

Abbatiello Wins 5,000th

Special to Newsday

Yonkers — **Carmin Abbatiello** became the second driver in harness-racing history to drive 5,000 winners when he reined J.C.'s First Born to victory in last night's first race at Yonkers Raceway. The 46-year-old **Abbatiello**, a Staten Island resident, is second to Herve Filion, who passed the 8,000-victory mark this year.

Typically, J.C.'s First Born went wire-to-wire — an aggressive style of driving that **Abbatiello** often has used during his 25-year career. The daughter of Albabross finished 4¼ lengths in front of Lucy Bromac in a 2:00 3/5 mile. J.C.'s First Born, **Abbatiello's** only winner of the night, paid \$5.

"I can't tell you how happy I am right now. It's been more than 20 long years of hard work to reach this," **Abbatiello** said. "She raced very good and I was really

trying to get this win over with. I was getting closer and closer and have been thinking about it for the last two weeks."

Abbatiello, needing one winner to reach 5,000, was scheduled to drive at The Meadowlands Tuesday night, but canceled his drives because of sickness. The missed day set up his triumph at Yonkers, where he has won six annual driving championships.

A driver who is not a regular on the Grand Circuit, **Abbatiello** has never won a Triple Crown race. He drove Newt Lobell to victory in last year's George Morton Levy Memorial Pace and won a division of the 1978 Cane Pace with Never Wrong in 1978 but lost to Armbro Tiger in the final.

Last week **Abbatiello** passed the \$30 million mark in career earnings, joining Hall of Famers Filion and Billy Haughton.