

Pelling confident going into the Cane Pace Final

**By Tom White
September 5th, 2000**

Freehold, NJ --- Most trainers would consider getting a horse into the Cane Pace Final, the first let of the Pacing Triple Crown, the accomplishment of a lifetime. But then again, Brett Pelling, who has not one, or two, but three horses in the Cane Final, is not "most trainers."

Long one of harness racing's leading conditioners, Pelling is no stranger to the Cane. In 1991, he trained the winner, Silky Stallone, and captured his second Cane Pace with Shady Character in 1998.

This year, Pelling had a total of five horses entered in the two Cane Pace eliminations at Freehold Raceway, and three -- Armbro Trench, Art Dot Com, and Astreos -- gained berths for the \$331,350 final which will be decided at Freehold Raceway on Labor Day, September 4.

Pelling, speaking after training hours on Tuesday morning, offered his assessment of his colts' chances in the Cane final. "Obviously the one to beat in the final is Astreos," Pelling said. "Even though he went a long way first-over and equaled the track record, he came out of the race in great shape. The fact that he will get nine days between the elim and the final figures to make him even better.

"That was the first time he raced on a half mile track. That just shows you how good he is. It's long been my experience that horses will go better the second time they race on a half. He's a smart horse and I'm sure he'll learn a lot from last week's race."

Astreos won his elimination in 1:514, equaling the Freehold track record for 3-year-old pacing colts set in last year's Cane Pace Final by Blissful Hall. Although driven to victory in his elimination by Mike Lachance, Astreos is owned in part by Canada's leading driver, Chris Christoforou and Pelling says that Christoforou will come to Freehold to drive his colt in the Cane Final. Pelling also suggested that his other two trainees in the Cane Final, Art Dot Com and Armbro Trench, should be given serious consideration.

"Last week Art Dot Com went a lot better than it appears he did. He got caught inside and Tyberwood was gone by the time he got out. If he gets a good post in the final, he could be close," Pelling added.

Art Dot Com finished second in his elim, beaten a length by Tyberwood. Pelling also had praise for Armbro Trench. "In the elim, he was making only his third start after having major throat surgery. He raced well and I think he can only be expected to improve." Armbro Trench made the Cane Final by finishing third in his elimination, two and one-half lengths behind Tyberwood.

All three of Pelling's Cane finalists were sired by Artsplace. "Just a coincidence," Pelling said. "I have quite a few in training. The three that made the Cane final came from different places. They are all very well mannered horses, though, and it just goes to show that Artsplace sires horses that race well on all size tracks".

The post position draw for the Cane Pace final will take place at Freehold on Thursday morning.