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From The Great White North: Zeron is a young juggernaut

Tuesday, September 18, 2012 - by Karen Briggs, USTA Web Newsroom Senior Correspondent



Karen Briggs

Toronto, ON --- She has made it clear: the Little Brown Jug is at the top of Casie Coleman's bucket list.

She has sent two colts to the Delaware oval in search of that iconic trophy thus far: Kyle Major, who so disastrously self-destructed right in front of the grandstand and the photographers in 2010, and Betterthancheddar, who was a creditable third but couldn't beat Big Bad John and Roll With Joe.

The Ontario-based trainer didn't really think she had a Jug candidate in her barn for the 67th edition, coming up on Thursday (Sept. 20). But young Scott Zeron never doubted it.

"Right from the first time I sat behind Michael's Power, I thought we had a really nice horse," says the 23-year-old linesman, who has been going from strength to strength since he started driving

professionally at the age of 18.

Zeron, the son of veteran driver and trainer Rick Zeron (who was an O'Brien Award winner in 2010) comes by his talent honestly, and has carved out a place for himself in the highly competitive driver's room at the Woodbine Entertainment Group.

He has already been an O'Brien Award finalist for driver of the year in both 2010 and 2011, was the leading driver at Flamboro Downs in 2010 in both wins and money earned, captured the 2010 Gold Cup and Saucer in Prince Edward Island with Part Shark (the youngest driver ever to win the event), and represented Canada in the 2010 International Driving competition in France.

"I have a lot of big races under my belt already, and I'm trying to treat this like it's just another one -- but I have to admit, I'm excited to be going to the Jug with a real contender."

This will be Zeron's first drive in the Little Brown Jug, and he admits he has only attended one other.

"It was P-Forty-Seven's year, in 2005. That's the only other time I've been down there, except in 2009 when I won an Ohio Breeders' Championship on Jugette Day. I had one race in the U.S. and one win.

"It's funny, Casie never really considered Michael's Power a top 3-year-old candidate, and the Jug was not on the radar," added Zeron. "But he has been overachieving since the first time he went behind the gate with me. He's been beating the big American horses week in and week out, and I think he has earned his place."

It's not that Michael's Power doesn't have the credentials. Being a son of Camluck out of Michelle's Jackpot makes him a full brother to millionaire mare Michelle's Power. His granddam, Jef's Magic Trick, is also the dam of Cam's Card Shark.

And having put together a million-dollar sophomore season already, he's one of racing's leading money-winners, with a speed badge of 1:49.2.

The plain bay gelding has also proven that racing heats suits him; in August, he handily won the \$587,315 Confederation Cup final on Flamboro Downs' half-mile oval, defeating Dynamic Youth and Pet Rock, after coming second in the first heat.

"Casie's usually overly high on the youngsters she thinks are talented," says Zeron. "Not



USTA/Ken Weingartner
photo

Scott Zeron will be driving Michael's Power in the Little Brown Jug.



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Michael's Power has earned \$1.04 million in 2012 with 11 wins in 14 starts.

with him, though. Now she's really high on Michael's Power, but to begin with I really had to convince her.

"It was really (owner) Jeff Snyder's decision to go to the Jug though. He'd said last week that if we didn't win the (Sept. 8) Simcoe Stakes, we weren't going to go to Ohio. So when I got off the bike after finishing third, it was in my mind that we weren't going. But I guess his family really wanted to go, and they put the pressure on. I got the phone call a couple of days later -- one of the best phone calls of my life!"

Zeron knows Michael's Power has his work cut out for him.

"It's the best bunch of 3-year-olds I've ever seen," he says. "Bolt The Duer is on fire, and A Rocknroll Dance is a tremendous horse as well."

The gelding is slated to face Bolt The Duer in the first heat, and has drawn post three.

"Win or lose, this is huge for Casie. She's been putting the pressure on me all week, telling me it's the only race she wants to win," says Zeron with a laugh. "So that's the strategy -- we're not going just to participate, we're going to win."

Editor's Note: The views contained in this column are that of the author alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of the United States Trotting Association.

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Best of luck to Michael's Power, [Casie Coleman](#) and [Scott Zeron](#) in this Thursday's Little Brown Jug!

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