

Year 20 • No. 8 • Saturday, August 8, 2020



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A New Day

Tiz The Law stars on Travers card



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LICENSE PLATE OF THE DAY

8HORSE, Kentucky

NAMES OF THE DAY

Doswell, first race. Joe Allen's homebred 5-year-old gelding is named for the Virginia town where Secretariat was born. No pressure.

Bottle Rocket Man, fifth race. Peter Brant and Bob LaPenta-owned 2-year-old colt is by Into Mischief. Leave the fireworks at home, people.

Esperanto, sixth race. If Don Alberto Stable's 2-year-old colt wins his debut, it's doughboys (though they've been rebranded as Oboys) for everyone at Esperanto on Caroline Street – home of "great food fast and fresh since 1995."

Sweet Sneak, 12th race. Jim and Susan Hill's 3-year-old filly is by Candy Ride out of Stealthy.

WORTH REPEATING

"We're trying to do what Shine Again did and win it back-to-back. Allen Jerkens did it with her and I'd love to have a filly do something that the Chief did."

Trainer Carlos Martin, who sends out Come Dancing in today's Ballerina. Shine Again won it in 2001 and 2002 for Jerkens, who also won it in 1995 with Classy Mirage

Tracey Wilkes to her husband Ian, who was running expected favorite Elusive Ruler in Thursday's ninth race: "They can get beat, too. It's the Graveyard of Champions."

Ian Wilkes: "Thank God I'm not a champion." (Gentle Ruler finished fourth at 9-10 odds)

"I didn't realize how far back it went. I told him, 'if we run out of power over here I'm going to need a ride back to the barn. I'll never make it back.'"

Trainer Mike Trombetta, riding to Clare Court with his son and The Special's Michael Jr.

"Aye yai yai. Young man's game, Tom."

Exercise rider Rob Massey pulling one up in front of The Special's Tom Law on the far turn Friday morning

"We're going down to the Park Avenue stall that we had designed for her."

Trainer Carlos Martin, showing off defending Ballerina Handicap winner Come Dancing in her special stall with part of the frame cut out to accommodate her height

"Eerie – but a great view. Going to head to Shake Shack for some normalcy!"

The Special's Paul Halloran, working in the temporary media center in the Turf Terrace Friday afternoon

"My wife, she's the smart one around here."

Owner Michael Lund Petersen, about who named Test favorite Gamine. The name means an attractively boyish girl. Nice job, Charlene.

"A mile into it she's like . . . 'Game on bitches.'"

Exercise rider Anne Sinchak, about the stamina of Waya favorite Mrs. Sippy

"It's more like listed."

The Special's Tom Law, on his (not) Grade 1 couch

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

A Mintastrophe. Ny Traffic fumbles the handoff during a break at the Saffie Joseph Jr. barn.

The Chief

"I remember Swoon's Son. He's not in the 100 Best horses, that's a shame. He was a better horse than Slew o' Gold who's in there. In those days they just ran in every stake, if it happened to be on the grass, they ran on the grass. It was incredible. And he was a pretty good stallion. One of the first horses I ever had was out of a Swoon's Son mare. The guy who trained him, Lex Wilson, wasn't he a jump rider? He won \$900,000 – that's \$5 million nowadays. All those races were \$25,000, they'd be at least \$200,000 now."

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



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WORTH REPEATING

"You just get fortunate to win a race let alone having a day like Saturday. You sort of dream of stuff like that. First Saratoga win, first Grade 1 win, all of it."

Trainer Jack Siston, on Vexatious winning the Grade 1 Personal Ensign last week

"You guys can relate to this, just give me the news. Straight up. I don't care if it's bad, just give me the news."

Trainer David Donk

"Still trying to get used to the fact that this is Travers Week. My stretch of attending stopped at 29 consecutive years. Going to miss watching the replays of previous Travers on a backstretch TV while enjoying a breakfast sandwich. The Holy Bull Travers is still my favorite, the field could have gone around again and he wasn't going to lose. Happy to see Terry Hill returned for another year, a role model for the senior crowd."

Longtime reader Tom Biondi

"Now I see why Aidan O'Brien does so well with them. He's the first one I've had."

Trainer Ian Wilkes watching 2-year-old Galileo colt Modern Science, second here Aug. 1, train Wednesday morning

WHICH WHITNEY?

We're a fine one to comment on getting facts straight, but sharp-eyed reader Steve Price sent in this from the past: In the musical Guys and Dolls, Nathan Detroit promises Miss Adelaide a future together. "Adelaide, baby! Don't ever do that to me again! I can't stand it. We'll get married. We'll have a home, and a little white house with a green fence – like the Whitney colors."

We haven't exhausted all the Whitney silks but we see light blue, white sash, brown cap (Harry Payne Whitney); eton blue, brown cap (C.V. Whitney and Marylou Whitney); flamingo pink, white sleeves with black stripes, white cap (Jock Whitney's Greentree Stable and his father Payne Whitney); we're sure there are more but we've yet to find green and white. Adelaide, baby!

POSTCARD TO SARATOGA

It's hard to imagine the sales grounds on East and Madison Avenues are quiet today. Normally, the energy and excitement in the air is palpable. The finest yearlings in the world combined with the finest racing in the world is an unbeatable combination.

This year has forced us all to adapt. However, we can still celebrate the Travers today featuring Tiz The Law, a New York-bred racing for the Barclay Tagg/Sackatoga Stables team. The brilliant filly, Gamine, makes her first appearance at Saratoga in the Test (shameful plug – both Tiz The Law and Gamine are Fasig-Tipton sales graduates). Top fillies and mares from both the West Coast and East Coast clash in the Ballerina. And who knows what emerging superstars we might see in the 2-year-old races this afternoon?

