



Atlanta

Bay filly, 3 by Chapter Seven – Hemi Blue Chip by Cantab Hall

OWNER: Rick Zeron, Holland Racing Stable, Brad Grant, ONT; Crawford Farms, NY; Howard Taylor, PA
BREEDER: Order By Stable, Sweden
SALE INFO: Standardbred Horse Sale, Harrisburg \$60,000
TRAINER: Rick Zeron
DRIVER: Scott Zeron

YEAR	STARTS	1ST	2ND	3RD	EARNINGS	MARK
2018	5	5	0	0	\$178,234	1:50.3 S
2017	10	4	0	1	\$123,411	1:54.0 S
LIFETIME	15	9	0	1	\$301,645	1:50.3 S

- Atlanta becomes the 162nd filly to start in the Hambletonian, 13 fillies have won it, the last to win it was Continentalvictory in 1996, and Mission Brief was the last to race in it and finished second to Pinkman in 2015. 29-year-old Scott Zeron, the leading driver at the Meadowlands in 2016, is looking for his second Hambletonian in three years.
- Atlanta comes into the Hambletonian a perfect five-for-five this season. She won her 2018 debut at the Meadowlands with a sterling rally in 1:52 on April 28. She went on to sweep her elimination and the final of the \$238,613 Empire Breeders Class in an all-age track record at Vernon Downs of 1:50.3 on May 18. She set another track record of 1:52.2 in New York Sires Stakes at Tioga Downs on June 24. Her latest win was an easy romp in New York Sires Stakes at Vernon Downs in 1:53.4 on July 19.
- Her two-year-old highlights include a \$69,552 Champlain Stakes division at Mohawk in 1:56.1, a New York Sires Stakes win in 1:54 at Vernon Downs and a fourth in the \$600,000 Breeders Crown at Hoosier Park.
- In 2011, Rick Zeron finished second in the Hambletonian Oaks driving his trainee Lady Rainbow. Seven years later, the 61-year-old native of Ottawa, Ontario is taking a shot at the Hambletonian with his trotting filly Atlanta. Zeron has over 8,000 driving wins and earnings of more than \$100 million, yet nothing would compare to winning the Hambletonian, with his son Scott Zeron driving.
- Rick Zeron has never been ashamed to admit he's a crier. So, just what would that mean if his filly Atlanta were to beat the boys in the \$1.2 million Hambletonian on August 4 at the Meadowlands? "The tears would flow," the veteran trainer/driver said, laughing. "I'd go through a box of Kleenex from the place where I was standing to the winner's circle. That's what it's all about. Racing is all about, as far as I'm concerned, winning the best race that you could possibly win and showing your emotions after the race. Unbelievable." On July 21, the Ontario-based horseman announced what he and Atlanta's other connections had decided privately weeks ago that, heats be damned, the uber-talented filly would, indeed, take on the boys in the main event instead of racing in the \$500,000 Hambletonian Oaks.
- Despite a successful 43-year career with an emphasis on trotters, Zeron has never raced a horse in the Hambletonian, but he did finish second driving Lady Rainbow in the 2011 Hambletonian Oaks won by Bold And Fresh. Though he ranks the Hambletonian in a tie with the Elitlopp at the top of the list of races he would most love to win, the 61-year-old Zeron said putting Atlanta in against the boys isn't about taking a shot because the clock is ticking and opportunities are few and far between. "I'm taking my shot because I think she's good enough," Zeron said. "I wouldn't put a filly in with the colts if I didn't think she could trot with them or beat them. I would never put my filly in that position to make her do something that I know she couldn't do."

