

Horse Racing

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Flatter This earns first stakes victory



Flatter This heads to the wire on the way to winning the Band Is Passing Stakes at Calder Casino & Race Course on Saturday. JIM LISA PHOTOS

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Flatter This gained his first stakes victory Saturday when he held off even-money favorite Tannersville in the \$55,000 Band Is Passing Stakes at Calder Casino & Race Course.

Flatter This won by a half-length in the 1 1/16-mile race that was moved from turf to dirt following heavy rain at Calder on Friday.

His winning time was 1:47.91, slow for a stakes, on a track listed as fast. It came after Flatter This stalked a slow pace set by Hoopla, who faded and finished last in the six-horse field.

The result produced a thrill for **Larry and Vicki Stumpf** of Davie, whose Blackacre Farms owns Flatter This. It was their first victory in a stakes

race.

The victory also reinforced trainer **Kathleen O'Connell's** feeling that Flatter This has been coming into top form as a dirt horse.

"I thought our chances would be better if it came off the turf," O'Connell said.

Flatter This, a 4-year-old colt, came into the Band Is Passing with no victories and just one second-place finish in 10 career turf races.

O'Connell entered him anyway, well aware that wet weather often forces Calder races off the turf during summer months.

Calder has not been able to run any races on turf since Aug. 4.

Two other trainers scratched their horses from the Band Is Passing.

Flatter This came into the race without a victory since July 2010. But he had finished third and second in his two latest starts, both on dirt in allowances at Calder.

"I thought we would have a chance if it set up right," O'Connell said. "The pace was slower than we might have expected. [Jockey] **Luis [Saez]** gave him a perfect ride. I told him to not get too far back if the pace was slow."

Saez, who leads Calder jockeys with 106 victories, was riding Flatter This for the first time.

Hoopla led through a half-mile in 51.12 seconds, with Wingedlie second by a half-length. Flatter This was near the rail and another length behind in third, followed by Tannersville.

Flatter This, at 6-1, took the lead about 200 yards from the wire. Tannersville, whose best races have been on turf, then began gaining on the outside but could not catch Flatter This.

Wingedlie finished a length behind in third.

Flatter This' victory was his fourth in 28 career starts. He paid \$14, \$6.20 and \$4.40. Tannersville paid

\$2.60 and \$2.20 and Wingedlie \$2.80.

O'Connell said she will consider running him in the \$75,000 Darn That Alarm Stakes, at 1 1/16 miles on dirt at Calder on Sept. 3.

Henry Collazo, the trainer and part owner of Tannersville, said he was not disappointed with the second-place finish because of the slow pace.

"I thought Flatter This and Wingedlie might be the two top horses if it came off the turf," Collazo said.

"We ran him because we knew he had a good chance, and we want to keep him fit for the turf stakes down the road," he said. "Our jockey gave him a good ride, and he closed well."

Ruben Silvera rode Tannersville because **Luis Jurado** has been delayed in returning from a trip to his native Panama.

Tannersville, a 4-year-old, won last year's Calder Derby and finished fourth in this year's Canadian Turf (Grade 3) at Gulfstream Park.

RACING SCHEDULE

Calder will have its next stakes on Saturday, with two 7 1/2-furlong races on turf. The \$75,000 Naked Greed will be for 3-year-old males. The \$75,000 Crystal Rail will be for 3-year-old fillies.

Decisive Moment, best known for finishing 14th in this year's Kentucky Derby, is among nominees for the Naked Greed.

"We expect he will run," said **Juan Arias**, who trains Decisive Moment.

Decisive Moment last raced on July 30, winning the El Kaiser Stakes at one mile and 70 yards on dirt at Calder. On July 30, Battle of Love won the Three Ring Stakes at one mile and 70 yards at Calder.

"She is training well and will run next Saturday [in the Crystal Rai]," said Collazo, who trains Battle of Love.