



# The *Saratoga* Special



## Once More

Off DQ in Bowling Green, Sadler's Joy eyes another Sword Dancer



# THE TOP OF HIS CROP

# BLAME

(Arch - Liable, by Seeking the Gold)

Seventh Crop Sire	Graded Stakes Horses	Stakes Horses
<b>Blame</b>	6.11%	9.16%
Quality Road	4.02%	8.05%
Munnings	3.35%	6.28%

*\* 2020 stats as of 08/24*

2020 Graded Stakes Horses incl.

NADAL	MRS. SIPPY
DONTBLAMEROCKET	PROMPT
ABSCOND	RANDONNEE
MARAUD	SHOTSKI



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**Jockey-Trainer.** Brittany Russell (then Trimble) gets after Wheels Up en route to victory at Fair Hill in 2010. She runs Wondrwherecraigis in the Amsterdam today.

Tod Marks

## here&there...in racing

Presented by Shadwell Farm



### BY THE NUMBERS

**27:** Browser tabs open on Joe Clancy's computer at 7:06 p.m. Thursday.

**47:** Positive Covid-19 tests at Churchill Downs of staff, vendors and horsemen from 1,823 administered tests Aug. 19-24.

**50:** Jock's fee paid to Barclay Tagg by Ruth Clancy to ride Nalanx on Wednesday at Rolling Rock in 1971.

**60:** Jock's fee paid to Barclay Tagg by Ruth Clancy to ride Nalanx on Saturday at Rolling Rock in 1971.

**2:** Starbucks gift cards sent to The Special's Sean Clancy and Joe Clancy (thank you).

**4:** Computers used by Joe Clancy – all within 15 feet of each other – at the home office Thursday.

### NAMES OF THE DAY

**Bird's Eye View, second race.** Ballybrit Stable's 6-year-old gelding is by Mizzen Mast out of Lavish Outlook.

**Tied Up, fourth race.** The 5-year-old mare is by Even The Score. And we're going to overtime.

**Puffery, fifth race.** The 5-year-old mare, bred by Bill Parsons and David Howe, is by Flatter.

**Yaupon, seventh race.** It's got nothing to do with his pedigree, but the 3-year-old colt is named for North America's first caffeinated beverage. Native Americans brewed it from the leaves of the yaupon holly, a tree native to what is now the southeastern United States. The drinking of yaupon goes back ancient times before Europeans arrived in North America.

**Principal Dancer.** We missed this one Friday. R&H Stable's 4-year-old is by Central Banker out of Bunhead (a nickname for a ballerina). The gelding finished second. Thanks Steve Price.

### WORTH REPEATING

"If we can come up here and knock out a Grade 1 win every other year, we'll take it."

**Jonathan Thomas, who won the 2018 Travers with Catholic Boy and goes for today's Sword Dancer with Corelli**

"The good news is the crowd was already at a minimum."

**NYRA's Andy Serling during Thursday's downpour**

"That was not a good joke."

**NYRA's Anthony Stabile responding to Serling**

"I didn't think quiet could get any quieter. But it has."

**Old Friends' Michael Blowen in his lede to his newsletter**

"Loved your column. Had been waiting for the classic, 'Let the tape recorder run.' Cue the song, 'That's what friends are for.'"

**Longtime reader Price Bell, after Sean Clancy's column that included a long quote from teammate Tom Law**

"I love that pic."

**Retired jump jockey Robbie Walsh when seeing a photo of The Special's Sean Clancy interviewing him after winning the New York Turf Writers Cup eight years ago**

## The Saratoga Special

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### Editors/Publishers/Owners:

**Sean Clancy:** (302) 545-7713. sean@thisishorseracing.com **Joe Clancy:** (302) 545-4424. joe@thisishorseracing.com

**Managing Editor: Tom Law:** (859) 396-9407. tom@thisishorseracing.com

### Writers/Copy Editors:

Paul Halloran, Terry Hill, Mary Eddy,  
Nolan Clancy, Ryan Clancy.

### Photography:

Tod Marks.  
Michael Trombetta Jr.

### Marketing:

Samantha Loud.

### Handicappers:

Charles Bedard, John Shapazian,  
Rob Whitlock.

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Susie Raisher

**Juicer.** A NYRA outrider makes sure his mount stays fueled on watermelon during a break in the action at Saratoga.

## The Chief

“Why do they go a half-mile and stop? Why?  
Just answer me why they go a half-mile and stop.  
I don’t understand it. You train them, you get them fit  
and they go a half-mile and stop. Why do they do that?”

– *Trainer H. Allen Jerkens, 1929-2015*



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Tod Marks

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### WORTH REPEATING

“Couldn’t imagine being under that much pressure every day.”

**Longtimer reader John Fahey III after writing a postcard to Saratoga for The Special**

“I feel for him inheriting this hard time. But some get strong in the broken places.”

**Singer songwriter Jamie Potter, after reading Miles Clancy’s poem about today’s world**

“There was a moment there...”

**Trainer Arch Kingsley after Kilronan ranged into contention before finishing fifth Saturday**

“Hey, Scoop.”

**Herringswell Stable’s Johnny Mitchell, every time The Special’s Joe Clancy walks in the barn; every single time**

“I could redneck it up a little.”

**Herringswell Stable’s Adrian Rolls, on tricking out his new pickup truck**

“I just read Missing It and loved it. My husband, Jack, and I have missed sticking our heads in your office to bring you greetings from Alexandria, Va. during our annual Saratoga visit. Already looking forward to next year!”

**Longtime reader Mary Dixon Hutcheson**

“Bob Buika’s ‘postcard’ was right on. The Green River was nice, but Saratoga is great! God bless John Prine.”

**Longtime reader Tom Hessel**

“Like the old Brooklyn Dodgers used to say, ‘Wait ’til next year!!’ ”

**Longtime reader Vince Russo about missing Saratoga this year**

“I miss you and your troops. And I miss the tactability of The Special on track. Miss the three hour and 20 minutes it takes to get from my Manhattan apartment to Nelson Avenue. Hell, I miss it all, but there’s always next year.”

**Longtime reader Michael Thomas**

“I read Sean’s Cup of Coffee about being at the top of the stretch and thought, ‘I was there, I could be in the background of that photo.’ That was my spot, I’d go there with my Pentax, shooting black and white Tri X film.”

**Winning Ponies Radio host John Engelhardt**

“He’s a sweet boy.”

**Owner/breeder Bonner Young on Highland Sky, who goes in today’s Grade 1 Sword Dancer**

“I’m not loaded, they’re all 20-1. Loaded is when you run three and they’re 6-5.”

**Trainer Wayne Catalano, busy today with Big Dreaming in the Grade 3 Saranac and 2-year-old maidens Regular Guy in the sixth and Rookery in the 10th**

“The guys I worked for would throw a water bucket down the shedrow.”

**Calumet Farm’s Eddie Kane, about trainer Jack Sisterson’s team-first mentality around the barn**

“Fingers crossed it’s Saratoga and nowhere else this week.”

**Sisterson, on Forego starter Lexitonian whose last trip to Saratoga resulted in a gate scratch, a van ride back to Kentucky and a flight to California**

### STALLION RACE

Leading stallions at the 2020 Saratoga meet (compiled by The Special using dutiful, if somewhat haphazard statistical analysis from free sources):

Sire.....	Wins
Into Mischief .....	14
More Than Ready .....	9
Hard Spun .....	8
Central Banker .....	7
Maclean’s Music .....	7
Tapit .....	6
American Pharoah .....	5
Cairo Prince .....	5
Candy Ride .....	5
City Zip .....	5
Freud .....	5
Summer Front .....	5
Uncle Mo .....	5
Verrazano .....	5





## POSTCARD TO SARATOGA

Dear Saratoga,

It's been 13 straight years since my wife Nancy asked how I wanted to celebrate my 40th birthday. Simple. A house in Saratoga. Walk to the track. Walk to Broadway. Dog friendly. She made it happen.

Where else can you find hardboots from Kentucky, horseplayers from New York and people who still use "summer" as a verb in one spot?

Greatest memories? Rachel's Woodward. Standing next to Tom Durkin as he called a race. The glamorous chaos of the yearling sale. Gathering with friends we've made year after year. The ultimate, standing in the paddock with my wife as our Dream Maker filly was tacked up as a 2-year-old. In the paddock at Saratoga as an owner (even if it's a small share)? Couldn't have imagined that 13 years ago.

They say absence makes the heart grow fonder. We'll be back next year, seeing old friends, making new ones and celebrating that mysticism of the Spa.

— **Shawn Meyers**

*Shawn Meyers writes from Chambersburg, Pa. A dedicated fan of racing since his dad took him to see Seattle Slew in Kentucky 40 years ago.*

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I always tell everybody a good horse is like a loaded gun, dangerous in anybody's hands."

**Trainer Wayne Catalano**



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## With Graham Motion

Short Time. On Aug. 14, 1995, Larry Johnson's 3-year-old filly became trainer Graham Motion's first runner at Saratoga Race Course. With Mike Smith aboard, she finished fifth at 17-1 as the Pat Kelly-trained Fashion Star outran the Fred Hooper/Jimmy Picou filly Class Kris for the win.

Two years later, Motion picked up his first Saratoga win with Lazy Lane Farm's Through The Rye and lost him to Gasper Moschera on a \$50,000 claim. Since then, the Maryland-based Motion has won plenty at Saratoga – the Whitney, Sword Dancer, King's Bishop, Lake George, Lake Placid, Glens Falls, Bernard Baruch, Waya, even back-to-back runnings of the Caress and a Coronation Cup.

"The one I really remember is Caveat Competitor. She won the Lake George and I was really surprised. That was a big deal. We shipped Secret Firm up to run in the Amsterdam and he dead-heated for the win and then came back and won the King's Bishop," Motion said of a banner 1998 season. "Those were both big deals. Winning the Sword Dancer (twice), Bullsbay winning the Whitney . . . those are really iconic, historic races.

"It's still a big deal to win at Saratoga, that hasn't changed."

In his 28th year as a trainer and getting close to 2,500 wins, Motion has won two at Saratoga this summer and tries to add to that number with several runners over the final eight days of racing. Back in his office at Fair Hill Training Center, he talked through his stable with The Special's Joe Clancy Thursday morning.

**Bye Bye Melvin:** Half-brother to multiple graded stakes winner and Diana runner-up Mean Mary runs in today's Grade 3 Saranac Stakes. Comes off a second (at 38-1) in the Jersey Derby July 26. Motion paid him a subtle compliment a week earlier when the son of Uncle Mo walked past in the shedrow – "That's Mean Mary's brother. He's pretty useful too." Alex Campbell Jr.'s colt has won twice (December and January at Tampa Bay Downs) in eight starts, and looks for his first stakes win. "He ran really well last time at Monmouth and we're going to put blinkers on him. Skylar McKenna (a teenage amateur/apprentice jump jockey) gallops him every day – he's her big horse – and she thought it would help him. He didn't have a great trip at Delaware (seventh in the Kent July 4), he was



much better at Monmouth. He and Irish Mias were going to run in the Virginia Derby at Colonial Downs, but that got canceled so this is Plan B."

Is he like (the somewhat notorious) Mean Mary at all? "Not really. He's a big, strong horse though."

**Irish Mias:** Another for the Saranac. Second twice at Saratoga last year, the New Jersey-bred 3-year-old won the Laurel Futurity as a maiden in his next start and has run in nothing but stakes since. He's been fourth in the Awad, second in the Pulpit, fourth in the Kitten's Joy and third in the Jersey Derby. His worst finish was a seventh in the Transylvania at Keeneland, but he lost by less than 2 lengths. Isabelle de Tomaso's homebred is out of Irish Score, a half-sister to millionaire Irish War Cry and graded stakes winner Irish Strait. "He was champion Jersey-bred 2-year-old last year after he won the Futurity on the same day Sharing won the Selima. He looked like he could be any kind. It's been a little bit frustrating this year. Things haven't quite gone right for him this year because of Covid. Nothing's quite fallen into place for him and now we were going to go to Virginia and we've got to go to New York. But he's obviously talented. I thought he ran fine at Monmouth, he just kind of ran out of ground."

**Pedro Cara:** World traveler runs in Saturday's Grade 1 Sword Dancer, his first start for Motion. The 4-year-old won four times in his native France for trainer Mauricio Delcher Sanchez. Second by a nose at 38-1 in last year's Jockey Club Derby at Belmont Park, then went to Qatar for new owner Sheikh Al Thani and won the Qatar Derby in December. Used that as a prep for the Group 1 Amir Trophy going 1 ½ miles and finished third behind French King and the Motion-trained Standard Deviation. Has been busy on the all-weather Tapeta surface at Fair Hill with three works in July and four more in August including 7 furlongs in 1:27.60 Monday. "I ran against him in Qatar with Standard Deviation for the same owners and

Maggie Kimmitt  
**Saranac runner Bye Bye Melvin and  
Skylar McKenna gallop at Fair Hill.**

they mentioned that he would come to me after that and he came to us kind of late spring. He had a foot abscess and he missed quite a bit of time. It took almost a month to get over it. Now all the sudden we only have so many opportunities to run. It's here, Canada, the Joe Hirsch, maybe Kentucky Downs but he'd run for half the money there, so here we are. If he goes back to his Belmont form, he should be competitive. He's a little bit hard to figure. He's not a very big horse, but he's obviously a very tough horse."

