Haughtons Racing With a Sad Memory

By JAMES TUITE
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DU QUOIN, Ill., Aug. 29 — His name is Robert Cameron Haughton, but everybody calls him Cammy, and he has a problem.

Cammy's 23-year-old brother, Tom, will drive one of the favorites, Final Score, in the last Hambletonian Trot to be raced in the bucolic setting of the Du Quoin Fairgrounds tomorrow. He likes his brother, but Cammy will not be rooting for Final Score.

Instead, Cammy will pull for Burgomeister, who will be driven by Bill, father of the racing Haughtons. Burgomeister was the favorite of the late Peter Haughton, Cammy's older brother, and is still partly owned by Peter's estate.

"I want to see Tommy do well with Final Score," Cammy said as he sat outside the Haughton barn today, "but I want to see the other horse do better.

"Maybe I shouldn't feel that way," said Cammy, an assistant trainer who is also a talented driver. "But if Peter were here, he'd be jogging Burgomeister and my father would be jogging Final Score."

Peter Haughton, a promising driver, was killed at the age of 25 near the Meadowlands track in New Jersey last January when his car went out of control.

His mother, Dorothy, flew here for the race from their summer home in New Hampshire. "I don't know how we will make it through Christmas without Peter," she had said, but she said a Burgomeister victory tomorrow would be a nice tribute to her late son.

"Everybody on the ground is kind of hoping that Burgomeister wins, too," Cammy said.

"The ground" is a spacious fairgrounds, alive with carnival rides and cotton candy, pizzas and popcorn and other indigestibles. The vans and campers have started spewing the families that tomorrow will jam this track and focus their attention on the 55th edition of this classic for 3-year-old trotters.

Next year, the Hambletonian becomes part of the multimillion-dollar racing program of the Jersey Meadowlands, the most successful racing operation in the nation.

So wide-open is tomorrow's race that 19 horses have been entered, forcing split divisions. There will be two elimination heats, with the five top finishers in each mile going into a third heat. If either of the winners triumphs again, he becomes the Hambletonian champion and recipient of half the $293,570 total purse.

Next year the loot will be more than twice that and the race shown on national television.

Along with Final Score, a favorite in the opening dash will be Noble Hustle, a lightly raced colt who was champion 2-year-old trotter. The second division, in which Burgomeister will start from the outside post, is headed by Thor Viking and Dixon Hanover. The two most promising early contenders, Netted and Rodney's Best, were withdrawn because of injuries.

Until Tommy Haughton, who is 23, took over the driving of Final Score, the colt raced erratically, often going off stride even when reined by Billy Haughton. But Tommy seems to have the winning touch with Final Score, a son of the 1972 Hambletonian winner, Super Bowl.

"Tommy knows the horse," said Cammy, who helps to train the Haughton family stock. "I don't think just anybody can sit behind him, he's such a funny colt. Once he gets rolling, there's no stopping him."

Cammy admits there is pressure on him and Tommy to do well since Peter's death. "It's not easy to live up to the Haughton name," he said. His father has won $478,889 racing in 20 Hambletonian dashes.

Cammy and his father say Burgomeister is the better of the Haughton entry even though Final Score beat him at Syracuse a week ago. Al Thomas, chief assistant trainer for the Haughtons, said the colt was brought along slowly by design.

"Peter Haughton knew this colt had lots of ability," Thomas said, "but he felt that the way to develop a trotter was a slow, steady process that was unrushed and unhurried. Billy kept asking Peter why he didn't race the colt more, but Peter was adamant on his schedule. It's a shame that Peter isn't around to see the colt doing so well."