

STONE HEADING WEST

Upsets in

Indiana Quarter Horse Futurity



written by: Jada Buchanan

Pictures provided by: QHRAI

Stone Heading West and Tom C. Johns captured Indiana's richest Quarter Horse race Saturday, Sept. 5 at Hoosier Park Racing and Casino. The Grade III \$100,000 Stallion Service Auction Futurity was the highlight on the program that featured more than \$150,000 in Quarter Horse purses.

Ridden by Rodney Prescott in the trials to a second place finish behind El Campechino, Stone Heading West picked up longtime Hoosier Park jockey Tom C. Johns of Pendleton, Ind. for the Futurity final. The duo was the second longest shot on the board entering the race after Stone Heading West recorded the ninth fastest time of the field to get qualified for the final.

Starting from the outside post 10, Stone Heading West got a clean break and was even with his opponents in the first portion of the 350-yard race. It wasn't until the latter stages that he began to emerge as a potential contender for the title. Stone Heading West finished a neck ahead of another longshot, Tuff Southern Gal and Lee Gates, for the victory. El Campechino and Carter Riley finished another neck back for third.

"He (Stone Heading West) broke so well," said Johns. "It took him a little bit to get his feet underneath him. But he was in full gear at the end."

The win with Stone Heading West marked the biggest win of his career for Johns, who attend Pendleton Heights High School. Johns also won a stake race earlier this season at Indiana Downs, piloting He's Rare Too for Bob Piatt in the \$75,000 Blue River Derby.

Johns has been a member of the jockey colony since the inaugural season, riding in his first pari-mutuel race at the track in 1995. Prior to the opening of Hoosier Park, he rode in Michigan at Mount Pleasant Meadows, beginning his career on Arabians and Quarter Horses.

Stone Heading West recorded his first career win in five starts for trainer Randy Haffner, who co-owns the two-year-old grey gelding with Bob Petersen. Stone Heading West now has a bankroll of more than \$67,000. The son of SC Chiseled in Stone was acquired by Haffner and Petersen through a claim for \$4,000 earlier this year in Oklahoma.

"We were looking for horses that were eligible to the futurity and the derby and found a couple at Remington Park," said Haffner. "We went out and put a claim in him (Stone Heading West) but there was another claim in on him too. We got him in the shake. We had also put a claim in on one for the Derby, but there were seven claims in on that horse and we didn't get that one."

Stone Heading West paid \$69.40, \$30.60, and \$21.60 across the board as the upset winner. Time for the Futurity was :18.074 seconds.

The Stallion Service Auction Futurity began in 1998, one year after pari-mutuel Quarter Horse racing was introduced to the state of Indiana. The event began with a purse of \$40,000 and has now escalated to \$100,000, marking the richest purse offered in the state of Indiana for Quarter Horses.