**He's No Lemon:** One of two winners at the meet for Motion, the Campbell homebred edged his half-brother Midnight Tea Time (who races for Joe Sharp now) by a neck in a 1 3/8-mile turf allowance race Aug. 16. Son of Lemon Drop Kid also won at Saratoga in 2019, part of a three-win season that included a score in Laurel's Bald Eagle Stakes. Four-year-old will aim high and tackle the \$1 million Kentucky Cup Turf Sept. 12 along with Standard Deviation. "I wasn't surprised he won, it was a great spot for him and Javier gave him a great ride. I think he can ride him back. He's a pretty useful and that was a great prep for the Kentucky Downs race."

Do you think differently when it comes to races at Kentucky Downs? "The only thing I have in the back of my mind is I ran Confessional there when I was really green and she was undefeated for me. She'd always been sprinting and I took her there and ran her a mile. It's just a much harder mile there than a regular mile because you go up quite a hill. I always think about that. I think it's a little stiffer, more like a European course. I always remember I was so disappointed I got Confessional beat. It wasn't a smart move. It's a long ship for us too. It's farther than Keeneland and Churchill, a long way to take a little filly that might have had a hard run in her previous race or something." After starting her career with Bill Mott, and winning a Grade 1 at 2, Confessional won nine of 10 starts for Motion and Pin Oak Stable. The only loss was a second in the Kentucky Cup Ladies Turf.

**Invincible Gal:** Two-year-old filly won her debut going 5 ½ furlongs on the turf Aug. 7 for Mike Ryan, Jeff Drown and Team Hanley. Daughter of Invincible Spirit eyes the P.G. Johnson Sept. 3, stretching out to two turns. Worked 6 furlongs in 1:14.40 with Pivotal Mission, who was third at Saratoga Aug. 8, Thursday on the Tapeta. "At this time of year, you don't have much time to find out if they're (Breeders' Cup) caliber so you kind of have to run them in races like this. You can't really miss a beat. If she steps up, handles two turns and all the rest of it – I'm sure everyone else is probably saying the same thing – I would think she could go to the Breeders' Cup. She's pretty talented."

**Continued On Page 7**



# Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 6

**Ratajkowski:** A \$75,000 Fasig-Tipton New York-bred sale purchase by Gary Broad in 2015, the 6-year-old mare has won five of nine starts and earned \$372,890 including stakes scores in the 2019 Empire Distaff and 2020 Critical Eye at Belmont. Fifth as the favorite in Saratoga's Union Avenue Aug. 13, she'll look to bounce back at Belmont. "She was disappointing. I loved that filly. She was training really well, too. I don't know if the cut back to seven-eighths was too much for her or something else."

**Succeedandsurpass:** Irish-bred 4-year-old colt owned by Little Red Feather Racing and Madaket Stable eyes a first-level allowance before the meet ends after moving from Mike Puype's California barn. The son of Exceed And Excel finished second on the turf at Del Mar July 24 and has worked twice at Fair Hill. Second to Mo Forza in the Grade 2 Twilight Derby last year. "He just came in from California. I haven't had him very long, but he seems like a nice horse."

**Red Storm Risen.** Sam-Son Farm homebred 3-year-old gelding by Stormy Atlantic has been third in his last two, including a trip to Woodbine Aug. 1. "We took him to Canada last time because we wanted to see if he could stretch out and maybe get to the Queen's Plate (Sept. 12) if he won. He ran well, but was third. His race at Belmont (third on the turf going 1 1/8 miles July 4) was good. "Johnny (Velazquez) rode him that day and thought he was more of a miler and we were trying to get him to do more than that. He could run before the end of the meet."

**Ready At Dawn.** Sam-Son homebred 2-year-old colt by More Than Ready drew post 8 with Castellano in the 10th race Sunday. He's breezed on the dirt (half-mile from the gate in :49.60 Thursday) and the Tapeta this summer. "He's trained forwardly. It always makes me laugh because people ask if you like your horses when they run for the first time. You don't run 2-year-olds in Saratoga unless you like them. Except for the fact that it's such a great opportunity to run two turns, which you don't seem to get as often somewhere else, you don't go unless you like your 2-year-old."

**Pivotal Mission:** Albert Frassetto's 2-year-old Noble Mission colt has run twice at the meet — a wide sixth July 18 and a trafficked, late-running, lead-changing third Aug. 8. He's most likely headed for Kentucky Downs and the Gainesway Farm Juvenile Sept. 7. "He ran too well to lose, but it happens."

**Mrs. Sippy:** Finally got her 2020 started in the Grade 3 Waya at Saratoga Aug. 8. Andrew Stone's homebred was stronger than normal early and settled for second by a neck

to late-running My Sister Nat. The 5-year-old Blame mare heads to Kentucky Downs for the \$500,000 Ramsey Farm Stakes at 1 5/16 miles. "She ran really well, and came out of her race fine. They get knocked out if you're worried about their fitness going into the race. She had a lot of miles in her, she just hadn't run. I have gotten messed up with a few horses who didn't get to run because of Covid (scheduling) and then for one reason or another they didn't get in or didn't get to run. It's definitely been a strange year."

**Alda:** Wertheimer et Frere homebred 2-year-old filly opened her career with a third going 5 furlongs on the turf at Belmont June 12. Daughter of Munnings came back to win going 6 furlongs July 9 and then prevailed by a nose in Woodbine's Catch A Glimpse Stakes Aug. 23. "I didn't run her at Saratoga because the stake there (the Bolton Landing won by Tobys Heart Aug. 19) was 5 1/2 furlongs and she'd just won going three-quarters. I wanted to go farther, rather than shorter. We went to Canada where it was 6 1/2, which is a good steppingstone to run in the Natalma at a mile in October. That's a Win and You're In for the Breeders' Cup. I did consider running her in Saratoga, but the distance just made much more sense in Canada."

**Sharing:** Last year's 2-year-old filly turf star won the Tepin Stakes at Churchill Downs in May, then finished second in the Group 1 Coronation at England's Royal Ascot in June. The \$350,000 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga purchase was initially aimed at Del Mar's Grade 1 Del Mar Oaks (Aug. 22), but will instead target the Grade 2 Edgewood at Churchill Sept. 4 for Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and Gainesway Stable. "She's worked three times in August — the last a 6-furlong move in 1:13.40 on the all-weather Aug. 22. She just wasn't quite ready to run. We missed a breeze with her. She's always had little feet issues and they kind of flared up when she came back from England and that set us back timing-wise. The Edgewood just makes sense now. She's run there and won, Manny (Franco) is there, and hopefully it works out well and we can go to the (Queen Elizabeth Challenge Cup) at Keeneland Oct. 10. Hopefully, the light summer will help her in the long run for the fall. Her rider Lauren (Mendenhall) was very happy with her this morning, which is very encouraging."

**Mean Mary:** Four-year-old filly put up a game fight, but couldn't hold off Rushing Fall in the Grade 1 Diana last Sunday. The neck loss snapped a four-race winning streak, but did little to diminish anyone's opinion of her. Motion will point for the Breeders' Cup in November, and most likely not run her in between. "To squeeze in a race now would be tough to do. To run her a month before the Breeders' Cup, if I want her to be at her best for the Breeders' Cup, I shouldn't do that. Partly it's because she ran all winter. I want

Continued On Page 8

## A SHOWCASE OF PEDIGREE!

SELECTED YEARLINGS INCLUDE SIBLINGS TO

# 78

GRADED STAKES WINNERS,  
INCLUDING THESE GRADE 1 WINNERS...

<b>Accelerate</b>	<b>American Gal</b>
<b>Battle of Midway</b>	<b>Brilliant Speed</b>
<b>British Idiom</b>	<b>Caledonia Road</b>
<b>Callback</b>	<b>Cavorting</b>
<b>Covfefe</b>	<b>Cupid</b>
<b>Curlina</b>	<b>Honor A. P.</b>
<b>Ice Box</b>	<b>Kodiak Kowboy</b>
<b>Mia Mischief</b>	<b>Mongolian Groom</b>
<b>Out for a Spin</b>	<b>Points Offthebench</b>
<b>Power Broker</b>	<b>Princess of Sylmar</b>
<b>Ransom the Moon</b>	<b>Salutos Amigos</b>
<b>Sharing</b>	<b>Sporting Chance</b>
<b>Starship Truffles</b>	<b>Swiss Skydiver</b>
<b>Tiz The Law</b>	<b>Vasilika</b>

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# Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 7

to be sparing with her races to keep her right. I always feel like you can't run a horse consistently all year from January to November and expect them to be at their best in November, which is going to be the toughest race they'll run in all year. She runs so hard, so to go and run at Belmont a month before the Breeders' Cup and lay it out again, I don't want to risk that. I'd like to get her to the Breeders' Cup, have Mr. Campbell be able to go watch her and have her run as well as she can." When a horse runs hard like she did in the Diana and loses, do you feel for them? "I don't know how much they know, because it was so close. She was tired, because she can be quite opinionated, and I visited her Monday morning in the stall and she had her head lowered and she let me pat her and hug her. She's not normally quite that amenable so she was definitely tired. She seems great now. She just jogged the shedrow, and seems really good."

You said before the Diana that you might look at the Breeders' Cup Turf over the Filly and Mare Turf because of the added distance. Is that still the case? "It's probably the filly race, unless I see something with the way the races are shaping up. It's hard to know what Europeans are coming. If one race glaringly looks easier than the other, that would sway me. The whole reason for running in the Diana was to see if she could handle that race and I think she showed she could. The Breeders' Cup is an extra sixteenth of a mile which will only help her. Maybe they leave her alone a little bit longer. The mile-and-a-half would be risky, but I would never say never. A lot would depend on the Europeans. The American (male) turf horses kind of beat each other. If there's a really good filly coming from Europe and you've got to run against her and Sistercharlie and



Tod Marks

**With a deep pool of runners in Maryland, trainer Graham Motion looks for another win or two before the meet ends.**

you've got to run against Rushing Fall, that could definitely sway me. If no one's coming from Europe for the (Turf) and it's these same horses, maybe I'd run her in there."

**English Bee:** Calumet Farm homebred has won five of 16, but is winless in five tries this year. The losses include seconds in the Grade 3 Canadian Turf at Gulfstream Park in February and the Grade 2 Wise Dan at Churchill Downs in June. Most recently, he was sixth — beaten a length by War Of Will — in the Grade 1 Maker's Mark Mile at Keeneland July 10. A Grade 3 winner last year, the son of English Channel aims for the

Tapit Stakes at Kentucky Downs Sept. 9. "He's run a lot so I skipped some races over the summer. The race in Kentucky has a condition in it (non-winners of a stakes this year), which is good for him. That horse has been impressive this year. He's a real hard-knocking horse. He's run some pretty big races this year and hasn't missed many dances. James Graham (aboard for the last two) can ride him and he's ridden him really well. Kentucky Downs would really suit him. He's doing really well, a cool little horse. He showed nothing as a 2-year-old, nothing. He just keeps getting better. He won first time out (Presque Isle Downs, 10-1) and nobody was more surprised than I was."

**Kanthaka:** West Point Thoroughbreds' Jimmy Creed gelding came off the bench for his first start in more than a year in the Grade 1 Jaipur at Belmont in June and lost by a neck to Oleksandra. He's eyeing a trip to Kentucky Downs, too. His race is the \$700,000 Runhappy Turf Sprint. "We kind of decided we would just point him for that race and go to the Breeders' Cup. He could have gone to a 5 1/2-furlong race at Saratoga, probably couldn't have done both. It's a lot of money, and a 'Win and You're In.' Before the Jaipur, I obviously knew from his form how good he was but it was a big step for him to run in that race the first time in so long. He's a lovely horse."



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# Triple Play

Sisterson, Calumet Farm send three to contest Grade 1 sprint stakes

Everfast streaks home in an allowance win at Saratoga Aug. 1.



Tod Marks

## BY JOE CLANCY

## FOREGO STAKES PREVIEW

As long as Jack Sisterson can remember, there's been a horse painting on the wall. At home in England, he went racing with his parents – point-to-points, Aintree for the Grand National, a fan photo with jockey Frankie Dettori at Doncaster.

"I had a few pony lessons here and there at a young age, it became a passion of mine," Sisterson. "I've just always been a huge follower of racing. I wanted some sort of involvement in the business."

But he didn't dare dream of winning Grade 1 races at Saratoga, which he did in the Personal Ensign with Vexatious Aug. 1. Or having three runners in another Grade 1, which he does in today's Forego (the eighth of 11 races with a 5:07 p.m. post time) with Everfast, Lexingtonian and True Timber for Calumet Farm. They're longshots against the likes of Whitmore, Funny Guy and two from Chad Brown, but Sisterson's horses wouldn't be there if they didn't have chances.

