

McLOVIN FINDS HIS CALLING WINNING STAKES OVER 2 MILES ON SOFT SOD ANIMAL KINGDOM 5YO IS STAKES WINNER NO. 181 FOR AN IRWIN SYNDICATE SET TO MAKE SECOND START OVER 2 MILES IN DECEMBER AT GULFSTREAM

McLovin, already a beloved equine simply by virtue of his comical name, endeared himself to the crowd of National Hunt aficionados on Saturday at a major day of hurdle and steeplechase racing at Fair Hills in New Jersey and before he cooled out and hopped on the van back to Keeneland he had managed to create his own fan club. It did not hurt that during his signature victory in the day's only Flat race, the \$100,000 John Forbes Stakes over 2 miles, he jumped a road and a pathway a few times en route to his grass course triumph, teasing those in attendance that he himself may someday want to return to the home of jump races in the United States to try his luck over the barriers.



Truth be told, TVI actually fielded a couple of offers for the bay horse to be trained to race over the jumps next season.

On a beautiful afternoon in rural New Jersey, McLovin lined up against 7 experienced 2-mile horses for the flag start that would send the older runners on their way in the last race of the day contested over a course softened by overnight rain.

This season's leading steeplechase rider in number of winning rides, the English-born Harrison Beswick got the job done in the end, but it was a learning experience for both rider and horse. McLovin crossed the line a length to the good. While the victory was never in doubt, Mr. Beswick was unprepared for the start, which cost McLovin at least 3 or 4 lengths.

Racing with a stranglehold on McLovin as though the horse would have trouble seeing out the full trip, Beswick kept McLovin unnecessarily wide to avoid trouble, as his neck was bent double. McLovin had to lose another 3 lengths because of the extra ground he covered.

Finally, his armed pulled out of their sockets, Beswick let go of his hold on McLovin, and the horse immediately dropped his head like an old pro, made his way to the lead and traversed the second lap of the course along the rail.

McLovin had an insurmountable lead at the top of the lane and was only mildly kept to his task to prevail at the finish and cop the \$60,000 first prize. [RACE REPLAY](#)

Now he will be sent after the Breeders' Cup to Arnaud Delacour, his wintertime trainer at Tampa Bay Downs, and be prepared for yet another 2-mile race, this time the Allen Jerkens Stakes at Gulfstream Park for the same \$100,000 pot he just won at Far Hills. "We thank Rudy Brisset and his assistant Leslie Howes for their creativity and talent," Barry Irwin said.