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Black Nova upsets in Hoosier Breeders Sophomore Fillies Stakes at Indiana Grand Racing & Casino

Story by Tammy Knox
Photos by Linscott Photography



SHELBYVILLE, Ind.; – June 20, 2018 – It wasn't the finish that anyone expected, not even owner-trainer Ron Brown, but Black Nova proved everyone wrong by breaking her maiden in the 10th running of the \$100,000-added Hoosier Breeders Sophomore Fillies Stakes at Indiana Grand Wednesday, June 20. Black Nova paid \$155.40 to win as the second longest shot on the board in the field of nine.

Ridden by Fernando De La Cruz, Black Nova broke well out of the gate from post two and was in the first flight behind race favorite Flurry and Marcelino Pedroza who went right to the lead in the one and one-sixteenth mile race. Prompted, ridden by Sammy Bermudez, also went out for the lead and pressed the pace through the first half of the race. De La Cruz kept Black Nova along the inside and waited for the right time to challenge the top spot.



Around the turn, Black Nova saved ground and moved in on Flurry. At the head of the lane, those two fillies were matching each other stride for stride as they moved through the stretch. Flurry wasn't giving in easily, but Black Nova just kept challenging her for the lead. Halfway through the stretch, it appeared Flurry would pick up the title, but the final strides brought Black Nova to the front for the win by one-half length in a time of 1:44.67. Obsolete and John McKee also moved up the inside to save ground and pick up the third spot at the wire.

"I talked to the assistant trainer, Justin, before the race and we were making a plan to stay inside and follow the favorite," said De La Cruz. "When we turned for home, she kept moving up. She really responded and never gave up all the way to the wire. We kept pushing the leader and she finally got by her."

Black Nova paid \$155.40, \$38.40 and \$9.60 across the board as the surprise winner. She had been close in her three previous starts, scoring one second and two thirds in three starts this season, all with De La Cruz aboard.

"She's really pretty easy to ride," said De La Cruz. "She gets a little nervous in the post parade and behind the gate, but once the race starts, she settles down and is all about racing."

Brown, a native of Connerville, Ind., recognized talent in Black Nova as a two-year-old. The Indiana-bred filly made her first start at Indiana Grand last September and after four starts, took the winter off to regroup for her three-year-old season.

"This filly (Black Nova) has really matured over the winter," said Brown. "If I had it to do over, I wouldn't have raced her last year at two because she was so immature. The difference in last year to this year is day and night. I thought she would break her maiden soon, but seeing her getting it this way today is even better. I'm just amazed and couldn't be happier."

Black Nova was making her ninth career start for Brown and increased her career bankroll to more than \$78,000 with her win in the Hoosier Breeders Sophomore Fillies Stakes. The black daughter of Holiday Promise was greeted in the winner's circle by Brown and his family along with breeder, Dr. Crystal Chapple of Hillsboro, Ind., and her friend, Michael Phelps, who has a special bond with the filly.

"This is the first foal from my mare Spousal Privilege," said Chapple, who has three brood mares at her farm. "The night she was born, we were watching the movie True Grit. We went out to check on her and this filly had just been born. Michael was with me and had never seen a foal born before. She got up and walked right over to him, and he quoted a line from the movie we had just seen, 'I shall name you Little Blackie.'"

Unfortunately, the name wasn't available. Chapple did a DNA test on the filly to ensure she would be registered as black. Once she was sold to Brown, they discussed the name and told Brown the story behind the attempted name. Brown said, "When I was a kid, I had a Nova that was pretty fast, so I'll just name her Black Nova."

Brown was impressed enough with Black Nova that he also bought her half brother, Rooster, who is a two-year-old this season. Chapple also has a yearling by Santiva at her farm, so Black Nova is paving the way for the family to continue to prosper in the state of Indiana.



The 16th season of Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing continues through Wednesday, Nov. 7. Racing is conducted Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 2:05 p.m. EST with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 p.m. EST. Two special Thursday racing dates will be held July 19 and Sept. 6 with a 2:05 p.m. EST post time.

About Indiana Grand Racing & Casino: Indiana Grand Racing & Casino holds multiple awards for customer service, entertainment, gaming, dining, and diversity. Located in Shelbyville, Ind., Indiana Grand features 2,200 of the latest slots and electronic table games in addition to a one-mile dirt race course and a seven-eighths mile turf course offering live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing each year. Simulcast wagering is also offered year-round at Winner's Circle Brewpub & OTB located on the casino floor as well as a Winner's Circle OTB located in Clarksville, Ind.