This year won't dampen my love or enthusiasm for Saratoga – in fact it will grow even stronger. As much as I miss not being there, I know 2021 will bring renewed interest and renewed enthusiasm for the special place and the special horses we all love so much.

– **Boyd Browning Jr., Fasig-Tipton CEO and president**

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SUMMER READING

Fourth-generation Saratogian Sue Jeffreys provided a couple excerpts from her historical fiction novella, *Lake Lonely*, published by Northshire Bookstore's Shires Press for release this month. Order one at northshire.com/book/9781605715001

Prologue: Down the well-worn path rode the dark colored sedan, meandering through the midnight hour. The moon rose high in the sky, illuminating the tops of the pine trees. The road remained blackened as the wheels spun round and round in the muddy sludge. Clickety clop, clickety clop - was the only sound heard for miles around as the headlights barely exposed the trodden way. The inhabitants of the jagged vehicle sat in silence of their thoughts on this Saturday evening, transfixed on the hypnotic sound of the Studebaker's wheels going round and round. Every so often the bumps and valleys in the dirt road jarred them into the present reality of what their destination was. "Knowing was better than not knowing," rang repeatedly in Moe's head. Moe and Izzy were strong armed bookends in the backseat on each side of Nicky B, who was slumped over in prayer saying "Hail Marys" over and over again in a low chant that began to get under Izzy's skin. He pointed his elbow into Nicky Bricco's ribcage and pushed hard with a punishing force, hoping he would shut him up. Nicky continued his own conversation of prayer knowing that this was his only hope.

That Day: Saratoga Racetrack Opening Day: August 5, 1946. The women were all in ragout mode, dressed to the nines. It was a super duper day to be seen in your fashion finery.

The men went all out, too. Dapper Dands with hats on their heads and cigars dangling from their mouths. Patrons carried the local newspaper, *The Saratogian*, with the headline in bold letters announcing, "Crowds Jam City for Return of Racing," and *The New York Post* touting the small bettors with their lead story, "Two-Buckers Crowd Spa." It was a glorious day of all kinds of bettors with a boodle of cash in their pockets parading in, returning after a three year hiatus due to WWII rationing and closures.

The town had been in a holding pattern for those three summers and felt the economic loss along with the loss of spirit. Summer Saratoga gatherings were based around this ritual. With

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Everything is good. Barclay's now on lockdown, nobody's allowed around the barn. I can appreciate that. It's getting close to game time."
Sackatoga Stable's Jack Knowlton, on life during Travers Week



its closure, it left a gaping black hole in the social gathering pot. The gear up to August had lost its momentum until this reopening. The light revelry had descended upon the day and the excitement was contagious. Five thousand people stood in line early to get in for the eight-race card that started at 2:30 p.m. on this Monday to enjoy a full afternoon of horsey happenings. Fun was on everyone's mind with a unified conviction, looking to take part in this celebration that brought in more than fifteen-thousand people on the track grounds. Opening day was back to stay. The people needed this summer venue because it was a ritual that was etched into their souls. Without it, they didn't feel the same. They felt out of sorts. The magic was missing. Not to mention the economic impact it had. There was no doubt that it felt normal to be back again together at this unified gathering.

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with Todd Pletcher

Can it be possible for Todd Pletcher to be quietly having a good meet? The 13-time champion at Saratoga has won 14 races in 17 days of racing, placing him in second behind the surprising leader, Christophe Clement, and the surprising third-place, Mike Maker and fourth-place Chad Brown.

"We've had a pretty good start to it. Honestly, a little better start than I anticipated," Pletcher said. "Normally I've always said our success at Saratoga is dependent on how our 2-year-olds run and I came into this meet knowing we had a lot of 2-year-olds that are 30 days behind schedule."

Thirty days behind schedule? For 2020, that's right on time.

"Mainly due to the pandemic and when Saratoga opened for training, the delay of a lot of horses coming in, the delay of the sales. They had the one sale in March, but no Gulfstream sale, no OBS April, no April Keeneland," Pletcher said. "A lot of the horses purchased at OBS and Timonium, we got some of them in but they're not as far along as they would have normally been. The combination of those factors put you at least a month behind, which is a long time for a 2-year-old, when you're trying to get one ready for Saratoga."

Pletcher rolled through his training chart with The Special's Sean Clancy this week.

Fort Worth: New York-bred owned by Bass Racing returned for his first race since April, 2019, winning from the outside post Aug. 2. "We thought that was definitely a good possibility, he's been a horse who has always trained really well and we got a good strong series of works into him. We felt like we had him fit, if anything, I was a little worried about 6 furlongs possibly being too sharp. He drew an outside post and he broke as sharply as he did, I was pretty confident that he had done enough in his training to get the job done. I was very pleased with the way he did it and the way he came back. Off that long of a layoff and still having another New York-bred condition, we'll probably go that route."

Moretti: Seasoned router won the Birdstone Stakes Sunday. "The next step will be interesting. We'll have a couple of conversations about that one. We could back him up to a mile and a quarter and try the Woodward again, see how he steps



up against that type of competition. There is on September 1, the mile and a half race at Churchill, it's only (\$115,000), not graded. The other thing we kicked around at times was the possibility of trying him on the grass, we might even keep an eye on the Sword Dancer. The type of opportunities to run at a mile and three eighths plus on the dirt are just not that plentiful so we have to fill the gaps."

