MATRON STAKES HIGHLIGHT DOVER DOWNS’ FIRST WEEKEND CARDS

DOVER, Del. --- The Matron Stakes at Dover Downs annually complete the Grand Circuit season of major stakes for juvenile trotters and pacers. Again this season, most of the top two- and three-year-old colts and pacers are nominated to the eight stakes events which feature lucrative elimination rounds and finals the following week.

This season, all four freshman elims are carded on Nov. 3, the first Saturday of the track’s 39th race meet. The top eight finishers in each section return on Saturday, Nov. 10 for rich finals.

Last year there in the Matron Stakes 1,181 nominees, 767 two-year-olds and 474 three-year-olds compare to 414 last season. The Progress Pace has 102 nominees including one filly.

In two-year-old divisions, the highest nominees come in the two colt divisions. There are 204 colt trotters eligible and 216, 192 pacing colts, eight more than last season’s 192. The filly division boasts 186 pacers and 185 trotters.

The numbers are up among Matron sophomore eligibles. The most nominees in the three-year-old colt divisions are 216 pacers exceeding last season’s 122 and there are 126 trotters, eight more than a year ago. There are 129 filly trotters, 41 more than last season while nine more filly pacers this season with 93 nominees.

Upsets were the rule, not the exception, last season in Matron action. In two-year-old divisions, Artzina, conditioned by Dover Downs trainer Dylan Davis and piloted by Jack Moiseyev won the Colt Final posting a 1:52.1 win while George Brennan guided Current Hanover to a world record performance scoring a 1:52.2 longshot victory. On the trotting side, Snowboarder, was plucked from being sent to the Harrisburg sale and came through with a 1:57.1 victory for Dave Palone in the Colt finale. Undercover Lover, with Ron Pierce, also pulled a surprise winning the filly final in 1:57.1.

In the sophomore section, Western Ace became only the second double Matron winner at Dover Downs when David Miller drove the George Teague conditioned gelding to an upset 1:51.4 triumph in the Colt Final. Caviart Sydney, with Ron Pierce was another unexpected winner recording a 1:52.1 Filly Final. The Colt Trot was taken by Algiers Hall, trained and reined by John Stark Jr in 1:56. Queen Serene with trainer-driver Trond Smedshammer was a 1:56 Filly Trot champion.