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Indiana Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association



## PEYTON'S PASS SPEEDY IN 23RD RUNNING OF THE \$100,000 MERRILLVILLE STAKES AT INDIANA GRAND RACING & CASINO

*Story By Tammy Knox  
Pictures By Linscott Photography*



SHELBYVILLE, Ind.; – Sept. 13, 2017 – Peyton's Pass showed how quick-ness pays off as she rallied to a nearly gate to wire victory in the 23rd running of the \$100,000-added Merrillville Stakes at Indiana Grand Wed. Sept. 13. The race joins the Indiana Derby as the oldest stakes race in the history of pari-mutuel Thoroughbred racing in the state of Indiana. It was part of the lineup during the inaugural season at Hoosier Park in 1995 and was moved to Indiana Grand in 2013 when the track went to all Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing.

Peyton's Pass was ready to go as the Steve Peterman starting gate sprung open, the four-year-old daughter of Pass Rush busted out of the gate on top and looked powerful on the inside as she was joined by Ourcinnamonansugar and Fernando De La Cruz on the outside for the race down the backstretch. Whistle Stop and Marcelino Pedroza were tracking the progress of the top two throughout the race and when the field turned for home, they were ready to pounce.

In the stretch, several opponents tried their best to catch Peyton's Pass but she was strong through the wire, winning by four lengths in a time of 1:10.36. Hay Little Bit and Alex Contreras rallied from the back of the eight horse field to finish second, less than a length ahead of Whistle Stop for third.

"We used some early speed and once we got out of there (the gate), I let him take it from there," said Perez, who has more than 2,500 career wins. "I expected to get the lead early. When you have the one hole, you gotta go. I think her last race helped her. She ran good today. I want to thank Bob (Gorham) and the connections for letting me ride her this year."

Peyton's Pass was a bit of a surprise at the windows, paying \$13.40, \$6.60 and \$5.00 across the board. The win in the Merrillville Stakes was her second career stakes win at Indiana Grand, pushing her career earnings to more than \$242,000 for Henry Mast's Mast Thoroughbreds LLC. Peyton's Pass is now six for 12 lifetime and has only missed hitting the board twice in her career.

"We bought this filly privately from Crystal Chapple," said Gorham. "We've had several horses from her and they have all done well for us. She has been solid through her two, three and four-year-old year for us. She had a chip removed during the last half of her three-year-old year but it was nothing major."

Peyton's Pass returned to action this year and has only finished back of second once, which was her last start, a fifth place finish in the Shelby County Stakes. She has been very consistent throughout her career for her connections, who have long term plans for her after the racetrack.



"I'm not sure if we will run her or breed her next year," added Gorham. "Her next career will be as a brood mare and we are really anxious to start raising babies with her. She is a great brood mare prospect and we like the way she's built to pass that onto her babies."

The 15th season of Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing continues through Friday, Oct. 27. Racing is conducted Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 2:05 p.m. with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 p.m. A special Thursday program will be held the final week of action on Oct. 26 beginning at 2:05 p.m.

About Indiana Grand Racing & Casino: Indiana Grand Racing & Casino holds multiple awards from industry publications for customer service, entertainment, gaming and dining. 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 an off-track betting facility located in Clarksville, Ind. For more information, please visit [www.IndianaGrand.com](http://www.IndianaGrand.com).