Eve Of War: Treadway Stable's homebred returned to the main track to finish third in the Grade 3 Monmouth Oaks Aug. 1. "She was parked wide on both turns, I was happy to see her fight it out and get third and earn some graded black type. She's been a little bit of a frustrating horse for the barn because if you watch her train, you would feel like she's certainly capable of winning graded stakes on dirt and turf but we haven't been able to accomplish that yet, we're still trying to figure that out."

Winfromwithin: Owned by Jim Bakke and ridden by John Velazquez, the 2-year-old finished second in his debut at Belmont and came back to finish fourth at Saratoga Aug. 1. "His first start was good, his second start was OK. Johnny came back and said he was spinning his wheels a little bit, that he gave him a turf feel. If you look at the bottom side of his pedigree, he's got some turf there. We'll probably give him a turf work in the next couple of weeks and I wouldn't be surprised if we end up making a start around two turns on the turf here toward the end of the meet."

En Wye Cee: Owned and bred by Waterford Stable, the 4-year-old son of Declaration Of War returned with a late-running third in his turf debut at Saratoga Aug. 1. "I thought it was an excellent effort, a little bit frustrating that he ran out of real

Susie Raisher.
**Todd Pletcher's barn
started quickly at Saratoga.**

estate. He ran a very strong closing quarter mile but just couldn't get there. It confirmed what we were thinking that he would take a step forward on the grass. He's a horse who is capable of running anywhere from a mile to a mile and a quarter so it gives us a lot of options. I don't know if we'll be aggressive and look at a stake or come back in the two other than and go from there. The pace didn't really develop, it looked on paper that Hidden Scroll and Dream Friend were going to set a fast pace and that's what we talked about in the paddock. Jose (Ortiz) said the doors opened and he saw Hidden Scroll go, he saw Dream Friend go, he said his horse was pretty settled so he dropped him out the back and then all of a sudden Dream Friend takes back and now they're crawling up front. The idea was right but sometimes you don't always know what everybody else is going to do in the race."

Ima Pharoah: Charles Fipke homebred snapped a four-seconds-in-four-starts skein with a win going 7 furlongs at Saratoga Aug. 1. "It was nice to see him get the job done. I was trying to think of how many horses we've had over the years who finished second in their first four starts. It was a good setup, I do think the blinkers helped a little bit which Irad (Ortiz) suggested, it was a good solid effort. The horse has a little bit more talent than we've seen in his first four starts, hopefully this was him figuring out how to polish off the job."

Prairie Wings: Well here's one for the 4-for-4 question. Shadwell's daughter of Tapit made it four starts and four seconds when making her turf debut going 1 3/8 miles here. "That was a tough beat to lead almost the whole way and get nailed on the wire. She confirmed what we thought, that she would like the turf. Hopefully the next time is the charm for her."

Farmington Road: Road tripper. Owned by Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and breeder Chrysalis Stable, 3-year-old son of Quality Road has to be the only horse in history to run in the Belmont Stakes and win an allowance at Colonial Downs in his next start. "I thought he took to the turf pretty well, a big drop in class so he was expected to win. It just looked like he was happier on that surface, had some adversity to overcome, found a turn of foot late. We'll probably look at going back for the Virginia Derby. Maybe he's found his home on the grass."

Largent: Virginia-bred son of Into Mischief returned from a short respite to take the Edward Evans Stakes at Colonial Downs, improving his record to 4-for-6 for Twin Creeks Racing and Eclipse. "Nice horse. Doesn't need to run against Virginia-breds to be successful but we just felt like it was a good

Continued On Page 7

Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 6

opportunity for him. He hadn't run in a little while, glad to see him go over there and enjoy the surface and loved the way he finished. There's another Virginia-bred race that we'll probably look at going a mile and an eighth. He's been a very consistent horse, shows up and runs hard every time."

Valiance: The graduate of the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale in 2017 began a 3-for-3 raid at Colonial, earning a nose win in a \$54,000 allowance after three consecutive stakes starts for Eclipse and CHC Inc. "It was one of those things, it started off because we were taking Largent there and Aron Wellman said, 'What do you think about looking at these two races with Farmington Road and Valiance?' As a trainer, you always love when an owner is willing to go to a spot you're going to be odds-on in. I was happy to do that and it worked out well. That was as tight a photo as you'll ever be involved in, I really would have settled for a dead heat, but she got her nose down in just the nick of time."

Ashiham: Owned by Shadwell, the son of Tapit is 0-for-5, finishing third at Saratoga July 29. "He's been a little bit of a frustrating horse. There's more talent there than we've been able to get from him. He's got a little bit of a Tapit mentality. Oftentimes, he's making a mistake during the course of the race that puts him in a bad spot, either, getting away from the gate poorly or not running into a spot when it's there, things like that. It was a decent race the other day, he was continuing to close ground late. Eventually it will come together, sometimes you have to be patient with these Tapits, to give them time to get their mind completely in the game."

Thebigfundamental: The house horse. Seven-year-old gelding finished sixth at Saratoga July 29. "Yeah, I think 515 days off caught up with him. We were looking for a starting point, they ran him off his feet the other day so we'll look to stretch him out next time. Cool old horse."

Gidu: Five-year-old son of Frankel owns four wins and a reputation. Faded to last after opening up a big lead here July 29. "He's really a very frustrating horse and he always has been. He's got a tremendous personality around the barn, he's as kind as any horse you'd ever be around, completely gentle, all class around the barn. Unfortunately, when you put a rider on his back and break him out of the gate, he's completely one dimensional. When you run him long, he looks like he would sprint. Then you sprint him and that's not really what he wants to do. I'm not sure what we're going to do next, he's definitely frustrating. If you could just turn it on the right time and turn it off, but he's got one speed and it's all out."