"I just dreamt of being a jockey or trainer, never mind winning a race like the Personal Ensign or a day like tomorrow," Sisterson said Friday. The former hotwalker for Todd Pletcher and assistant to Doug O'Neill started his first horses in 2018, won 19 races last year and has won a dozen so far this year as the private trainer for Calumet.

The jockey career flew past as Sisterson (now 6-foot-2) turned into a standout soccer player in England. His father John was a coach and took a job with Upson Lee High in Georgia. While also training a few steeplechasers, he took the school to six consecutive winning seasons and won four coach of the year awards. Next came a job with the U.S. Deaf Soccer Association and a gold medal at the 2005 Deafolympics. Sisterson coached at West Texas A&M University and Santa Barbara City College.

Jack Sisterson set a school record for goals at Upson Lee and was good enough to get a scholarship to the University of Louisville, where he mainly played defense while studying equine business. Two knee surgeries derailed his senior year, but also sent him fully into racing. He worked for Pletcher at Churchill Downs – crossing paths with Rags To Riches, Octave, English Channel, Scat Daddy, Circular Quay and other stars.

"I walked over with Octave for the Kentucky Oaks," Sisterson said. "It was amazing, a fantastic experience. Todd ran five in the Derby that year and I remember thinking, 'Five of them? Wouldn't you just like to have one?' It was my first time working in racing in America."

After college, Sisterson joined the O'Neill team and was there for Kentucky Derby wins by I'll Have Another and Nyquist and met the Calumet team

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# Forego —

## ■ Continued from page 10

while at Oaklawn Park with a string for O'Neill. When Calumet wanted to hire a trainer, Sisterson was an early call.

"We asked him for a resume, and was the only guy we talked to actually," said Calumet's Eddie Kane. "We hired him and it's been good ever since. We've got a pretty good working relationship. He's done a better job than we expected in such a short period of time."

Based at trainer John Ward's former farm across Rice Road from Keeneland, and around the corner from Calumet, Sisterson borrows from his soccer days while managing a barn. He has team meetings, a message board for staffers looking for extra hours, days off, whatever, and goes out of his way to pass along credit.

"They do all the hard work," he said. "It's my name in the program, but I'd like to get that changed to a team if I could. A lot of the grooms and hotwalkers follow soccer and I say, 'Guys, look at the good soccer teams.' The ones that do well are the



Michael Trombetta Jr.

**Lexitonian catches up on his rest before today's Forego.**

ones that play as teams. We win as a team, we lose as a team. It can be a struggle at times implementing that thinking a little bit, but you want everyone to work together. If that means picking up a pitchfork in the shedrow even if it's not your job, you do it. I want them to think like that."

Kane appreciates that thinking, and figures it helps the horses. The mas-

sive Calumet operation includes 11 stallions with stud fees listed, another eight marked "private," plus three in regional markets, broodmares, young horses in various stages at the farm and now Sisterson's training base.

Purchased by Brad Kelley in 2012, Calumet led the country in breeder earnings in 2019 – a title the farm held while dominating racing in 1941,

1944, 1947-57 and again in 1961.

Lexitonian is a homebred son of Speightstown and the Tapit mare Riviera Romper. The chestnut colt made three starts for Pletcher in 2018, and won two stakes for Sisterson in 2019 – the Grade 3 Chick Lang at Pimlico and the Concern at Laurel. He flashed real sprint prowess with a third behind Engage and Whitmore in the Grade 2 Phoenix at Keeneland in October and got back to work this year with a dull 10th in Oaklawn's Count Fleet before winning a Churchill optional claimer over Grade 1 winner Hog Creek Hustle. The 4-year-old colt was supposed to run in Saratoga's Vanderbilt July 25, but was scratched at the gate.

Sisterson drew up a new play, and got permission to breeze at Saratoga the next day. Lexitonian vanned back to Kentucky, caught a flight to California Monday and ran in Del Mar's Bing Crosby a week after the Vanderbilt. His big late run came up a nose short and he settled for second. After another plane ride back to Keeneland and then a van to Saratoga, it's all systems go again with Jose Lezcano at 10-1 from post three.

**Continued On Page 12**

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## Forego —

■ Continued from page 11

“He ran really well in California, though I wasn’t expecting him to be so far back,” Sisterson said. “He came running. Would he have won last time if it was seven-eighths? I can’t predict that, but he was making up ground. He’s won over seven-eighths twice. I expect him to be a lot more forwardly placed. He’s bright-eyed, he’s happy, he’s ready to run.”

Purchased for \$47,000 at Keeneland January, Everfast won his debut for trainer Dale Romans in August 2018. The colt lost his next 17 races – including a second in the Preakness – but came through in a 7-furlong allowance at Saratoga Aug. 1 to earn a Forego start with Ricardo Santana Jr. aboard from the inside post at 30-1. Sisterson, who took over the horse’s training this year, thinks Everfast can outrun that big price.

“I made a mistake running in the Maker’s Mark Mile; draw a line through that and he’s run three competitive races for us,” Sisterson said. “The seven-eighths one-other-than was perfect timing where we thought if he could win that and win it well we’d give him a shot in the Forego. He’s trained extremely well out of that. It’s the best he’s looked physically.”

The victory potentially did wonders for the son of Take Charge Indy’s mind, too.

“His confidence is probably up,” Sisterson said. “Does he have a bit of an ego now that he’s coming off a win? Who knows? I know the talent is there, he was second in the Preakness, a good second to Owendale (in May). If he wants to go in there with that attitude and confidence, that’s great. He’s going to need that. He’s trained better going into this race than any of those others.”

Calumet spent \$170,000 to buy True Timber as a weanling at Keeneland November in 2014. The 6-year-old has more than paid that back with \$1,002,650 in earnings despite not winning a stakes. He’s placed in eight including the Cigar Mile twice, and makes his second start for Sisterson after moving from Kiaran McLaughlin’s barn. Third at Keeneland in July, the son of Mineshaft will be ridden by Kendrick Carmouche at 20-1 from post five.



Susie Raisher

Win Win Win, here with Sarah Shaffer aboard, gets back to 7 furlongs.

“He came to us in great shape, and ran in some tough races so with the pandemic going on we gave him 30 days in the paddock,” Sisterson said. “We let him put his feet where he wanted and let him tell us where he wanted to go. That race at Keeneland was perfect coming back off a layoff and he ran well. He wasn’t 100 percent fit, and he’s breezed several times since then. If he produces one of those Cigar Mile performances, he can be competitive.”

As usual, the Forego came up tough and deep.

Seven-year-old Whitmore, second to Volatile in the Vanderbilt, rates the 7-2 morning-line favorite. The 14-time winner captured two stakes at Oaklawn Park in March and April, then returned to chase Volatile home while outrunning today’s rival Mind Control by a half-length for second. Joel Rosario (the last-out jockey on three in here) opts for Funny Guy so Luis Saez gets aboard Whitmore for trainer Ron Moquett, Bob LaPenta and Head of Plains Partners.

Second choice Complexity won his 2020 debut going a mile at Belmont Park July 2 for Klaravich Stable and trainer Chad Brown, and seeks his first stakes win since the 2018 Champagne. The 4-year-old Maclean’s Music colt gets Jose Ortiz on a return call.

New York-bred Funny Guy has ruled restricted company – with five wins and four seconds in 11 starts for Gatsas Stable, R.A. Hill stable and Swick Stable and trainer John Ter-

ranova. The 4-year-old Big Brown colt exits back-to-back wins in state-bred stakes – the Commentator at Belmont June 12 and the John Morrissey at Saratoga July 30.

Mind Control (6-1) won the Grade 1 Allen Jerkens at Saratoga last year and seeks his third win of 2002 for Red Oak Stable and Madaket Stable and trainer Greg Sacco. Third in the Vanderbilt, the 4-year-old Stay Thirsty colt gets John Velazquez while seeking an eighth win in his 15th start.

The Brown-trained Fortin Hill (also 6-1) makes his stakes debut with three wins and a second in four starts over three seasons. The 4-year-old Mucho Macho Man colt won a two-other-than allowance for OXO Equine at Belmont July 4. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides from the outside post.

Fourth in the Vanderbilt, Firenze Fire makes his fourth start for new trainer Kelly Breen and Mr Amore Stable. The 5-year-old son of Poseidon’s Warrior won the Sanford at Saratoga in 2017 and eyes his 12th career win. Junior Alvarado gets on for the first time in a race at 8-1.

Live Oak Plantation’s Win Win Win (12-1) finished second to Complexity in that mile optional claimer at Belmont July 2 and gets back to 7 furlongs on the dirt for the first time since he set a track record in the Pasco Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs in January 2019. Javier Castellano takes the return call off two works at Saratoga – one a bullet 5 furlongs in :58.88 Aug. 16 – for trainer Mike Trombetta.



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# Trippin'

Turf stars look to find the right path in Grade 1 stakes



Bowling Green runners (from left) Highland Sky, Sadler's Joy, Cross Border and Channel Maker return in the Sword Dancer.

Tod Marks

## BY SEAN CLANCY

Jonathan Thomas said it best when it comes to today's Grade 1 Sword Dancer.

"When you have a field of horses that are basically separated by a number or two it's really going to boil down to trip," said Thomas, trainer of 6-1 Corelli.

Like all turf stakes, the three-turn Sword Dancer, the ninth race at 5:43 p.m., attracts a well-traveled, evenly matched group of eight. They have combined to win 46 races for \$7.8 million.

With the right moves at the right times, any one of them can win the 1 ½-mile stakes. With a jink or jive at the wrong time, any one of them can lose the \$500,000 stakes. But that's turf racing, inches mean places, luck comes and goes, decisions mean everything.

From the inside out, the trips go like this.

Highland Sky breaks from the rail in his fourth start of the season for trainer Barclay Tagg. The

## SWORD DANCER STAKES PREVIEW

7-year-old gelding could be rounding into his best form after a closing third in the Bowling Green where he split five of today's starters. Jockey Junior Alvarado has it the easiest, at least for the first two turns. On a one-dimensional closer from the rail, settle and sit, wait and chill. If you've saved ground around the first two turns, which he should, he'll have options around the final turn. Pick a lane, pick who to follow, don't stop and start.

As Tagg said, "You don't even want to think about position until you get to the five-sixteenths pole, most horses have a quarter-mile in them, a hard-drive quarter-mile. They've got a quarter-mile. Everybody thinks they can start at the half-mile pole and pass everybody, very seldom."

Aquaphobia will try to continue his transformation from a \$25,000 claimer in 2017 to a dual Grade 1 stakes winner in 2020. Claimed by Mike

Maker for \$62,500 in January, the 7-year-old has won two stakes, including the Grade 1 United Nations at Monmouth July 18, since joining the transformational barn. Irad Ortiz Jr., who rode Aquaphobia to a second in the Sunshine Forever at Gulfstream in May, is named to ride. Ortiz took off his mounts Thursday and Friday with a banged-up wrist and will decide Saturday morning about his rides Saturday afternoon.

Whoever rides the 4-1 third choice will try to emulate Joe Bravo who engineered a sweet stalking trip in the United Nations. With late-running Highland Sky inside and speedy Marzo outside, it's easy, just clear the inside horse and allow the outside horse to clear. Boom. Stalking. From there, sit and wait, definitively go inside or outside Marzo and get first run on the likes of Sadler's Joy and Highland Sky. Aquaphobia made his own trip in the United Nations, sliding inside Corelli and out-

**Continued On Page 16**



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# Sword Dancer —

■ Continued from page 14

side Paret as they straightened into the stretch. That kind of moxie makes moves easy.

Ricardo Santana Jr. gets the call on Marzo for the Maker barn. Breaking from post 3, with speed and with a closing stablemate, Cross Border, it's doubtful the style will be altered for this. Ortiz hustled the four-time winner to the lead in the United Nations, a long, looping rein dangled and waved to establish a big early lead. Perhaps, that took away some late starch but either way, it's a simple trip, to the front, save ground, make them come around you, if Cross Border wins again, you've done your job. With a Grade 3 win in the Sycamore to his credit, Marzo will need a perfect trip and will need others to convolute it to upset these.

Channel Maker breaks from post 4 for Manny Franco. The Bill Mott-trained veteran is no Rand-McNally. His high-headed, light-mouthed style makes it difficult to work out the best trip.

Take too much hold and he gets too strong early. Over-ride late and his head goes higher. It's time-bomb delicate and Franco will need to improve on their trip in the Bowling Green. Channel Maker stuttered in the air at the break, Franco sent him a few strides and wound up outside in third. Without cover, Channel Maker raised his head higher from there, getting bounced around late but the deal was done by then.

Trainer Bill Mott knows the task in Franco's hands.

"He's a really difficult horse to ride," Mott said. "I think he's hard to get comfortable on, you've got to sit still but you can't make any bad moves on him. If you push too hard or pull too hard his head comes up and he goes in."

The two-time Grade 1 winner finished second in the 2018 Sword Dancer and fourth in last year's edition. Cool horse. Delicate work.

In the United Nations, with blinkers and Lasix added, Corelli broke tepidly, sliding into the left side of the gate.

