

Can Gallo Blue Chip Add Little Brown Jug Trophy To North America Cup & Meadowlands Pace?

**By Tom White
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Not since Precious Bunny in 1991 has a North America Cup or Meadowlands Pace winner gone on to win the Little Brown Jug. Precious Bunny won both one-million dollar races and cemented "Horse of the Year" honors by capturing the Little Brown Jug over an incredible three month period.

Gallo Blue Chip is on the same path this year following the three-year-old gelding's impressive triumph in Saturday's \$1,150,000 Meadowlands Pace. The son of 1994 Jug champion Magical Mike earlier captured the \$1,000,000 North America Cup and has earned \$1,267,456 this season!

Steering clear of an incident involving Tyberwood, Aces N Sevens and Ain't No Stopn Him, Gallo Blue Chip and driver Daniel Dube powered to a 1:50.4, 3 1/4 length win in Saturday's \$1,150,000 Meadowlands Pace. The gelding is owned by Martin Scharf of Lawrence, NY and trained by Mark Ford.

As the gate folded, Ain't No Stopn Him, Aces N Sevens, Tyberwood and Gallo Blue Chip all stepped away alertly, with Ain't No Stopn Him and John Campbell leading into the first turn, only to yield quickly to Aces N Sevens by the quarter. Tyberwood and Richie Silverman ried to brush for the lead down the backstretc, but Aces N Sevens declined to yield. Under strong urging from Silverman to the half, Tyberwood swered briefly to the inside, interfering with Aces N Sevens and setting off a chain reaction which started with Ain't No Stopn Him and Jersey Bouncer being knocked offstride and also affected most of the rest of the field.

Unaffected was Gallo Blue Chip, who'd tipped three wide, brushed to the front and quickly opened up two lengths by the three-quarters. Down the stretch, Gallo Blue Chip opened up five-lengths and despite the late close of Astreos, has no trouble winning his sixth race in 11 starts this year.

"I'm just so relieved this is over with," said trainer Ford. "I just thought, 'Please hold on.' He's really been more than I ever thought he was. I just couldn't be happier. He's been very lucky, tonight with the nine-hole, he simply has to be the best."

"I needed to leave and retake," said Dube. "I know he was pace, I hold him all the time, but when I ask him, he takes off. I didn't want to be up front at the start. I wanted to take my time getting there. When the two horses came together in front of me, I was worried we might be affected, but it cleared up and we came out of it, OK."

The Brett Pelling entry of Astreos and High On Emotion finished second and third followed by Aces N Sevens, Indian Territory, Ain't No Stopn Him, Mr Prez, San Gimignano, Jersey Bouncer and Tyberwood.

Gallo Blue was sold for \$32,000 at the 1998 Harrisburg Sale, but Scharf purchased him in a private sale in August of 1999. Last season the Gallo Blue Chip was unbeaten in eight starts, all in New York Sires Stakes.

Gallo Blue Chip is not eligible to the Cane Pace, the first leg of Pacing's Triple Crown, and he can not be supplemented into that race. He is eligible for the 55th renewal of the Little Brown Jug on September 21 at Delaware, Ohio.

The Firepan won the \$100,000 Meadowlands Pace Consolation in 1:50.4 by four lengths over Riverboat King and Macart.