Tod Marks

Todd Pletcher offers some feedback after a recent win.

Mandate: Winner of a \$40,000 claimer on the turf at Saratoga for Michael Stinson. Paid \$17.80, rare double-digit price for a Pletcher winner. "He was just coming off the same condition, I thought I had him spotted correctly but when I was looking at the odds board, it didn't look like the betting public agreed. He ran a good race, he's found his home on the turf in that 40 to 50 range. He's a nice horse to have in the barn that always shows up and tries hard."

Happy Saver: Wertheimer et Frere homebred son of of Super Saver won a 9-furlong allowance at Saratoga July 26 to run his record to a cool 2-for-2. "Again, a little concerned when you go from one 7-furlong start and stretch out and you're running against older horses. I felt like we had a very good line on him based on him being Dr Post's workmate leading up to Dr Post's Haskell, his ability level and his fitness level. It worked out well, I loved the way he finished. He's got a great demeanor, great personality. I was a little worried in the paddock that he was going to take a nap, he was almost too quiet. That's just his demeanor. That's great when they can behave that way and perform the way he does. Possibly the Jim Dandy (Sept. 5), timing-wise it makes sense. We'll see how all the things work out coming up. It could potentially be a prep for the Preakness."

Halladay: Harrell Ventures' 4-year-old finished fourth behind lone speed Somelikeithot-brown in the Grade 2 Bernard Baruch July 26. "I didn't see any of the coverage but I heard some people were thinking we gave the race away when we rated. The horse is 4 years old, we have spent the last three years training him trying to get him to settle, I felt like we had accomplished that and we don't want to undo it. At that point, I don't think a two-turn race on the turf had had a winner going wire-to-wire. We came away in a perfect stalking trip and

Continued On Page 8

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 7

the horse was relaxed and settled. Hat's off to the winner, they flew home. I guess we could have sent him and set it up for somebody else by running the eventual winner into the ground. The race unfolded the way we hoped it would, I had no beefs about it, we weren't good enough to fly home that day. I would play it the same way if we had to do it all over again. I thought he ran well and he'll come back and run even better next time. The Fourstardave (Aug. 22)."

Midnight Surprise: New York-bred Giant Surprise filly broke her maiden in her debut at Saratoga July 25 for owner/breeder Chevaux Racing. "I was really proud of her. The owners were very patient with her. My expectations coming into the meet were this was a filly that's going to need maiden New York-bred claiming level but she consistently improved. Her works kept getting better and better. I would say coming into this, she is the most improved at the meet. I was really happy for the owners to be rewarded for their patience."

Money Moves: Owned by Robert LaPenta and Bortolazzo Stable, the \$975,000 purchase won his first two starts before finishing second by a neck at Saratoga July 25. "That was a tough beat. One of those situations where you have to be really pleased with how the horse ran, he got pretty sick after his allowance win at Gulfstream. We were looking for a spot to bring him back and unfortunately there wasn't what we considered an ideal option, finally we decided to land on the 9-furlong two-other-than, that's a big move up in class. The one-other-than to the two-other-than is one of the toughest step-ups especially when you're going against older horses, especially



Tod Marks

Irish Front checks out his time after winning July 23.

when you're going a mile and an eighth, especially when you're doing it off the layoff and having missed some time from being sick. It was one of those times when you're disappointed you didn't win but very, very pleased with the horse's effort. It was everything except a win. Another horse who is a possibility for the Jim Dandy."

Irish Front: Waterford Stable's homebred Summer Front colt returned from a long layoff to take a maiden at Saratoga July 23. "Really pleased with his effort. He was a 2-year-old we

liked a lot last year, had some minor physical issues coming out of his debut, just needed some time, it was a long layoff but he came back and it was a good performance. He finished up strong, there's some upside with him. You love to see patience rewarded and you like to see a horse confirm what you were seeing as a 2-year-old. Believing in the horse and having him live up to expectations."

Kitten By The Sea: Two-time winner at Gulfstream Park this winter, Repole filly returned to finish third here July 23. "She's been an interesting one. Mike Repole claimed her with (Jorge) Navarro and then all that went down and we picked her up. As we were getting her ready, she's a filly we wanted to run in a starter race, because we like her and we wanted to protect her. Gulfstream stopped writing starter races so we brought her to New York. Normally New York writes starters for fillies and mares who have started for \$50,000 or less and have not won a race other than maiden or claiming, which they changed to two races. She's already won two races so that option went by the wayside. It took us longer to get to a race and finally we decided to run her in the one other than. She ran well but couldn't quite get there. It was a good effort. Hopefully they're going to write the starter race in book three, which should suit her very well. We've had very good results from the horses we picked up from Navarro, I think we picked up seven or eight. Granted we placed them aggressively, but I think we had four or five winners and most have run well. We didn't notice any major physical issues with any of them or any changes in them once we got them. But we were also mandated that they couldn't run for eight weeks if I remember it correctly, so you have a lot of time to prepare them for when they were going to run."

Continued On Page 10

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LANE'S END

Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 8

Blewitt: Turf experiment yielded a third in the Lubash for the Repole homebred. “We gave him a try on the turf because we anticipated some short field opportunities with the New York-bred older horse turf program. I thought he handled it fine but he’s really more suited to two turns on the dirt. That’s been one of the categories that’s been impacted by the pandemic, those opportunities aren’t as plentiful as they used to be.”