Daniel Centeno slapped him on

Continued On Page 18



Michael Trombetta Jr.

Corelli goes out for trainer Jonathan Thomas.

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# Sword Dancer —

■ Continued from page 16

the right shoulder, which created an outside, in the clear, trip. It was a decent spot in the middle of the field, but not as ideal as Aquaphobia inside him. Wide around the first two turns (we can hear Bobby Frankel moan), Centeno gunned Corelli outside longshot O Dionysus while Aquaphobia waited inside around the third turn.

It made all the difference late. Reverse those trips and Corelli could have easily won the United Nations. Breaking from post 5 and getting the cool-riding Joel Rosario, it could be very different in the Sword Dancer.

“I don’t know what he is yet. My guess is he probably wants to be attending or right off the pace, kind of grinding it out,” Thomas said. “I don’t think he’s one that needs to be 20 off the lead and come rolling home in :22. I don’t think that’s him. I could be wrong. But it just doesn’t seem like that’s his style.”

In arguably his best race in a three-win career in England, Corelli was beaten a head in a rich handicap stakes at York last summer. That day, Corelli ran free and wide early, but Frankie Dettori made sure he tempered that, finding cover in the 16-horse field and producing him late to just miss.

“He’s a little bit of a bruiser, kind of a linebacker. He’s a big horse, needs to get into some form

of momentum and not get stopped. Doesn’t mean he needs to be on the lead but if he’s first, second, third, saving ground, that’s all we can ask for,” Thomas said. “He’s training well. Seems like he’s taken a big step from the U.N. fitness wise, his two works have been really good and it looks like he fits on paper. Clearly it looks like the mile and a half shouldn’t be a problem.”

Talking of trips, Jose Ortiz has engineered several smooth ones on second choice Cross Border, already, winning twice at the meet, including the Bowling Green. That day, they finished second but were moved up when Sadler’s Joy was disqualified for interfering with Channel Maker. In the Bowling Green, Ortiz stood tall in his irons for a few strides before shortening his hold, Cross Border tossed his head, bouncing Ortiz off the saddle once, like a posting stride. He’ll have that in mind as he tries to settle the Saratoga specialist into a middle slot, just off Corelli, Channel Maker and Aquaphobia and ahead of Sadler’s Joy and Highland Sky. That’s where Ortiz placed Cross Border in the Bowling Green and he tried to keep his position inside an onrushing Sadler’s Joy but wasn’t quite able to do that when the melee ensued, forcing him to wait and then re-rally late. If you want options, Cross Border offers plenty.

Pedro Cara makes his first start since finishing third in the Grade 1 Amir Trophy in Qatar in February. The 4-year-old gelding won three times in France and once in Qatar. John Velazquez will have watched as many replays as possible of the world

traveler, including a strong second in last year’s Jockey Club Derby at Belmont in September. Settled inside and in the back early, Pedro Cara shifted outside, punched and lost a head bob to Spanish Mission. In the Prix Frederic de Lagrange at Vichy last July, Pedro Cara dropped to the back of the nine-horse field, rallied resolutely, bulled his way between rivals to win the 1 ½-mile test over ground listed as soft but looked firm. Now trained by Graham Motion, who tends to want his horses ridden patiently, and coming off a layoff, Pedro Cara will likely follow the same strategy.

And then there’s Sadler’s Joy. A winner of seven races and \$2.5 million, including the 2017 Sword Dancer, the 7-year-old has one trip in mind, especially from the outside post. Drop over. Simmer. Pounce. And hopefully run straight, which squandered his stellar race in the Bowling Green. Javier Castellano, who has ridden Sadler’s Joy in 16 of his 31 starts, knows the drill and will keep it simple on the Tom Albertrani trainee. Again, the more ground you save around the first two turns, the more you can swing wide around the last turn. Potent horse with a very simple game plan. Trips? Sadler’s Joy has lost eight races by less than a length, including last year’s Sword Dancer when he and Jose Lezcano broke from the outside, found a spot in midpack but couldn’t stave off Annals Of Time and Castellano in a trip-filled thriller.

*Additional reporting by Tom Law*



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# Old Friends

## Saratoga regulars Highland Sky, Channel Maker meet in Grade 1

Eight talented and durable turf horses converge yet again for today's Grade 1 Sword Dancer. Like old friends coming for Sunday dinner, like barstools at the corner pub, like leather boots on the porch, like Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour regulars.

Highland Sky made the annual Barclay Tagg Stable Tour for five years, and drew praise from his trainer and assistant Robin Smullen every time. The tours went like this:

**2015:** Unraced 2-year-old by Sky Mesa. **Tagg:** "Nice colt, he should run in the last book. He's out of Kristy With A K so he's a cousin to some good ones. He's good-sized, a nice 2-year-old. I think he'll run well first time out."

**2016:** The 3-year-old Sky Mesa colt finished second in the Grade 1 Belmont Derby last month. "He just got beat that far," Tagg said, holding up his hands to show the neck margin. "He's going to run back in the Saranac. He's a lovely, lovely, lovely horse."

**2017:** Co-owned by breeder Bonner Young, the 4-year-old carries \$447,472 and aims for the Bernard Baruch here on Closing Day. The son of Sky Mesa and the Petionville mare Kristi With A K won his 2017 debut at Gulfstream Park and has lost three straight including a seventh here against stakes horses Muqtaser, Infinite Wisdom, Messi, Red Rifle and Kaigun. Has won a stakes and placed in two graded stakes including last year's Grade 1 Belmont Derby. **Tagg:** "He is a real, real nice horse. I might prefer just attacking the long races with him, but we're going to run him in the Bernard Baruch (going 1 1/16 miles) before we leave here. His last race (going 1 1/8 miles) was disappointing to us, but he ended up real wide and didn't get beat all that far. We got the Ragozin figure on him and it was the best race he's ever run – and he was seventh."

**2018:** Bred by longtime Tagg client Bonner Young and owned by her, Gerald McManis and Jerrie Stewart, the son of Sky Mesa has bankrolled \$581,222 in 19 races. He won a tough allowance at Belmont Park in June before finishing fifth in the Bowling Green and fifth again in the Sword Dancer this summer. **Tagg:** "Joe Hirsch, that's what I want to do, if that doesn't work, we'll start over." **Smullen:** "If he gets pace in front of him, he's going to run his race."

**2019:** Gallant veteran added the off-the-turf John's Call, his second stakes win, to a career that's netted \$724,494 for breeder Bonner Young and partners. **Smullen:** "He got a new lease on life. He does gallop well on it and he breezes well on the dirt. We ran him in the Jockey Club Gold Cup, he was too close to the pace, he can't run that way. He reminds me of Dry Martini, you have to sit in the back and make that one run." **Tagg:** "He's made \$700,000 the hard way. We thought it would be a three-horse field, we pulled his shoes off, put some turn-downs on him and sent him over there. You don't even want to think about position until you get to the five-sixteenths pole, most horses have a quarter-mile in them, a hard-drive quarter-mile. They've got a quarter-mile. Everybody thinks they can start at the half-mile pole and pass everybody, very seldom."

Not to be left out, Channel Maker has made two Bill Mott Stable Tours.

**2018:** The dead-heat Bowling Green winner came back to finish second in last weekend's Grade 1 Sword Dancer. He's tries to grab Mott's water bottle from his hand. "Hey, that's mine. He's almost an overachiever, I guess. He's run hard, he's had some trouble trips, beaten a length, a half-length, 2 lengths. He usually comes from behind but he did lay close the other day. I was worried he was too close but they went around the track like that. (Joel Rosario) rides him good, he's a really difficult horse to ride, I think he's hard to get comfortable on, you've got to sit still but you can't make any bad moves on him. If you push too hard or pull too hard his head comes up and he goes in."

**2019:** Ontario-bred 5-year-old has earned more than \$2 million, winning five stakes, including the Grade 1 Man o' War and Joe Hirsch Turf Classic. "Overachiever. You just can't overachieve every time."

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# Fact Finding

Russell ships Wondrwherecraigis from Maryland for Gr. 2 sprint



Jim McCue/Maryland Jockey Club

Wondrwherecraigis tackles graded company in Saturday's Amsterdam.

## BY PAUL HALLORAN

In a field full of road warriors, there's no reason a Maryland-based horse can't win, right Brittany Russell?

"It's a tough assignment, but we wouldn't be going up there if he wasn't doing well," said Russell, who sends out Wondrwherecraigis in today's Grade 2 Amsterdam Stakes for 3-year-olds at Saratoga Race Course. "He might get beat, but it's worth taking a shot."

The Amsterdam won't be the first foray to New York for the son of Munnings out of the Giant's Causeway mare Social Assassin. Russell shipped Wondrwherecraigis to Belmont Park for the Gold Fever Stakes July 10 and he rewarded her confidence with a gutsy effort, setting fast fractions (:21.65, :44.66) on a sloppy track before getting nailed at the wire by Liam's Pride. Wondrwherecraigis was demoted to third when the stewards ruled he interfered in the stretch with Long Weekend, who also runs in the 6-furlong Amsterdam.

## AMSTERDAM STAKES PREVIEW

"He ran hard and he showed he fits with those horses," said Russell, who is staying in Maryland due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and will leave the saddling to members of Brad Cox's team. "You get excited when you see him run like that. We decided to move forward and take a shot in the Amsterdam."

Wondrwherecraigis, a \$67,000 Keeneland September yearling purchase who was a \$210,000 RNA at the Keeneland horses of racing age digital sale in June, didn't run until March. Owned by Michael Dubb, The Elkstone Group, Madaket Stables and Bethlehem Stables, he broke his maiden at Laurel Park at first asking and followed that with an allowance win, prompting Russell to enter him in the Gold Fever.

"He had some issues as a 2-year-old and they gelded him," Russell said. "We took our time with him and let him develop."

A well-traveled field will contest the Amsterdam, with the six horses combining for 32 starts at 10 racetracks. The 8-5 morning line favorite is Yaupon, owned by William and Corinne Heiligbrodt, who campaigned 2019 Eclipse Award champion sprinter Mitole. Yaupon, 2-for-2 for Steve Asmussen, owns the only triple-digit Beyer speed figure in the field, earning a 101 for an allowance win here July 18.

Long Weekend is 9-5 off the troubled trip in the Gold Fever, with Basin – the 2019 Hopeful winner now in the care of Todd Pletcher after traveling the Derby trail for Asmussen – the 7-2 third choice from the rail. Mike Trombetta has Premier Star, who breaks just to the inside of 10-1 Wondrwherecraigis, while Liam's Pride, who ran last in the Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens, breaks from the far outside.

"It's a tough bunch, naturally," Russell said. "He's run against a couple of them. It's a tough

**Continued On Page 23**



# Amsterdam —

## ■ Continued from page 22

assignment, but this is why we do it, to find these horses that we hope are good enough to win these races.”

Russell has a stakes record of 10-2-1-2 and picked up her first win at Saratoga Aug. 6 when King's Honor took a claiming race under Javier Castellano, who rides Wondrwherecraigs. That was a milestone for the young trainer, who has 45 wins in three seasons of training and has matched her 2019 total of 17 already this year.

She would love to capture her first graded stakes at Saratoga.

“To have one in the barn good enough to take a shot in a race like this is special,” Russell said. “If he

were to jump up and win it, that would be huge.”

NOTES: Wondrwherecraigs had company on the van ride from Maryland, as Russell also shipped Hello Beautiful, a 3-year-old filly that she considered running in the Grade 1 Test but wanted to stay away from Bob Baffert's Gamine. She opted for the Audubon Oaks at Ellis Park, where Hello Beautiful finished last of 11 as the 2-1 favorite.

“That was a disaster from the start,” Russell said. “She got taken out at the start and was never really in it.”

Russell planned for Hello Beautiful to gallop at Saratoga Friday and work either Saturday or Sunday, depending on the weather. If all goes well, she will enter her for next Saturday's Grade 2 Prioress Stakes.



Tod Marks

Favorite Long Weekend has won four of six starts.



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# Legacy Colt

Big Dreaming, last foal of Dreaming Of Anna, makes stakes debut



Big Dreaming scores at Churchill Downs in June.

Coady Photo

## BY TOM LAW

Wayne Catalano never tires of reminiscing or talking about what Dreaming Of Anna did on the racetrack in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The daughter of Rahy provided the affable horseman with his first Grade 1 win, first Breeders' Cup win and first Eclipse Award winner. No one-hit wonder, he's climbed each of those mountains since with other horses and Catalano even trained a few of her foals for longtime client Frank Calabrese.

Fast Anna, won a stakes for Kathy Ritvo and was beaten a neck for Catalano in the 2014 King's Bishop. Dreamologist won a Grade 3 for Richard Mandella. All Her Class lost all three starts, but placed in a stakes for Catalano.

And now it's Big Dreaming's turn.

The smartly named son of Declaration Of War owned and bred by Calabrese, makes his stakes debut in today's Grade 3 Saranac on the grass, the

## SARANAC STAKES PREVIEW

first of four graded events on the penultimate Saturday of the 2020 Saratoga meeting. He's 2-for-3 and 12-1 on the morning line for the 1-mile Saranac, which goes as the third of 11 races with a post time of 2:18 p.m.

