

# The Perks of Being a Derby Winner



## Perks Prize Wagon pulls off a mild upset in the NDQHRA Derby



*Perks Prize Wagon with Terry Bennet up, headed into the Derby winner's circle*

Jeff and Eva Hepper's charge **Perks Prize Wagon** carried a form into the \$8,800 NDQHRA Derby that was quite unconventional by Fargo standards. The three year-old colt by Pyc Paint Your Wagon had started his career with a win at Chippewa Downs before coming back sore, ending his juvenile career. So when it came to start his sophomore season the debut didn't come in the Dakotas but rather Oklahoma – at Remington Park in a lucrative \$21,000 Allowance race.

"We have some friends in Oklahoma and actually we bought the mare from Fred Stanley and she was bred when we bought her so we thought we'd try him down there," co-owner Eva Hepper said. "But he ran against some pretty tough horses and we just decided to bring him back here and run him and then take him home."

The Sooner State test (a ninth place finish) gave Perks Prize Wagon an edge against six foes in the Derby as he broke strong under Terry Bennett and seized the lead from Blurred Cash in midstretch before finishing the race a neck in front of his rival, the 2-1 favorite. Dontthrotlemystyle, the 7-2 third choice, finished third.

"I was very nervous until he got his nose up on the line," Hepper said. "I just had confidence in this horse since the day he was born and haven't lost that."

The \$4,400 earned by the winner boosted his lifetime earnings to \$5,590. With two wins in three starts however it appears that the brief career (on the racetrack anyway) may be coming to an end.

"No more races, none that are planned unless something comes up," Hepper said. "We have some girls coming up that are looking at barrel horses so we're going to take him home."