Colonel Liam: \$1.2 million 2-year-old purchase last year improved his record to 2-for-3 with an allowance score at Saratoga for Lawana and Robert Low. “That was a huge effort first time on the grass, again, running against older horses. He really leveled off and kicked home. We worked him on the turf a couple of times with En Wye Cee so we felt like we had a pretty good barometer. He’s a horse who’s always trained pretty well on the dirt, but he seemed to take it to the next level on the grass. We were confident going in that he was going to step up but that was an impressive turf debut. Saratoga Derby (Aug. 15) is the plan.”

Lucifers Lair: The Elkstone Group’s Maryland-bred 2-year-old won her debut at Saratoga July 19. “I thought she was impressive. The filly trained very well, she had been good from the gate, I thought we had a good foundation into her and she was fit and ready. Very pleased with everything she did. The original thought was we might just wait for the Spinaway, but she seems like she bounced out of it so well, we’ll get a breeze into her this week and if that goes according to plan, we’ll probably run in the Adirondack (where she’s entered, Aug. 12). We’ll still have kind of a month back to the Spinaway.”



Tod Marks

Eternal Summer (right) got the barn’s first Saratoga win – via disqualification – on Opening Day.

Current: Owned by Eclipse, LaPenta and Dixiana Farm, the 4-year-old finished sixth in the Grade 1 United Nations July 18 at Monmouth. “He’s sort of a frustrating horse to train. You get the feeling that he loses focus during the race and he’s had some tricky trips. At the same time, he generally shows up and gives an effort, we’ll try an allowance race next time, see if we can get him back in the winner’s circle.”

Dr Post: St. Elias Stable’s colt won the Unbridled Stakes in April, finished second in the Belmont and third in the Haskell. “Very frustrating trip in the Haskell. We had a game plan in place and didn’t do a very good job of executing it. Just got shuffled back too far on a track that you can’t do that on, especially behind modest fractions and especially when the odds-on favorite is the one setting the slow fractions. Despite that and making a wide run, he closed well. He’s better than that

showed. I have high hopes for him, he’s a very talented horse and he’s got a big win in him, hopefully it’s coming sooner rather than later. The plan is to run on September 5, that leaves the Jim Dandy and the Kentucky Derby in play. We’ll see how he trains and continue to assess the landscape of the Derby and go from there.”

Mo Mischief: Sent off favorite at Saratoga July 18, the 2-year-old finished second to impressive first-time starter Momos. “Decent debut, just got outrun that day. He’ll appreciate going a little longer where you don’t have to chase him the whole way.”

Eternal Summer: Won a \$75,000 maiden claimer on the turf through disqualification Opening Day. “We got lucky there. He ran well, but he was second best. We were the beneficiary of a justified disqualification that didn’t involve us. You love to get that first win out of the way, the last thing you want to do is be in a slump at Saratoga. I was happy to get the W but I don’t take any satisfaction of being put up via disqualification. I know how it feels to be on the other side of that.”

Candy Tycoon: Mathis Stable 3-year-old broke his maiden at Gulfstream in January, finished second in the Fountain of Youth, sixth in the Florida Derby, second in an Oaklawn Park allowance before a seventh in the Grade 3 Peter Pan Opening Day. “Solid horse who tries hard every time. The Peter Pan, he stumbled pretty badly and grabbed a quarter and put himself in an impossible situation. We’ve got to regroup and maybe drop down to an allowance race and try again.”

Setting The Mood: Owned by Paul Pompa Jr., the daughter of Lea finished second at Belmont July 9 and has breezed

Continued On Page 12

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 10

twice at Belmont since. “She’s a filly who is still developing. She’s a very big filly who’s still filling out into her frame. I don’t think we’ve seen the best of her yet, she’s a bit one paced and the further she goes the better. She’s versatile. She is one who will come into her own this fall and into her 4-year-old year.”

No Word: Another homebred for Wertheimer et Frere, son of Silent Name won an allowance on the turf at Belmont in July. “He’s also pointing for the Saratoga Derby, he liked the turf course here last year when he broke his maiden. It’s coming up a very competitive race, but I’m hoping his affinity for Saratoga brings him forward another notch.”

Social Paranoia: Won the Poker for the Elkstone Group. No works since. “We had a little setback, he should be coming back sometime in the beginning of September.”

Texas Swing: Owned by Harrell Ventures, the bay colt finished third in the Tampa Bay Derby. He’s breezed five times at Saratoga. “He’s back, hopefully will make an allowance race at the end of the meet. Son of Curlin, should improve all of his 3-year-old year and even more so next year.”

Spice Is Nice: Daughter of Curlin won her debut, finished second in the Davona Dale, fifth in the Gulfstream Park Oaks and won an allowance at Belmont July 3. Breezing at Belmont. “She’s pointing for the Alabama. I was very pleased with her last allowance race. She’s always given us the impression of a true two-turn filly, the distance of the Alabama should be right in her wheelhouse.”

Sweet Melania: Never off the board in seven starts, the daughter of American Pharoah won the Wonder Again July 20. She had her first breeze at Belmont July 24. “She’s pointing for the Lake George (Aug. 28). She ran well off the layoff.”

Thankful. A \$625,000 purchase at the 2018 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale, daughter of American Pharoah finished second in second start at Belmont Park June 18. Two breezes at Saratoga and entered main-track only in Sunday’s fifth. “We entered her for this weekend but the mile and eighth maiden didn’t go. She made a big improvement in her second start. We’re hoping to get a two-turn maiden here. She’s an improving sort.”