"Dreaming Of Anna's last baby," Catalano said while he led another Saturday runner, the 2-year-old Bernardini maiden colt Regular Guy, to the main track Friday morning. "He's a big boy, real big. And a pretty cool horse, twice the size of his momma when she was 2. Of course he's 3 now but he was big when he was 2. He's got some talent."

Big Dreaming showed some of the same talent his elder siblings displayed and looks to become the fourth stakes-placed or stakes winner produced by Dreaming Of Anna. Champion and unbeaten in four starts at 2, including the 2006 Breeders'

Cup Juvenile Fillies in her dirt debut, Dreaming Of Anna went on to produce stakes winner Dreamologist, Grade 1-placed Fast Anna and stakes-placed All Her Class

Dreaming Of Anna died at age 14 from a ruptured aorta in early January 2018 at Dr. Gary Priest's Woodspring Farm in Versailles, Ky., where Big Dreaming was born the year before.

Big Dreaming needed time to fill out his big frame, dealt with a troublesome shin as a 2-year-old and didn't make it to the races until this spring.

"He was too big," Catalano said. "I tried but a shin got to bugging him a little bit so we just waited until it got better. He went to Dr. Priest's place and we let the shin heal good and everything, let him fill into his big frame."

"Then the pandemic hit and we had nowhere to go, everything was closed. We got to brainstorm-

**Continued On Page 25**



# Saranac —

■ Continued from page 24

ing and ran him to get a race under him at Tampa. That's how he ended up there."

Prepped at Fair Grounds over the winter, Big Dreaming went first to Oaklawn Park when racing closed in New Orleans and eventually to trainer Mike Stidham's string at Tampa Bay Downs. He finished second in his debut May 6 at Tampa in a 1-mile turf maiden before rejoining Catalano when Churchill Downs' stable area reopened about a week later.

Big Dreaming won back-to-back starts after his Tampa run, taking a 1-mile maiden at Churchill June 20 and a 1-mile optional at Arlington Park Aug. 1 to earn a spot in the Saranac.

"I was supposed to be in the last day at Fair Grounds, the last day that they ran, not Closing Day just the last day they ran. Then they closed," Catalano said. "So it was either (Tampa) or Gulfstream. We wanted to get a race into him, it worked out and he came back and won his next two. Now here we are."

"There's nowhere else to run, I was already here and we had a truck coming this way so I said, 'you know what, it's either here or Kentucky Downs going a mile-and-three-sixteenths. I didn't want to do that.'"

Big Dreaming gives up experience to his 10 Saranac opponents, who include one main-track-only runner. They average seven starts apiece to Big Dreaming's three.

Dreaming Of Anna won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies in her fourth start, after winning the Tippet Stakes

at Colonial Downs in her second and toppling males in the Grade 3 Summer Stakes at Woodbine in her third. She also won the Juvenile Fillies in her first start on dirt, a journey Catalano regaled Friday morning while watching Regular Guy and recent Irish import Stanford train on the main track.

"Obviously she was unbeaten going into the Breeders' Cup. We got shut out at Arlington on a grass race and we didn't have many choices. So we said, 'Let's take her to Canada and run her against the boys.' We did that and it worked. So now it's time for the Breeders' Cup, she has no prep and at that time there were no grass races for the babies at the Breeders' Cup. Our only shot is going to be dirt. So Stevie, Frank's racing manager and my personal friend, said, 'You know what, these turf horses you can trick them one time.'"

"So now guys like you, the media, come around and ask, 'Hey, you're not going to run for six, seven weeks before the Breeders' Cup, no prep race on the dirt, never been on the dirt, bah, bah, bah, bah.'"

*Let it be known, The Special wouldn't dare "Bah, bah, bah" Catalano.*

Dreaming Of Anna won the Summer in mid-September and the Breeders' Cup wasn't until early November. The time worked in her favor, Catalano said, since he could give her a few longer workouts to prepare for the 1 1/16-mile Juvenile Fillies.

"At the time I said 'We'll just train up to the race.' ... She's working seven-eighths in :25, :24, working like one of those Bob Baffert son-of-a-guns. I'm training her and she's training like a monster. To make a long

Continued On Page 26



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<b>BOOK 4</b> <i>Sunday,</i> <i>Sept 20</i>	<b>BOOK 5</b> <i>Tuesday,</i> <i>Sept 22</i>	<b>BOOK 6</b> <i>Thursday,</i> <i>Sept 24</i>

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# Saranac —

■ Continued from page 25

story short, they kept bugging me and I said, 'Listen, she's going to run, only going to run on the dirt one time, she's only going to run in the Breeders' Cup, no prep race, nothin.' Anyway, that's what we did. One time. We tricked her. She went to the lead and that was it. It worked."

Now Catalano hopes what he's done with Big Dreaming, training at Churchill and two breezes since his Aug. 1 win, works again. He takes on a deep field that includes Jersey Derby winner Vanzzy, European import L'Imperator, last-out Saratoga winner Don Juan Kitten and stakes winner Embolden.

Vanzzy exits a 3 1/2-length win in the Jersey Derby July 26 at Monmouth Park for trainer Michael Pino. The son of Verrazano finished fourth in the Grade 2 Pennine Ridge and third in the Grade 3 Kent before that, after winning the Rushaway on Turfway Park's synthetic track in mid-March before the pandemic shut down most of racing around the country. Joel Ro-



Maggie Kimmitt

**Third in the Jersey Derby, Irish Mias trains at Fair Hill.**

sario takes the call on Vanzzy, the 7-2 morning-line favorite from post one.

Don Juan Kitten, the 4-1 second choice for trainer Danny Gargan and jockey Kendrick Carmouche, won a 1-mile allowance July 25 after a runner-up effort in a similar spot June 7 at Belmont.

Mike Maker goes for another graded turf stakes with 9-2 third choice Bodecream and 20-1 recent maiden winner Turn Of Events.

Bodecream, winner of the Texas Turf Mile in late January at Sam Houston Race Park, joined Maker's stable after Mike Repole purchased

the 3-year-old Bodemeister gelding for \$50,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July horses of racing age sale. Irad Ortiz Jr. takes the call on Bodecream.

Chad Brown, in a tight battle for leading trainer honors with Todd Pletcher, sends out L'Imperator for his first start in the U.S. The French-bred son of Holy Roman Emperor won three of four in his native country, including a 3-length win going 10 furlongs at Toulouse in his last start March 14. Javier Castellano rides the 5-1 fourth choice.

Others in the field are a pair from trainer Graham Motion's Fair Hill operation in Bye Bye Melvin and Irish Mias, first-time turf runner Three Technique for Jeremiah Englehart, last year's Jamestown Stakes winner Embolden for Stidham and Ima Pharoah, Pletcher's main-track-only runner.

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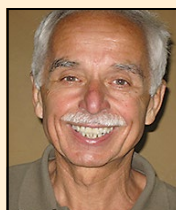
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## Saratoga Race Course – Saturday, August 29

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**Charles  
Bedard**



**Rob  
Whitlock**

**Race #**

<b>1</b>	Happy Sophia Enough Love La Negrita	Enough Love Happy Sophia La Negrita	Happy Sophia Grey Jazmine Enough Love	Enough Love Happy Sophia La Negrita
<b>2</b>	En Wye Cee King Cause Expert	En Wye Cee Dynamax Prime Ballagh Rocks	Ballagh Rocks En Wye Cee Spirit Animal	En Wye Cee King Cause Dynamax Prime
<b>3</b>	Ima Pharoah L'Imperator Don Juan Kitten	Ima Pharoah Embolden Bodecream	Don Juan Kitten Bodecream L'Imperator	Bodecream L'Imperator Three Technique
<b>4</b>	Bustin To Please Englehart entry Stay Fond	Bustin To Please Englehart entry Stay Fond	Bustin To Please Englehart entry Stay Fond	Stay Fond Englehart entry Bustin To Please
<b>5</b>	Letmetakethiscall Archumybaby My Roxy Girl	Letmetakethiscall Archumybaby My Roxy Girl	Archumybaby My Roxy Girl Puffery	Archumybaby My Roxy Girl Letmetakethiscall
<b>6</b>	Happymac Newbomb Jimmy The Kid	Happymac Newbomb Highly Motivated	Happymac Newbomb Founder	Charleston Strong Happymac Newbomb
<b>7</b>	Yaupon Long Weekend Liam's Pride	Yaupon Basin Long Weekend	Long Weekend Basin Premier Star	Yaupon Basin Wondrwherecraigs
<b>8</b>	Fortin Hill Complexity Funny Guy	Whitmore Funny Guy Mind Control	Whitmore Fortin Hill Majestic Dunhill	Firenze Fire Funny Guy Whitmore
<b>9</b>	Aquaphobia Marzo Cross Border	Sadler's Joy Pedro Cara Cross Border	Aquaphobia Corelli Cross Border	Pedro Cara Aquaphobia Cross Border
<b>10</b>	Jouster Zainalarab Always Carina	Rookery Zainalarab Jouster	O'Gotten Girl Len Lo Lady Zainalarab	Spun d'Etat Rookery Peachy Queen
<b>11</b>	Eloquent Speaker Midnight Surprise Flashpackinbarbie	Midnight Surprise Eloquent Speaker Paved With Gold	Eloquent Speaker Bustin Scones Kinky Sox	Eloquent Speaker Midnight Surprise Miss Jimmy
2020 Records	<b>109/319</b>	<b>97/319</b>	<b>90/319</b>	<b>76/319</b>

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# Super Sub

Cohen pinch hits  
for Ortiz, gets stakes  
win aboard Selflessly

BY TOM LAW

The call came in about 10 a.m., after training hours and about the time David Cohen might have considered something else for the day. He'd been named on one mount on the overnight – Make Or Break in the second race – but when that filly was among the early scratches that was it.

Until the call.

Cohen learned on the call that Irad Ortiz Jr., the meet's leading rider by two over his brother Jose heading into Day 32, was off his mounts for the second day in a row due to a troublesome wrist injured in a starting gate incident Wednesday. Ortiz's

**Continued On Page 30**



NYRA Photo

Selflessly (left) catches Sweet Melania at the finish of Friday's Lake George.

## One Horse

*Buyers and sellers remember  
some names from Keeneland  
September sales of years past.*



KEENELAND

SEPTEMBER

SUN. 13 - FRI. 25

## HARD NOT TO LOVE, 2017

*David Ingordo*

"John (Shirreffs) didn't have many people that were buying that year, so Terry Finley with West Point Thoroughbreds and myself, my mother and some other people put some money in. She walked out and we're like 'Damn, this is a pretty good horse.' When you're doing your short list, you're running around and you might see something at the last minute. That was her. I was able to get her vetted, get the X-rays looked at but we couldn't get her scoped. We went up there and bid on her and somebody went 380 (thousand) and I said to John 'What do you want to do?' He said he wanted her. We said 400 and got her. A few minutes later (half-sister) Wonder Gadot placed in a stakes, so the pedigree got a big jump right from the start.

"To have her trained by my stepfather, my mother and I owned a good piece of her, that means something. It is a business but she was special. She wouldn't be who she is without John. Having it all come full circle that she's good meant a lot to me.

"She has her quirks. When my vet went down there to scope her he said, 'This is a tough heifer.' She'd just had enough and wouldn't let it happen. Losing an eye didn't help her, that was an accident, but the tough constitution has been there from the beginning. That 'I'm my own woman' attitude has been there since she was a yearling. That's her. I try to remember those little things when I'm looking at horses. If they're tough and determined and have a mind of their own . . . I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. Every good horse I've been around had a certain quirk."

*Hard Not To Love has won five of nine starts (including a Grade 1 and a Grade 2 stake), and earned \$528,980 for Ingordo, West Point, Dottie Ingordo, Mercedes Stable, Scott Dilworth and Steve Mooney.*



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# Recap —

## ■ Continued from page 28

mounts were live – per usual – and one included Klaravich Stable's Selflessly in the featured Grade 3 Lake George.

Cohen picked up that mount aboard the More Than Ready filly good enough to earn a spot in last year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf for trainer Chad Brown, and made the most of the opportunity. Cohen rode Selflessly to a last-jump win over odds-on favorite Sweet Melania in the 1-mile turf stakes for 3-year-old fillies to return a hefty \$30.60.

"Some loyal Chad Brown fans made money today, for sure." Brown quipped after his second graded stakes win at a price in less than two weeks' time after Domestic Spending paid \$16.40 winning the Saratoga Derby Invitational Aug. 15.

Cohen fans no doubt were rewarded, too, after the veteran rider put on a patient ride subbing for Ortiz, following the favorite most of the trip and getting up just in time to win by a nose in 1:36.06 over the good inner course.

