

## Gingras to Drive Both Mission Brief and Pinkman in Hambo Elims

By Bill Finley

Yannick Gingras said this morning he will drive both Pinkman and Mission Brief on Hambletonian Day in their respective heats, and that he has been given permission by trainers Ron Burke and Jimmy Takter to do so.



**Yannick Gingras has the difficult choice between driving Pinkman and Mission Brief in the Hambletonian**

Gingras is the regular driver of both Pinkman and the filly Mission Brief, who loom as the top two contenders for the Hambletonian. Gingras is banking on there being heats, which will be required only if at least 14 horses are entered. It appears that number will be reached.

"I don't have to make choice now because I am going to drive both," Gingras said when reached by phone in Sweden.

"Hopefully, one of them will step up really big and make my decision easy. I

have not lost any sleep over it at all. I actually think it a great problem to have. I do hope that someone steps up and makes my decision an easy one. I love both of these horses. I baby raced both and have been with them from the start. I want both of them to be good. If that's the case it's going to be maybe the hardest decision I've ever had to make and I'm going to disappoint someone. One way or the other, it's going to stink, but I wouldn't trade places with anyone else. I know this makes for a good storyline."

Burke said he has no problem with Gingras's decision and, like Takter, will simply wait and hope he retains the services of the driver for the Hambletonian Final.

"It is what it is," Burke said. "This is the situation and how it unfolded. I want certain drivers, but I'm not going to kill myself if I don't get one driver over the other."

Burke said he does not have a backup plan concerning who he will use if Gingras is not available to him.

"We'll see who's in what eliminations and then come up with a plan," he said.

Takter could not be reached for comment.

"I don't know what Yannick will do," Takter said Sunday after Pinkman and Mission Brief were both Zweig winners at Vernon Downs. "It is his call. Pinkman is not a difficult horse to drive. There are a lot of good drivers out there who will want to drive Pinkman if Yannick doesn't."

Hambletonian starters are placed in various eliminations based on a seeding system. It is therefore guaranteed that Pinkman and Mission Brief, both No. 1 seeds, will not meet each other in the first heats.

Between now and Hambletonian Day there will likely be a lot of speculation concerning who will drive the horse Gingras does not pick. Brian Sears does not have appear to have a top horse for the race and figures to enter the mix. As far as Pinkman goes, Takter could choose his brother, Johnny, who is scheduled to drive Sarcy for him the same day in the Hambletonian Oaks. Takter confirmed Sunday that he will not drive Pinkman himself.

Gingras has never driven a Hambletonian winner. He has driven Mission Brief in every career start. On five occasions, he has not piloted Pinkman. Twice Takter drove the gelding himself. Brett Miller, Sylvain Filion and Jim Marohn Jr. have also driven him.

Gingras and Jimmy Takter went to Sweden for Maven's race there Tuesday. In a race won by Creatine, Maven finished sixth. Gingras was winless on the card, but is hopeful he will pick up a victory tonight at Solvalla. He is listed to drive four horses, including one, the Daniel Reden trained Be Spontaneous, who is likely to be favored.

"I love it here," Gingras said. "This is my second time here and both times I've been here have been a great experience. I think I have some good chances tonight. I have horses that are a little bit more competitive tonight."

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