Sombeyay. Starlight Stable’s turf stakes winner rarely runs a bad race and recently went through the ring at Fasig Tipton July horses of racing age sale. “Did not get sold. He seems to really relish Gulfstream so we decided to give him a little bit of a break with the idea that we would have him ready to roll for the December meet. They have a nice series of the 7 1/2 and 1-mile turf races that seem to suit him very well.”

Black Magic Woman: Bass Stable homebred finished third in her debut from the rail Thursday. “She trained very well, naturally drew the one hole going seven eighths in her debut. We like her. Half sister to Magnum Moon. Beautiful filly.”

Frosted/Dashing Debby 2-year-old colt: Needs a name, but will get a race soon. “He’s getting pretty close. He’s been training pretty well.”

Gunman: Third in his debut in October, War Front gelding has posted five turf breezes at Saratoga before a start Saturday. “He’s getting ready to make his return this weekend. Typical of a lot of the War Fronts, he’s not a real big horse but seems to like the game and is training well.”

Graceful Princess. Daughter of Tapit and Havre de Grace, won an allowance at Gulfstream in April. “Very talented filly, very pleased with her one start for us. A little bit of a setback but breezed again Monday, hoping to make a race in the final book here. She acts like a graded stakes caliber filly watching her train.”

Tapit/Rags To Riches 2-year-old colt: Unnamed, but breezed three times at Saratoga. “He’s on target for the Belmont 2021 (laughs). He’s doing fine. He’s not one we expect to be an early study but seems to be improving a little bit each week. I don’t think he’ll make his debut here but maybe when we get back to Belmont. Very straightforward, very professional horse.”

Off Topic: Ran hard in the Gazelle, Black-Eyed Susan, CCA Oaks and Alabama last year. Fourth in April at Gulfstream. “She’s pointing at an allowance race next week, still hoping to get the best out of her, she’s another one that we always felt like would improve later on. A big, gangly filly who hopefully puts it all together.”

Mutasaabeg: Shadwell’s 2-year-old son of Into Mischief drew the outside post in a field of seven on Travers Day. “He’s been training pretty smartly.” Asked if he points horses for Travers Day maidens, Pletcher answered succinctly, “No. I’m not that smart.”





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Career Year

Tiz The Law ascends from debut winner to Midsummer Derby



Susie Raisher/NYRA

Tiz The Law and Heather Smullen walk the shedrow after a workout July 25.

BY SEAN CLANCY

One year. Exactly one year.

Barclay Tagg unveiled a first-time starter at Saratoga Aug. 8, 2019. A year later, that first-time starter goes postward as the overwhelming favorite in the Grade 1 Runhappy Travers at Saratoga Race Course. Tiz The Law and jockey Manny Franco break from post six in today's Travers, the feature of a 12-race card. The \$1 million stakes runs at 6:15 p.m.

Partly because of pandemic and mostly because of performance, no horse has ever had a year in racing like Tiz The Law.

Sackatoga Stable's New York-bred son of Constitution won that Saratoga debut and the Grade 1 Champagne at Belmont Park two months later. With an Eclipse Award on the line, Tiz The Law suffered his only blemish with a telephone-booth

TRAVERS STAKES PREVIEW

trip in the Grade 2 Kentucky Jockey Club to finish his juvenile season. He opened his 3-year-old season with a facile score in the Grade 3 Holy Bull and came right back to add the Grade 1 Florida Derby. Then things went awry, not with the once-beaten, free-running colt but with the world.

"How would you like to have the favorite for the Kentucky Derby. . ?" Tagg asked back in March.

The Kentucky Derby was postponed until September, the Preakness was rescheduled for October, the Grade 1 Belmont Stakes went into hiding before reemerging as a shortened version of the first leg of the Triple Crown June 20. All the while, Tiz The Law kept breezing, 10 times in all, before clicking off the Belmont, like a Monday morning crossword. Now, he tries to add the Travers to a 365-

day odyssey, in the middle of the most unorthodox attempt at a Triple Crown.

What a year.

Well, it actually began when Tagg and partner/assistant Robin Smullen fell for the colt at the Fasig-Tipton New York-bred sale 362 days before that debut.

"I thought he was the best-looking New York-bred horse I'd ever seen," said Tagg, trainer of one of the best New York-breds of all time in Funny Cide. "When you look at the big white face, you think Hereford, but I couldn't fault him. I kept looking at him and looking at him and looking at him. He looks like a little chunk but when you really look at him, he stands over a lot of ground, he's got great bone, great strength. Two white-rimmed eyes, that stops me, but you couldn't turn down the

Continued On Page 15

Traversers —

■ Continued from page 14

rest of his body.”

Bred by Twin Creeks Farm and consigned by Sequel New York, Tiz The Law walked in as the 10th horse on the opening-night session. He walked out as Funny Cide’s heir apparent.

“That’s our go-to sale given the budget we typically work with. We come up with a list, we had two fillies, so we said we’d really like to get a colt. From that list, there were 30, 40 horses that fit Barclay’s criteria,” Sackatoga’s Jack Knowlton said. “The biggest thing we’re looking for is on the dam side, dams who are stakes winners or the family are stakes winners. Once we see that, they go take a look and winnow it down and we typically end up with a handful, four, five, six horses. We put a price range on which we think is reasonable and affordable from my standpoint and then we do the sale, 110 was probably the last bid. I think we had him pegged at 100, fortunately we went that extra 10 thousand.”