The Lake George was Cohen's first graded victory since Have At It in the Grade 2 Hill Prince in early October 2018 at Belmont Park. He also made it 10 in his career, including the memorable dead-heat in the Travers aboard Golden Ticket, in the midst of a quietly good Saratoga meet where he's won seven races with seven seconds and nine thirds



Tod Marks

**David Cohen picked up a graded stakes win.**

from just 68 mounts

"Always been lucky to be on Chad's lineup," Cohen said. "This is my first graded stakes for him. Ridden over the years for him, been riding at Churchill for him prior to this. He sent horses to Kentucky and was fortunate to get his support there. ... Whenever you have a live mount it's better and you definitely put the odds in your favor when you ride for Chad."

Selflessly went overlooked in the Lake George due to the presence of Sweet Melania, third in the Juvenile Fillies Turf and winner of the Grade 3 Wonder Again on the Belmont Stakes Day undercard in her most recent start June 20. Selflessly finished fifth that day, 11 ¼ lengths back as the 5-2 second choice behind the winner. Sweet Melania went to the post for the Lake George at 7-10, with Selflessly fifth choice at 14-1.

Brown attributed the Wonder Again effort to a rough trip and said she came back to the barn with cuts on her back legs.

She stayed downstate with Brown's team at Belmont Park and prepped for her return to Saratoga – where she finished second in a 5 ½-furlong turf maiden last summer before a win in the Grade 2 Miss Grillo at Belmont – with eight works on the main track and training track with one on the inner turf course.

"She missed some training after that race to heal up, so she probably had an excuse in there," Brown said. "My team at Belmont has had this horse all meet getting her ready and they really did a great job. David stepped in today when Irad couldn't ride and I'm really proud of him. He rode a great race and we were happy to put him on the horse. I use him occasionally and we certainly ride against him a lot. He rides particularly well on the turf saving ground."

Cohen and Brown talked strategy in the pad-

**Continued On Page 31**



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# Recap —

## ■ Continued from page 30

dock before the race, thinking saving ground behind Sweet Melania would be the way to go.

The plan worked into the first turn as Cohen kept Selflessly in fifth, not far off Sweet Melania's heels while longshots Windracer and Sugar Fix set the pace. Cohen stayed on the inside after the longshot leaders hit the half in :48.48 and into the far turn while Sweet Melania set her sights on the lead just to her outside and inside of Windracer into the lane.

Sweet Melania took the lead outside the three-sixteenths pole while the pacesetters dropped back. Cohen countered Ortiz's move and stayed busy on Selflessly inside the final sixteenth to get up just in time. Witez also made steady progress through the lane to finish a half-length back in third at 9-1 with Micheline fourth of 10.

"We thought there would be two or three to go and we really wanted to get her out aggressively and not get shuffled back into the first turn and kind of play it by ear," Cohen said. "If Sweet Melania was on the lead and I was fortunate to get behind her then great she would take me the rest of the way and if not just figure it out from there."

Bred in Maryland and out of the Grand Slam mare Uniformly Yours, Selflessly went through the Keeneland November sales ring as a weanling in

2017 and Nick de Meric scooped her up for \$190,000 on behalf of Klara-vich. She improved to 2-for-5 with the Lake George victory and increased her earnings to \$219,000.

• Irad Ortiz passed on 10 mounts Friday and two others came away winners, Captain Bombastic in the opening Times Square division of the New York Stallion Stakes (see below) and Rejected Again in the third, a \$16,000 claimer on the main track. Luis Saez rode Captain Bombastic, one of four winners on the day along with Party At Page's in the fifth, Lady Rocket in the sixth and Night Time in the eighth. Joel Rosario rode Rejected Again, one of two winners for him along with Timeless Journey in the second.

Jose Ortiz tied the race for leading rider with two wins Friday – Stage Left in the fourth for Wesley Ward and Beyond Brown in the finale for Dave Donk. The Ortiz brothers sit at 45 wins apiece, three more than Rosario with Saez fourth at 29.

The trainer's race continues to percolate with Brown and Pletcher, who sent out Sweet Melania in the Lake George, tied at the top with 24 wins. Christophe Clement (19) and Mike Maker (18) aren't far off the pace heading into today's card.

Brown entered nine runners for Saturday, including L'Imperator in the Grade 3 Saranac and Fortin Hill and Complexity in the Grade 1 Forego, and eight for Sunday, including Royal

**Continued On Page 32**

## Saratoga Leaders

TRAINERS	1ST
Chad Brown	24
Todd Pletcher	24
Christophe Clement	19
Mike Maker	18
Linda Rice	13
Rudy Rodriguez	12
Steve Asmussen	10
Jim Bond	10
Bill Mott	8
Wesley Ward	8
Brad Cox	7
David Donk	7
Shug McGaughey	7
Jorge Abreu	6
Jeremiah Englehart	6
Ray Handal	6
Orlando Noda	6

JOCKEYS	1ST
Irad Ortiz Jr.	45
Jose Ortiz	45
Joel Rosario	42
Luis Saez	29
Javier Castellano	23
Tyler Gaffalione	21
Jose Lezcano	17
Manny Franco	16
John Velazquez	15
Junior Alvarado	12
Ricardo Santana Jr.	12
Dylan Davis	11

Through Friday.

**CHURCHILL DOWNS**

## 2020 Derby Week & September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 27

**THE CHAMPIONS DAY MARATHON OVERNIGHT STAKES**

Runs Tues., Sept. 1 \$115,000 Three Years Old & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (No nomination fee) 1 1/2 Miles, Dirt
----------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------

**UNBRIDLED SIDNEY**

Runs Wed., Sept. 2 \$150,000 Fillies & Mares, Three Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$150 nomination fee) 5 1/2 Furlongs, Turf
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------

**POCAHONTAS (GIII)  
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Runs Thurs., Sept. 3 \$200,000 Fillies, Two Years Old	Closes Aug. 15 (\$200 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt
-------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------

**OPENING VERSE OVERNIGHT STAKES**

Runs Thurs., Sept. 3 \$115,000 Three Years Old & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (No nomination fee) 1 Mile, Turf
-----------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------

**KENTUCKY OAKS DAY**

**LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS (GI)**

Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$1,250,000 Second closing Fillies, Three Years Old	Closes Aug. 15 (\$500 nomination fee) 1 1/8 Miles, Dirt
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

**EDGEWOOD (GII)**

Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$300,000 Fillies, Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Turf
-------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------

**EIGHT BELLES (GII)**

Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$300,000 Fillies, Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 7 Furlongs, Dirt
-------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------

**LA TROIENNE (GI)**

Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$500,000 Fillies & Mares, Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 1/16 Miles, Dirt
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------

**ALYSHEBA (GII)**

Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$400,000 Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 1/16 Mile, Dirt
--------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

**TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (GII)**

Runs Fri., Sept. 4 \$250,000 Three Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$250 nomination fee) 5 1/2 Furlongs, Turf
---------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------

**KENTUCKY DERBY DAY**

**OLD FORESTER BOURBON TURF CLASSIC (GI)**

Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$1,000,000 Second Closing Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$500 nomination fee) 1 1/8 Miles, Turf
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

**IROQUOIS (GIII)  
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Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$200,000 Two Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$200 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt
--------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------

**PAT DAY MILE (GII)**

Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt
----------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------

**DERBY CITY DISTAFF (GI)**

Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Fillies & Mares, Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 7 Furlongs, Dirt
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------

**AMERICAN TURF (GII)**

Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Three Year Olds	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 1/16 Miles, Turf
----------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------

**LONGINES CHURCHILL DISTAFF TURF MILE (GII)**

Runs Sat., Sept. 5 \$500,000 Fillies & Mares, Four Year Olds & Up	Closes Aug. 15 (\$300 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Turf
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------

**ACK ACK (GIII)**

Runs Sat., Sept. 26 \$100,000 Three Year Olds & Up	Closes Sept. 12 (\$100 nomination fee) 1 Mile, Dirt
----------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------

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# Recap —

## ■ Continued from page 31

Flag in the Grade 3 Shuvee. Pletcher counters with six entries Saturday, including Ima Pharoah as main track only in the Saranac and Basin in the Grade 2 Amsterdam, and nine Sunday led by the trio of Nonna Madeline, Another Broad and Bellera in the Shuvee.

- Captain Bombastic and Dream Bigger were the two clear favorites in Friday's opener, the \$100,000 Times Square division of the New York Stallion Stakes at 6 ½ furlongs on dirt. The last time these two met in June in the Mike Lee Stakes at Belmont, Captain Bombastic caught his rival while coming from behind in the stretch and beat him by 2 ¼ lengths.

"This colt is all heart," trainer Jeremiah Englehart said after Captain Bombastic proved it again, battling Dream Bigger through a blistering early pace and then pulling away to win by 5 ¼ lengths.

Before the race Englehart asked jockey Luis Saez, who also rode him

in the Mike Lee, about strategy.

"I feel I want to be aggressive this time," Saez told Englehart. "Go for the lead."

"This colt's flexible," said Englehart, "he can go to the front or run off the pace, so I told Luis to go with what he felt."

Captain Bombastic came out fast but got bumped hard from the outside after just a few jumps. He recovered and Saez was able to get him within a head of Jose Ortiz riding the leader Dream Bigger after a furlong. At that point the two favorites took off on a match race as they left the rest of the field 5 lengths behind.

"I got a bit worried when I saw the early fractions," Englehart said.

At the three-sixteenths pole, Captain Bombastic opened up a 2-length lead and widened down the stretch to win easily.

The winner is by Forty Tales, who seven years ago won the Amsterdam Stakes at Saratoga running the same 6 ½-furlong distance as Friday's Times Square. His son ran the distance two-fifths of a second faster than his sire. The dam was Stolen Star, a stakes-

**Continued On Page 33**



NYRA Photo

**Captain Bombastic makes off with Friday's Times Square in the New York Stallion Stakes.**

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# Recap —

## ■ Continued from page 32

placed mare whose entire 21-race career was spent in New York.

Captain Bombastic improved to four wins, two seconds and a third from eight starts, with his only out-of-the-money finish in the Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens Stakes four weeks ago. It was the only open company stakes the colt has competed in and he finished fourth in a field of 11. Will he stay in restricted races from now on?

“Tell you the truth I didn’t plan for him in the Jerkens. I had another race in mind, but Jay’s the one that makes those calls,” said Englehart, referring to Jay Hanley of Captain Bombastic’s owner Team Hanley. “He basically plots the colt’s career. He’ll ask me about how sharp he is and what I think about things. Then he decides what races he runs. It’s working out pretty well, wouldn’t you say? And in the end, that fourth in the Jerkens was the proudest I’ve been of him in all his races. He shows up every race. He’s not the biggest horse, but, like I’ve said before, what’s there is all heart.”

— Terry Hill

## Thursday

The skies opened up about an hour before first post Thursday and Jorge Duarte, on his way to Saratoga from Colts Neck Training Center in New Jersey, did not mind a bit.

Duarte, in town to saddle Richard Santulli’s Introduced in the \$82,450 Smart And Fancy Stakes, also didn’t care when the steady rain became a hard rain and eventually forced the 5 ½-furlong stakes off the grass onto the saturated main track. The 4-year-old El Padrino filly had been in that situation before, back in September 2018 when she made her second start in a rained-off maiden race.

“When I ran her at Laurel and she broke her maiden, that day the track was really wet. It was actually on the turf but came off the turf,” Duarte said. “She handled it fine. She trains good over the slop at the farm. A change of surface is a concern but we were kind of confident. She’s sharp.”

Introduced showed how sharp winning the Smart And Fancy after an early duel with Peaceful before drawing away from that rival by 3 ¼ lengths for her second stakes victory. She also improved to 3-for-3 on the main track, adding a stakes to that 2018 maiden win and the restricted Miss Disco last August at Laurel.

Duarte initially hoped that Introduced would relax in the early portion of the Smart And Fancy if the race stayed on the grass. She’d finished fourth, beaten 3 lengths by Cariba, last time in the 5 ½-furlong Caress on the grass Aug. 1 while racing close to the early pace. Introduced won her two prior starts, albeit in allowance and optional company in the

**Continued On Page 34**



Chelsea Durand/NYRA Photo

Introduced waltzes away with the Smart And Fancy Stakes, which was taken off the turf.



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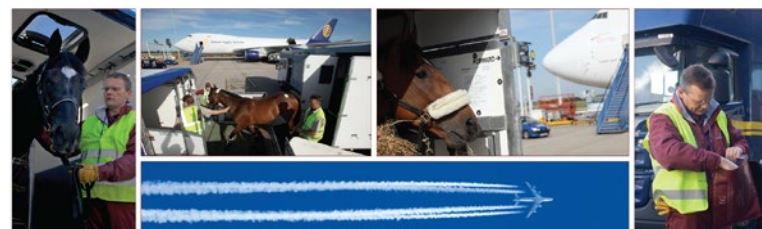
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# Recap —

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Mid-Atlantic, coming from deeper in the field.

Breaking from post three in the field of five, Introduced and jockey Manny Franco battled with Peaceful and Tyler Gaffalione to her outside through the opening quarter in :22.41 before taking the lead around the far turn. She edged away to a half-length edge through the half in :44.84.

Duarte watched the race unfold from a spot near the clubhouse porch and wasn't surprised to see Gaffalione and Peaceful press to his filly's outside.

