top three finishers from three elimination heats advance to the second heat. If a first-round winner also wins the second heat, he is declared the winner. If another horse wins, then a four-horse race-off is held to determine the winner. The last race-off was in 2000, when Astreos defeated Gallo Blue Chip, George Scooter and Profita.

Mach It So, who has won eight of 12 races this year and earned \$336,751 for owner Bamond Racing, is in the second of the three first-heat divisions. He will start from post two with driver Scott Zeron and is the 4-1 second choice on the morning line, behind Lucan Hanover from the stable of trainer Casie Coleman. Incidentally, the 24-year-old Zeron last year became the youngest driver to win the Jug, with Coleman-trained Michael's Power.

"He's a good little horse," Norman said about Mach It So. "He won't get embarrassed. I think he fits in there pretty good. It helps when you draw inside like that. He's not the best horse in there, but I think he's good enough to get in the final and good enough to get a check in the final.

"You need a lot of luck in that race, it doesn't matter how good a horse you've got. The best horse doesn't always win."

Jeffrey Bamond and his son Jeffrey Jr. purchased Mach It So in a private sale last September. Mach It So, a son of Mach Three-Beach Dancer, is a half-brother to 2009 Woodrow Wilson Pace winner Windfall Blue Chip.

Originally, the connections were going to skip the Little Brown Jug, but reconsidered when it was announced that top contenders Captaintreacherous and Sunshine Beach would bypass the race. Captaintreacherous, the defending Pacer of the Year who has won seven of eight races this year, captured the first jewel in the Triple Crown, the Cane Pace, on Sept. 2.

Mach It So is the leader in points in the Ontario Sire Stakes Gold Series for 3-year-old male pacers, where he is 4-for-4 this season, and Norman wanted the horse to race prior to the Sept. 28 Super Final.

"We weren't intending on going, but then a couple (horses) dropped out – like Captaintreacherous and Sunshine Beach – and the owners like to go to the race, so I said

let's go," Norman said. "We've got to race him somewhere, so we might as well race him for \$500,000."

In his most recent start, Sept. 7, Mach It So was fourth in a division of the Simcoe Stakes at Mohawk Racetrack. Mach It So was in last place on the final turn, more than nine lengths from the front, but came home in :26 to finish three lengths from winner Fool Me Once.

"He was really good," Norman said. "He just got a little bit held up, his cover wasn't that great, but the horse himself was very good. He finished up really strong."

Norman doesn't anticipate Mach It So having difficulty getting around Delaware's half-mile oval. On Aug. 28 in a sire stakes event, Mach It So won at half-mile Grand River Raceway in a track-record 1:51.4.

"He can get away from the gate good when you want him to," Norman said. "I think he'll be fine."