- Beyond blazing speed, Zeron said one of Atlanta's best qualities is, "that she recuperates after a race. Within 15 or 20 minutes, she's back to herself." That, said Zeron, will help her deal with the heats on a likely hot day. "Number two, she takes care of herself," he said. "She's not a bully. She doesn't pull. She's not erratic. She goes out there, you pick the lines up and put her behind the gate and she does what she's got to do. "Another thing I really admire about this filly is she covers the ground so softly. If you watch the gait that she has on her, she covers the ground so perfectly, it's unbelievable."
- Atlanta will become just the fifth filly since the year 2000 to race against the boys in the Hambletonian. The last filly to capture harness racing's most prestigious trotting event was Continentalvictory in 1996.
- Zeron's decision to race Atlanta in the sport's biggest trotting event adds tremendous hype to the 93rd Hambletonian and the veteran horseman expects to leave a lasting mark. "This will go down in history," he said. Atlanta, a Chapter Seven filly out of Hemi Blue Chip bred by Order By Stable of Sweden, was purchased for \$60,000 as a yearling at the Harrisburg Sale in November of 2016. "I watched the horse race many, many times – Chapter Seven – loved him as a stallion and was fortunate enough to buy her," Zeron said. "The only thing I didn't like was her name. I changed her name to Atlanta. Her name was originally Django Unchained. Why, I don't know. Great movie, loved the movie, but for a filly it's very odd. For a Muscle Hill colt or something like that, maybe, but not a trotting filly." Rick said he picked the name Atlanta as a tribute to new members of his family. His daughter Jade's father-in-law lives in Atlanta. "We were having a few beers and I thought to myself, "That's a nice name for a horse, if I can get it."
- Atlanta had a solid rookie season, winning four of 10 starts and earning \$123,411, but was in the shadow of then-undefeated Manchego. This year, Atlanta has posted an undefeated streak of her own through five eye-catching starts, including a 1:50.3 performance on May 28 at Vernon Downs in which she set the all-age track record in the \$238,613 Empire Breeders Classic that is a career best mile.
- Zeron co-owns Atlanta with Crawford Farms, Holland Racing Stable, Howard Taylor and Brad Grant. He said his partners have provided full support for the Hambletonian attempt, as has Zeron's son, Scott, the filly's driver. "Scott is right on board with me and we've talked about this extensively for the last two months or maybe two-and-a-half months. We've managed her perfectly and put her into race where she belongs, didn't put her in with aged horses, other than her first start," Rick said, adding he expects Atlanta to come into the Hambletonian in top form after a two-week break. "She loves coming off a two-week layoff. She's like a thoroughbred. She likes her time off to mellow out and enjoy herself, but you put the harness on her and she does her own thing. She's a natural trotter. I've been training horses since 1975 and I've never had a trotter like this. You can look up my record and I've had a lot of great trotters and won some great races – not the Hambletonian, but the Maple Leaf Trot, the Trotting Classic up here in Canada, lots of Golds and big events." But none of those would compare to winning the Hambletonian, a scene Rick predicts would turn into tearjerker in short order. "(Scott?s) not a crier, but when he sees me, he'll probably have a tear or two, ' Rick said, laughing. "And don't think my wife Joyce isn't going to be sitting next to me crying, too." One day seeing his name engraved on the base of the Hambletonian trophy would start the waterworks all over again. "There are just no words to describe it," Rick said. "To have Scott Zeron winning the Hambletonian with Atlanta and Rick Zeron as trainer and co-owner of that horse? Priceless."
- In 2017, Scott Zeron continued to concentrate on the major stakes trail and passed the \$7 million mark for the third straight season (220 wins). His trotting star Marion Marauder won the Hambletonian Maturity and John Cashman Memorial, International Moni won a Hambletonian elimination, and Lost In Time captured the Governors Cup.
- The Scott Zeron juggernaut soared to new heights in 2016 in a dream season of firsts. Zeron notched first Meadowlands driving title with 92 wins and \$2 million in earnings. Also, just prior to turning 27, he won his first Hambletonian in straight heats with Marion Marauder, who also captured the Yonkers Trot and Kentucky Futurity for Zeron's first Trotting Triple Crown. Plus, Zeron scored his first Breeders Crown in the Three Year Old Filly Pace with Call Me Queen Be. Zeron passed 3,000 career wins, joined the \$50 million club and enjoyed his first \$8 million season. He guided Shamballa to an upset win in the US Pacing Championship in 1:47.1, the fastest drive of his life.
- Zeron's great sense of timing on the track paid off with a major career move at the right time. The 2012 Rising Star Award winner and leading driver on the Woodbine Entertainment Circuit in 2013 decided to take a shot at the New Meadowlands right before the Grand Opening, and it resulted in a Top 5 finish in the driver standings at the inaugural meet.
- Zeron also caught the eye of trainer Tony Alagna, and the pair teamed up with the outstanding freshman pacer Artspeak, who captured the \$100,000 New Jersey Sires Stakes Final. Zeron won another \$100,000 NJSS Final with Stacia Hanover.
- Zeron, who became the youngest driver in history at age 23 to reach 2,000 wins on March 21st of 2013, and was the youngest to win the 2012 Little Brown Jug with Michael's Power at age 21. He was also a finalist for Canada's Driver of the Year for the 2010 and 2011 O'Brien Awards.
- For two years in a row (2010 and 2011), Zeron led all Canadian drivers in wins. In 2010, Zeron visited the winner's circle a personal best 606 times followed by 539 wins in 2011. He posted his biggest money year to date in 2012 with \$8,743,648 in earnings.