"The guys tried to race ride her a little bit," he said. "I rode before so that's what you would do when you have a horse that's the favorite and has speed, try to pin her in there. She overcame it and looked good out there.

"Everything changed once it was off the turf. She does have speed so that's an advantage for sure. When it's off the turf the whole layout changed, so we probably changed tactics, too."

A \$310,000 buy by Charlie Boden at the 2018 OBS March 2-year-olds in training sale, Introduced improved to 6-for-13 and padded her bankroll to \$271,551.

— Tom Law

- Mike Miceli continued his strong meet when he sent out Preamble to a victory at odds-on in the



Tod Marks

Jack And Noah (right) pulls away to win Wednesday's featured Mahony Stakes.

fifth, an off-the-turf \$25,000 claimer. The 4-year-old Speightstown colt, claimed in February for \$40,000, held off Outrageous Bet by a nose to give Miceli his third win from 17 starters, along with four seconds and a third. Miceli also won Wednesday's second, a state-bred maiden special weight for older fillies and mares, with Bankers Daughter.

### Wednesday

The losses started to pile up Opening Day – remember that, way back when the buzz in and around Saratoga focused on privacy screening on the fences surrounding the track, watch parties, wearing masks all the time and debate about when

**Continued On Page 35**



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# Recap —

## ■ Continued from page 34

and if owners would be allowed inside.

Jamie Begg put the tack on three runners for his boss, newly elected Hall of Fame trainer Mark Casse, on Day 1 of the 2020 Saratoga meet. None came home a winner, although Make Mischief ran well to be second in the Grade 3 Schuylerville. Twenty-nine more losses followed before Gary Barber's Jack And Noah ended the drought in Wednesday's \$85,000 Mahony Stakes.

"It's one of those things where if we had a few wins we'd be having a decent enough meet," Begg said. "We've been pretty consistent with the graded horses hitting the board. We just needed to get one and having it be in a stake with a horse coming back is pretty good."

Jack And Noah, who broke a tad slow before getting in the mix and eventually finishing fifth in the Grade 3 Quick Call, accounted for one of the losses but made up for it with John Velazquez in the 5 1/2-furlong Mahony. The French-bred son of Bated Breath shot from the gate and led throughout to win by 3 1/4 lengths over Competitive Saint in 1:01.28.

"Having a firm turf was key," Velazquez said. "Last time it was soft turf and when he jumped out of there, he kind of slipped. Right from the start today he had firm ground underneath him and from the first jump he was out of there. It was a big difference."

Jack And Noah won for the fourth time in eight starts, boosting his earnings to \$216,300 and improving



Tod Marks

**Sweet Bye And Bye (6) wins Wednesday's eighth for trainer Tony Dutrow.**

Casse's record at Saratoga to 1-9-3 from 34 starts. Despite just the single victory the barn ranked 15th by purses won at \$394,176 through Friday.

In addition to Jack And Noah's victory in the Mahony the barn placed in the Grade 1 Fourstardave (Got Stormy), Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens (Tap It To Win), Grade 2 Adirondack (Make Mischief), Quick Call (Old Chestnut) and Grade 3 Schuylerville (Make Mischief) at the meet.

— Tom Law

- Doug O'Neill sent out his first winner of the meet when Reddam Racing's Dipping In won the fifth, a maiden claimer on the grass. Tony Dutrow also scored his first winner of the season – and first since last August – when Joseph Imbesi's Sweet Bye And Bye won the eighth. Dutrow's last winner came Aug. 15, 2019 when Sneakiness won a maiden claimer

at Saratoga. He only ran five horses through the rest of the year and came into Wednesday's card 0-for-21 on the year. Robert Klesaris made it four trainers with their first winners of the meet in the finale, sending out Charles Hallas' Madam Maclean to victory in a maiden special weight for 3-year-old fillies at 5 1/2 furlongs on the grass.

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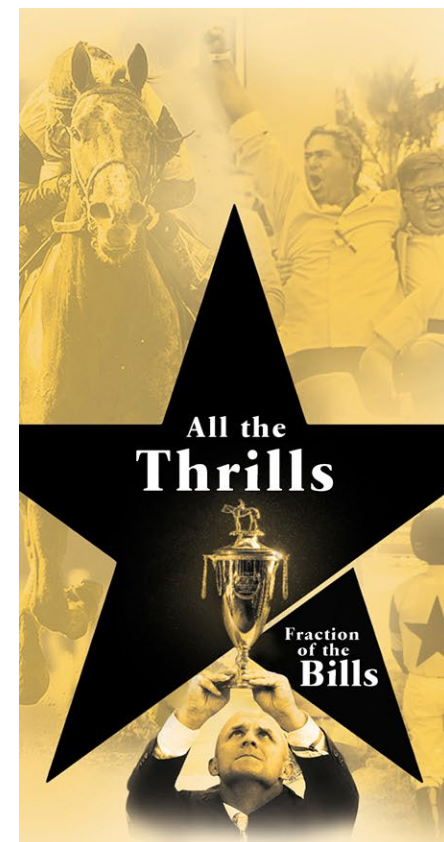


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Founded in 2001, *The Saratoga Special* has covered plenty of great horses and people and we'll bring you some highlights during our 20th season.

Our second season, the end of sales week – which back then meant 12 newspapers in a row without a day off – and we got treated to a gem by Pat Day and *With Anticipation*. The horse rallied from well back to catch Denon in the final stride of the *Sword Dancer* (which gets renewed as today's 10th race). The 7-year-old gelding won the Grade 1 for the second consecutive year, and made Day the winningest jockey in racing history. The Hall of Famer told us all about it afterward.

**August 11, 2002. Day Time. With Anticipation puts jockey on top of list with *Sword Dancer* rally. By Sean Clancy.**

Nothing like a choice. Like picking between Ted, Babe and Mickey. The *Sword Dancer* produced stories better than an old fisherman. And they were all true.

You decide. Was it *With Anticipation*, a white 7-year-old gelding winning his second *Sword Dancer* in a row? Was it the race itself with Denon getting through on the fence, *With Anticipation* coming around and both landing together on the line. Or was it Pat Day becoming the all-time richest jockey.

Any of the three, all of the three – this is why horses run and people watch.

Day walked into the paddock for the *Sword Dancer* needing \$70,711 to pass Chris McCarron at the top of the all-time money won title. He would have eclipsed the mark with a win or a second. *With Anticipation's* long white head decided the ceremony. Trainer Jonathan Sheppard greeted Day on the track, owner George Strawbridge Jr. walked his homebred into the winner's circle, Day saluted the heavens twice, NYRA handed the "Congratulations Pat Day" sign to the jockey while he was on the back of *With Anticipation*. The crowd went crazy. Day pulled his tack off and planted a kiss on *With Anticipation's* shoulder.

Maybe all of that pull upstairs does work. If *With Anticipation* loses the photo, Day still wins the title and what? – they give him the sign back in the jocks' room or he waits for Denon, Edgar Prado and Bobby Frankel to go through the moves and the crowd goes home.



Nah, that's not how the best of the best do things. They win when it counts, no matter the effort or the cost.

"I was worried early because he wasn't really caring for the ground. He warmed up great, acted great, broke well but just wasn't handling it," Day said. "You want to keep him happy, you can't whip on them with a mile left to run, you try to keep them in contention and keep them happy and hope they'll respond when the racing starts. When I mashed on him coming off the turn, he was willing to put forth the effort. When we got some racetrack in front of us and he eyeballed that horse down on the inside, he went after him with a vengeance. Like he knew where the wire was, like he knew what he had to do

**Continued On Page 37**



# Best Of —

■ Continued from page 36

and he was gonna get it done. I was really proud of him.”

And well he should have.

At the head of the stretch, Prado punched Denon through a hole on the fence and opened up quickly. With Anticipation actually slipped to fifth with a little more than a furlong to run. He was outside and in between horses while Denon was streaking home.

“I got to overriding him a little bit, you’d think after 30 years... about the sixteenth pole I had to slow down and wait on him just a touch. He kinda looked over his shoulder at me like, ‘come on jock, relax.’ I was riding him like some 2-year-old I guess,” Day said. “He was giving it to me and knew what he was doing, the best thing I could do and the only thing I should have been doing at that point was helping him, not whipping on him.”

You can be sure Day helped more than he hurt; just like he’s been doing since he won his first race at Prescott Downs in 1973 earning \$347.

“When I eased on over to the backside, it came over me, thinking about not only winning the race but getting the title,” Day said. “It’s a great accomplishment, it’s been an awesome career and it continues to be. It was an emotional moment. A couple of times, it got kinda tight in my throat. I was glad he was willing to come back nice and easy to give me a chance to collect myself.”

Sheppard had collected himself by the time he reached the winner’s circle, but he was a long way from collected while he watched With Anticipation toil in the \$500,000 stakes.

“I just couldn’t quite put my finger on it, I didn’t know whether I had him quite sharp enough, his last work was a second or two slower than I actually hoped it would have been and that was my fear,” Sheppard said. “You start second-guessing yourself but Pat’s kind of tricky because sometimes you think he doesn’t have much horse and actually he knows what he’s doing and he has more than you think.”

This time at least.

“I saw Frankel’s horse and I was beginning to think it was over, but



Tod Marks

Pat Day and With Anticipation put on quite a show in the 2002 Sword Dancer.

all of a sudden everything turned around,” Sheppard said. “I think it’s neat that he’s seemed to have developed a following. He’s a popular horse; it’s not just that he’s white and flashy looking, he’s old. And he keeps on doing it. It’s a little bit of a fairy-tale. Let’s hope the run continues to Chicago.”

The Breeders’ Cup Turf is in Chicago on Oct. 26. Last year, With Anticipation swept into the race off two straight Grade 1 wins. The son of Re-launch offered little kick and finished 13 lengths behind Fantastic Light. Now 7, With Anticipation seems to be as good if not better than last year. The Hall of Fame trainer knows old horses.

“Being associated with jumpers I’m kind of used to it. It’s not such a

big thing in my mind as it is in other people’s,” Sheppard said of the horse’s success at a seemingly advanced age. “If you take care of your horses and give them a little break from time to time I don’t think it’s so bizarre. Of course, he is a gelding and they’re normally easier on themselves. The stallions tend to get a big more temperamental as they get older. When you think of the great old horses, they’re almost all geldings; Forego, John Henry, Kelso. Not that he’s quite in that category...though, he’s getting up there.”

*Day retired in 2005 as the career earnings leader (\$297,914,839) and is still fourth behind John Velazquez, Javier Castellano and Mike Smith.*

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1. **Tiz The Law:** Belmont? Check. Travers? Check. Next stop, Derby. – Bred by Twin Creeks Farm
2. **Gamine:** California-based 3YO filly left no doubt in Test.
3. **Serengeti Empress:** Fought like a lioness in Ballerina triumph.
4. **Rushing Fall:** Diana winner was gutsy in stretch battle.
5. **Vexatious:** Vanquished champ in Grade 1 Personal Ensign.
6. **Halladay:** Made fastball stand up against strong Fourstardave field.
7. **Improbable:** Beat quality group in Grade 1 Whitney.
8. **Volatile:** Speedster made it look easy in Vanderbilt.
9. **Swiss Skydiver:** 3YO filly got her G1 in Alabama; look out Ky. Oaks.
10. **Snap Decision:** A jumper? Yeah a jumper. Sublime Walsh win.

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# Coach J.

**W**e never called him The Big Unit. To us, members of the Saratoga Springs High boys track and field team, Randy Johnson was Coach, Coach J., Coach Johnson or just Randy.

The Big Unit Randy Johnson, the one baseball fans around the country know as a Hall of Fame pitcher mainly for the Seattle Mariners but plenty of other clubs along the way, wasn't even in our minds back in the mid to late 1980s.

That's when our Randy Johnson, Coach J., was in the prime of his life and the Saratoga High track team fired on all cylinders. Just ask, or look it up.

Coach J. came into my life when I went out for the track team in the spring of my sophomore year. Sprints were the destination; after all I could adequately steal a base during my youth baseball days and could consistently outrun most of my friends in the backyard or down the street.

That plan changed after a couple practices. Maybe one practice.

"Let's try you with the distance guys," Randy said, and I dutifully joined that group led at the time by Coach Art Kranick. Thank goodness for that, sprinting against the likes of Mike Settles, Rich "Scooby" King, John Christenson and Kenny and Keith Parker wouldn't have turned out too well. The distance guys became my best friends and we logged mile after mile, in the heat, rain, snow, sleet, you name it. Ever see the kids running around Saratoga? That was us, minus the fancy running gear, good shoes and coaches following along on bike or in a car.

But back to Randy. Even though he didn't deal with the distance runners directly he was the head coach, tasked with coming up with the lineups for



The Big Unit would have loved Tiz The Law.

the meets, JV and Varsity, and for three years he was my head coach who became a friend.

Smart, fun, hilarious, gregarious, empathetic and full of life, Randy proved the perfect coach for athletes of all abilities, young men of all backgrounds, rich and poor (yes, there are poor people in Saratoga), fast and slow, you name it.