Sent to Tony Everard, part of the Funny Cide team, Tiz The Law arrived with Tagg in the spring and never missed a beat before his unveiling in that New York-bred maiden going 6 ½ furlongs.

A Tagg first-time starter at Saratoga on Aug. 8? Tiz The Law rekindled the adage to pay attention when old-school trainers play a new lesson.



Tiz The Law wins his debut at Saratoga last summer.

Long known for turf horses and older horses, Tagg proved yet again that when a horse is ready, the trainer is ready. Under Junior Alvarado, Tiz The Law showed what would become customary with a resolute cadence and a devastating finish to trounce seven state-bred foes.

Tiz The Law surprised Tagg. Not by his ability but by his readiness.

“We didn’t expect him to run like he ran. We thought he was doing good, but we didn’t know he

was that good. He never got out of a hack canter. Junior never had to ask him,” Tagg said 20 days after the win. “He got a little bit of a shin, he probably could have run in the Hopeful but there’s too many other things to look forward to, I put a blister on it, two days after he ran. There’s a New York-bred race on the 20th, we might make that.”

They didn’t make that. They made it way bigger.

Tagg and Knowlton kicked around options and wound up landing on the Grade 1 Champagne at Belmont Park Oct. 5.

“Barclay and I went back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, agonizing, can you really aim as high as the Grade 1 Champagne, the second best 2-year-old race in the country behind the Breeders’ Cup?” Knowlton said. “The more we talked about it and the more we looked at who was out there, finally, I said to Barclay, ‘The way he ran in Saratoga, the number he got, the way he did it, there doesn’t seem to be any distance limitations.’ We decided to take a shot. Sometimes you get lucky and we did.”

Alvarado had a commitment on Saratoga Special winner Green Light Go so Tagg pegged Franco, who has been aboard ever since. Tiz The Law stumbled and stuttered and pounced, skipping to a 4-length win.

“Despite some anxious moments, the horse showed that he’s good enough to overcome adversity,” Knowlton said.

Knowlton and Tagg decided to skip the Breeders’ Cup and aim at a two-turn race at Churchill

Continued On Page 16

TRAFFIC on the TRAIL

Derby contenders	Ragozin
NY TRAFFIC	4
Honor A.P.	4 ½
Tiz the Law	4 ¾
Authentic	5 ½
Art Collector	5 ½

CROSS TRAFFIC

SPENDTHRIFT

Travers —

■ Continued from page 15

Downs (remember the Derby was coming up in May). For Knowlton, it was an easy choice.

“We wanted to get a race in Kentucky,” Knowlton said. “We didn’t want to go to the Breeders’ Cup, we didn’t do it with Funny Cide, we didn’t think that was the best path to get to where we both want to get, the first Saturday in May at Churchill Downs.”

Franco rated Tiz The Law early and the blocks started building like a late level of Tetris. They wound up third, beaten three-quarters of a length. The Eclipse Award defaulted to Breeders’ Cup winner Storm The Court.

“Unfortunately, it turned out to be a terrible race day, the track was a sea of slop and he got stuck down inside,” Knowlton said. “He got beat. He only got beat three-quarters of a length, we knew that wasn’t the horse we had. It’s one of those you just draw a line through and that’s what we did.”

From there, it’s been winning lines. Freshened and shipped to Florida,



Tod Marks

Third in the Belmont Stakes, Max Player rates a threat in the Travers.

Tiz The Law returned with an easy win against six rivals in the Holy Bull at 1 1/16 miles. The plan was going to plan.

“He’s very sensible with his training, he’ll go any speed you want to go or do anything you want him to do, he’s a cool cat,” Tagg said. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen a horse exactly like him. I’ve seen some good hors-

es in my time, but he’s just kind of a phenomenon. He’s a good-looking horse but he doesn’t look like American Pharoah or one of those horses, he just looks like a horse and he just does whatever you ask him. He never takes a deep breath.”

Two months later, Tiz The Law secured his second Grade 1 stakes score in the 9-furlong Florida Derby. Deep

breath? Barely an exhale as he rolled to a 4 1/4-length win over Shivarree and Ete Indien.

“Just galloped around there, sat third and went on and won the race, came back and wouldn’t have taken a deep breath,” Tagg said. “It’s amazing, amazing. It’s all put in there some way and works out.”

The Florida Derby should have set him up perfectly for the Kentucky Derby. But, alas, this is 2020. Like everyone, Tagg adjusted to the shut-down, simply putting Tiz The Law on a once-a-week breeze schedule until a road map returned. The Belmont Stakes, shortened to 1 1/8 miles and rescheduled to June 20, became the first destination.

“We didn’t know one day to the next what was going to happen, all in all, everything went fine. We just kept him on a schedule, some people said, ‘Why don’t you rest him?’ What are you going to rest him for? He’s a big, strong horse, he likes to do something,” Tagg said. “We did pretty much the same thing with Funny Cide, work him once a week and wait for the new race. They’re racehorses.

Continued On Page 18

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Travers —

■ Continued from page 16

You've got to do something with him, he was born and bred to breeze, one way or another. He absorbs it all, he's very, very good, he likes to train, he likes everything he does."

Tiz The Law knocked off the Belmont Stakes with his typical nonchalance, settling in third before cruising to a 3 3/4-length win over Dr Post and Max Player. In an uncertain time, Tiz The Law has become a certainty, winning his third stakes this year by a combined 11 lengths.

And as for the Travers, it's been paint by numbers so far.

