

Walker Family Sends Two Top Contenders into Illinois State Fair Finals

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The Walker family will be well represented next week at the Illinois State Fair as Battlin Bob and Fox Valley Groupie gave strong performances in their eliminations to secure spots in the \$35,000 finals. Both horses are trained by Robert Walker and will be driven by Travis Seekman.

Battlin Bob, a homebred owned solely by the Walker family, is by Somestarsomewhere out of Bucklegirl Bobette. He continues to build on an impressive resume, posting a powerful win in the elimination with a lifetime best 1:50.3, once again handing the highly regarded Cash Money Twenty his second career Illinois Conceived and Foaled loss. Battlin Bob pressed the pace before digging in deep to hold off the favorite, demonstrating the grit and speed that have defined his two-year-old and current campaigns. Seekman noted that recent adjustments to Battlin Bob's equipment helped him find better rhythm and comfort in the elimination.

In the pacing filly eliminations, Fox Valley Groupie, owned by Jim Ballinger and the Walker family, is a daughter of Somestarsomewhere and Rock With Delight. She showed her trademark consistency, finishing a strong second after pressing the pace throughout. Groupie has been in the money in eight of nine starts this season, cementing her reputation as one of Illinois' most reliable 3-year-old fillies.

Driver Travis Seekman expressed satisfaction with the post positions drawn for the finals, saying, "The post draw gives us plenty of options on how to race, which is a real advantage in a competitive field like this. Both horses can adapt well, so it's exciting going into the championship."

Seekman also praised the Walker family, saying, "I really enjoy driving for the Walkers. They've been great people to work with, and our relationship is important to me both on the track and off."

The finals will take place during next Thursday's 14-race card, which kicks off at 11 a.m. Central Time. Battlin Bob will compete in Race 12, while Fox Valley Groupie will be featured in Race 11.