Some of my favorite memories of high school have Randy cast as a central character.

All the hard work in outdoor track, indoor track and cross country paved the way to a spot on the Blue Streaks' 4x800-meter relay team for the spring season of my senior year. We had designs on the school record – which we got midway through the season – and then set a goal to run under 8 minutes. That would require each runner to run sub-2, a true benchmark for the 800 at the time.

When our top squad – Brian Bishop in lead-

off, me running second, Justin Jenkins running third and Jeremy Briell on the anchor leg – lined up we were tough to beat. We clicked off wins at dual meets and invitationals and late in the season started thinking about landing a spot in the state meet.

The morning of our senior prom we knew if we rode the bus to the Niskayuna Invitational we'd probably get home late, have to rush getting into those rental tuxedos, clip-on ties and cummerbunds and miss all those things we didn't really want to do so Randy came up with a plan. Half the squad would ride down to the meet with Randy, run the 4x8, win it, get a photo taken and all of us would ride back home with Brian. Somehow this plan was legit and legal, since we didn't take the bus down we didn't have to take it back. Details, details. Randy worked it out, our parents signed off and down to Niskayuna we went.

Who knows what we talked about on the ride down, but I'll never forget the drive. We'd been close with Randy before that – how could you not, considering he was a teacher we'd see in the halls and our coach for three or more years. He also became our friend that day, and he'd be a friend of mine until I heard of his passing late last year. He died Dec. 28, just about a month after his 63rd birthday.

Word started to spread from my close friend Dave Burns to me, members of that 4x8 squad and others from the team. We shared stories and remembrances from high school and mourned a coach, teacher, mentor and friend.

So where does all this Big Unit stuff come in? Fast forward to my first few years with The Spe-

**Continued On Page 39**

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# Paddock —

■ Continued from page 38

cial, I remember Joe telling me stories about a larger-than-life racing fan yelling to his son Jack delivering the paper from his golf cart, “The Big Unit loves The Special.”

“Big Unit, what’s that all about?”

“That’s what we know him as, he’s a teacher or former teacher from around here.”

“Wait, is his name Randy Johnson?”

“I think so, that sounds right.”

And the circle is complete.

The Big Unit, Coach J., Randy, Randy Johnson suddenly and happily was back in my life.

How lucky can one person be? Not once but twice to be blessed by such a character, such a blast of positive energy.

There’d be stretches over the years when I wouldn’t see him and his wife Cheryl out walking but then I’d seemingly see them all the time. Most of the time I’d see them while out for a run on Union Avenue or East Avenue, and every time when I ran toward them he’d say, “I knew that was you, I recognize you running a mile away.”

The last few summers he’d walk past our office on East Avenue almost every day, cooler in tow before the races, greeting the team with a wave even if he couldn’t see us in the window. Same thing at the end of the day. More times than I can count I can hear Joe say, “There goes the Big Unit.”

I miss seeing the Big Unit around town, either out walking or on his way to the races. Every once in a while I’ll see a couple walking and think, “Is that...?” and remember that my coach, my friend, is shedding his beautiful bright light someplace else.

And I’ll never forget one of our last conversations, about Saratoga High Track and Field, Class of 1989 of course.

“Man you guys were good,” he said. “You broke 2, right? Sub 8 for the team, school record. Still the school record. I’ll never forget it.”

“It was awesome. We were on that day. We don’t have the school record anymore though Coach, another group of guys broke it a few years back.”

“Thanks for calling me Coach. I don’t hear that a lot anymore. I like it.

We liked it, too, and love you even more.

Rest in peace, Coach.

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# Protest Power

**M**ack Robinson, Jackie's brother, didn't use his silver medal from the 1936 Summer Olympics to meet people. He wore his Olympic team jacket to the only job he could get, as a street sweeper. White residents of Pasadena, Cal., called the cops on Robinson and made him take off the jacket.

Football players at New York University in 1940 didn't make a poster when the school's football team declined to use Black player Leonard Bates because of a request from the University of Missouri. They went to NYU's student council. For protesting, seven students at NYU were suspended for three months.

Bill Russell didn't ask to see the manager. He led a walkout by Black players on the Boston Celtics and the St. Louis Hawks – after being refused service in a Kentucky restaurant – before a preseason game in 1961. The game went on, with white players only.

Heavyweight boxer Muhammad Ali didn't put a sign in his yard. He refused induction into the United States Army as a conscientious objector in 1966, because he was against the Vietnam War. Ali was arrested, found guilty of draft evasion, stripped of his boxing titles, barred from the sport and missed four years of his career.

Russell, Jim Brown and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (then Lew Alcindor) didn't talk among themselves about Ali's decision and the reaction to it. They banded together with other Black athletes and spoke up.



NYRA jockeys take a knee at Belmont Park in June.

Tod Marks

John Carlos and Tommie Smith didn't ask the local running club for help. They raised their fists in protest while on the podium after winning gold and bronze medals at the 1968 Olympics. Smith and Carlos were expelled from the Olympics, booed, vilified.

Fourteen Black football players at the University of Wyoming didn't write essays. They sought permission to wear black armbands for a game against BYU in 1969 to protest the Mormon Church's rule against Black clergy. Wyoming's "Black 14" were kicked off the team.

Nine players on Syracuse University's 1970 football team didn't sit around their dorm rooms and complain about wanting better medical attention and academic support, and an integrated coaching staff. They asked for those things from their team and their school, and sat out the entire season.

Colin Kaepernick didn't make a speech before a Pop Warner game. He took a knee during the Na-

tional Anthem before an NFL game in 2016 to protest police brutality. He was booed by fans, called unpatriotic, un-American. Critics said he hated the military despite talking through the idea with former Green Beret Nate Boyer. The decision basically ended Kaepernick's career.

New York-based jockeys didn't meet with police. Before the first race on Belmont Park's Opening Day in June, they knelt in solidarity with Black Lives Matter protesters, who protested the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota police custody a few days earlier.

LeBron James didn't just complain about election results. He joined with Trae Young, Skylar Diggins-Smith, Jalen Rose and others to create the voting rights group More Than a Vote. Its mission is to protect Black voting rights and to educate people about the voting process. This 2020 effort joined his work to fund college tuition for low-income students at the University of Akron and starting a grade school in the city, his hometown.

The Milwaukee Bucks didn't send thoughts and prayers after Jacob Blake was shot seven times in the back by a police officer in Wisconsin this week. They boycotted their NBA playoff game. Other teams followed, so did teams from the WNBA, Major League Baseball, National Hockey League and Major League Soccer.

NBA coach Doc Rivers didn't go to HR. He spoke from the heart about his reaction to the Blake

**Continued On Page 41**



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# Outside —

## ■ Continued from page 40

shooting, about outrage, about fear, about wishing he could “just be a coach.”

Former NBA player Robert Horry didn't write a letter to the editor. On ESPN, he talked about racism and its place and its impact on his family. It was personal, painful, hard.

People protesting the police shooting of Louisville resident Breonna Taylor didn't picket the 4-H show. They stood in front of Churchill Downs, and vowed to do it again on Kentucky Derby Day. A Louisville native, Ali would have stood right there with them.

Sixty years after their protest, NYU honored those students for their work toward social justice. In 1971, the Supreme Court overturned Ali's conviction and he is revered as “The Greatest.”

Russell, Brown and Jabbar are legends in sports and life and doing the right thing, sought out – still – to comment about the role of sports in society.

Fifty years after being dismissed from the team, those Wyoming players were honored by the school, received team jerseys and letterman jackets, invited to speak to students. And the Mormon church allows Black clergy now.

Syracuse ultimately gave those football players the Chancellor's Medal and their letterman jackets.

Smith and Carlos are used as examples for their stance, for their courage during one of our country's darkest times.

James, Kaepernick, Rivers, Horry, the New York jockeys, those athletes from all the leagues that didn't play this week . . . well, we'll see what's being said in 50 years.

So don't argue that protests against racism, police brutality and other causes shouldn't involve sports, that athletes or anyone else should “stick to” something. Protests have always involved sports. They've always been uncomfortable to some people.

You want to make a statement and stand up for something? Do it around a sporting event, a team, an arena, anything people identify with and consider important.

And keep right on doing it.



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# In the Breed

It was quiet on Cazenovia Lake Sunday. The half-mile wide, four-mile long lake, about 20 miles southeast of Syracuse, offers fisherman a sweet spot for chain pickerel, bluegills, largemouth and smallmouth bass. Kayakers and canoers can pop in from Helen McNitt State Park. Swimmers can wade from the life-guarded sandy beach or jump into the 45-foot deep lake from their boats. And horse trainers can watch winners at Saratoga.

Ronnie Breed Jr. fired up his phone and watched the fifth at Saratoga with his wife, twin daughters, his sister and her husband in the middle of Cazenovia Lake, 86 miles from his base at Finger Lakes Racetrack.

"We were screaming," Breed said. "We were screaming."

It was a rare afternoon off for the 36-year-old trainer who rides High Command and his other 11 horses every morning. High Command, the longest shot on the board of seven, returning from a six-month layoff, cocked his head to the right like he was looking for his trainer while somehow lasting 9 furlongs in a slow-motion, grind-it-out finish. Breed's former boss, Tom Morley, met the bay gelding and jockey Benjamin Hernandez at the winner's circle.

"How many New York-breds want to run a mile-and-an-eighth? Not many," Breed said of the decision to ship High Command for the New York-bred allowance. "He was down there all winter, this pandemic went on, I brought him back home, I turned him out for a month and slowly brought him back. I entered him at Finger Lakes a couple of times, the race didn't go, didn't go, didn't go. I worked him a couple of more times, the Saratoga book came out and I pointed him for the race. We went for it and we got it."

Owned and bred by Carl Buhr, the 4-year-old son of Soaring Empire got his sixth career win. For Breed, it was his 38th career win, his first this year and

first at Saratoga. With \$120,950, High Command increased his lead as Breed's leading earner. Tancredi lags in second with \$49,469.

"When I ran him a one-turn mile, he burned himself up, he'd like to run off.

I just figured he loves to go two

turns, it helps him relax. If someone wants to go with us, let them go, because I know he'll run all day long," Breed said. "He's a quirky horse. He tries to look at the other horses, but if I open up the blinkers, he doesn't want to run, that's just how he is. Head's up. He's got cotton in his ears, any kind of noise, that's it. He's got his weird, weird ways."

Son of longtime Finger Lakes stalwarts, owner/breeder Ronald Sr. and trainer Debra, Breed learned the game from his parents, mucking stalls, walking hots, galloping horses. Nothing has changed.

"I get on every single one of my horses every day," Breed said. "Do stalls, groom them up, get on them. My wife and I do it all. It's just a family affair."

Breed saddled his first runner and winner Oct. 15, 2012 when Valuable Lady scored as the favorite in a Finger Lakes allowance. He won three races that year, six in 2013, six in 2014 and eight in 2015. That's when he needed a job.

"I started my career here," Breed said. "I gave up training because we were struggling."

Breed asked Morley if he needed an assistant, and stayed for two-and-a-half years. It was a heady time with Ballerina winner and Breeders' Cup start-



Susie Raisher

Trainer Ronnie Breed Jr.

er Haveyougoneaway, and others. There was one day that stood out, Oct. 22, 2016, the day Brother O'Connell won the Mohawk for Morley, Bar Of Gold won the Empire Distaff for John Kimmel and Breakin The Fever won the Hudson for the Breeds. They were in the same barn at Belmont Park.

"All three horses from that barn. We have the picture of all three horses outside that barn," Breed said. "My dad's homebred beat Weekend Hideaway that day."

Breed went back out on his own in September 2017. Based at Belmont Park that fall, he went 1-for-20 (the winner was at Laurel Park) and decided to head home with his wife, Jessica, and daughters, Layla and Anastasia. Partly business, mostly personal.

"It was hard because we loved being at Belmont. It was a tough decision, but we thought it was the right decision," Breed said. "Quality of life. Be closer to family. We wanted to give our kids a better life, the school district is smaller, financially we thought it would be better for us."

Sometimes perspective is learned in the barn and sometimes it's learned earlier than that. Breed was diagnosed with leukemia when he was 3. Yeah, that will instill perspective.

"I beat cancer. To do what I do today is big. I count my blessings all the time. You look at all the people in the world who die of cancer, you say, 'You know what, I made it through. I fought.' And I keep fighting to make everything better, try to be better," Breed said. "That's the way I look at it, keep working, keep fighting and maybe things will turn out. Everybody's got their sorrows, they're down in the dumps doing this and that, I keep pushing on, they kept me around for a reason and we just keep going. People have all this sorrow, 'don't have money for this, big truck, big this, big that.' But I've got my life. I've got my life."

And a winner at Saratoga.

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# The Big Picture

with Tod Marks

**Old John.** Back in 2000, the Sword Dancer belonged to 9-year-old John's Call, who turned back time for Trillium Stable, trainer Tom Voss and jockey Jean-Luc Samyn. The Lord At War gelding won 16 races, including two (both by disqualification) over hurdles and four on the Saratoga turf.