Tiz The Law returned to the work tab with an easy half-mile breeze in :50.06 at Belmont, 10 days after the Belmont Stakes. He followed that move with a 5-furlong jaunt in 1:01.10 a week later. Moved to Saratoga, Tiz The Law began to rev it up with a 5-furlong bullet in :59.63 July 18, another one in 1:00.48 July 25 and a third ripper in :59.94 Aug. 1.

"He just seems to be coming into this race as good as a horse can go



Tod Marks

First Line tries the Travers after breaking his maiden July 29.

into it. His three works on the track here have all been tremendous. We have a nice post. We have every reason he will be a mile and a quarter horse. Barclay's got all the confidence, he was wanting the Belmont to be a mile and a half so a mile and a quarter I'm not too concerned about," Knowlton said. "He gets a chance to prove it in the Midsummer Derby

before the real Derby. It's weird. It is weird for sure. It's a little daunting having an even-money favorite in the Travers, but I'd rather be there than 15-1. He's just got to go out there and do it. All the signs are that he can and he will."

And that would be a year of signs.

Seven rivals who run the table of experience and credentials line up

against the favorite.

Orlando Noda wheels back First Line from a maiden score over the track July 29. Owned by Noda Brothers, the son of First Samurai attracts David Cohen for his fifth career start and stakes debut. First Line is 30-1 from the rail.

Country Grammer eked out a neck win in the Travers prep, the Peter Pan, July 16. Owned by Paul Pompa Jr., the son of Tonalist pulled a neck win from the fire that day. The meet's leading jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. has the return call. Country Grammer is 6-1 from post two.

Bob Baffert makes the well-worn journey of California upstart to the Travers with second-choice Uncle Chuck. Owned by longtime Baffert clients Mike Pegram, Karl Watson and Paul Weitman, the son of Uncle Mo made his debut in June, trouncing four rivals in a Santa Anita Park maiden going a mile. He came back to wallop three foes in the Grade 3 Los Alamitos Derby July 4. Luis Saez, who flew to California to ride Uncle Chuck in the stakes win, gets the return call at 5-2 from post three.

Continued On Page 19



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Travers —

■ Continued from page 18

Max Player finished 5 1/4 lengths behind Tiz The Law in the rearranged Belmont Stakes for George Hall and SportBLX Thoroughbreds. Trained by Linda Rice, the son of Honor Code won the Grade 3 Withers in February. Joel Rosario rides the 6-1 shot from post four.

Ralph Nicks shoots for the fences with Shivaree. Owned by Fred Brie, the Florida-bred son of Awesome Of Course sports three wins, three seconds and two thirds in a hard-hitting career. He finished second behind Tiz The Law in the Florida Derby back in March but has lost twice since, including an 11th in the Blue Grass at Keeneland July 11. Shivaree, 30-1, breaks from post five for Junior Alvarado.

Caracaro battled Country Grammer for 9 furlongs in the Peter Pan before succumbing by a neck. Owned by Global Thoroughbred and Top Racing and trained by Gustavo Delgado, the son of Uncle Mo crushed maidens at Gulfstream Park in his previous start back in January. Javier Castellano rides the 10-1 shot from post seven.

South Bend joined Bill Mott's barn after a runner-up finish for former owner Sagamore Farm in the Grade 3 Ohio Derby June 27. Now owned by Gary Barber, Wachtel Stable, Peter Deutsch and Pantofel Stable, the son of Algorithms plied his trade on the turf through most of the winter and spring, hitting the board in three stakes at Gulfstream Park. Jose Ortiz rides the 15-1 chance for the first time.



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Off the turn and in command in the Acorn, Gamine shows the way before drawing off to win by 18 3/4 lengths.

BY JOE CLANCY

TEST STAKES PREVIEW

Growing up near Klampenborg Racecourse in Denmark, Michael Lund Petersen saw horses every day – but that’s about as far as it went.

“There were no horses in my life growing up, not in my family,” he said. “We lived on the outskirts of Copenhagen, 25 minutes outside the center of the city. I didn’t grow up in the country or around horses, but the stables were in the neighborhood where I lived and they rode to the racetrack to train. I loved seeing them.”

And thus a seed was planted.

Petersen grew up to become co-founder of Pandora, the now Baltimore-based international jewelry company, and put that childhood interest to work with major Thoroughbred purchases that have included graded stakes winners Mor Spirit, Mucho Gusto and now budding star filly Ga-

mine. The 3-year-old daughter of Into Mischief, purchased at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic’s 2-year-old sale near Petersen’s home in Maryland, headlines today’s Grade 1 Longines Test at Saratoga Race Course. Off a dismantling of six others in the Grade 1 Acorn at Belmont Park June 20, Gamine is 3-5 in a field of six for trainer Bob Baffert and jockey John Velazquez. The \$300,000 Test is the 10th of 12 races on the card with a 5:39 p.m. post time.

Like any other racing fan, Petersen would love to be at Saratoga but will watch from home as Maryland is among the 35 states on New York’s mandatory 14-day quarantine list due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“It’s just a shame that it has to happen in times like this,” Petersen said. “It is so rare you get to

win Grade 1 races with a big crowd in the stands, and then you sit at home it’s not the same. It’s the same for the horse and you feel good about it, but it’s different. I’m not going to complain, there are a lot of people worse than me in all of this, but I will miss it. I would like to be in Saratoga cheering for our horse.”

Petersen has done plenty of cheering since being introduced to Baffert at Santa Anita Park by a mutual friend in 2013. Petersen’s first racehorse, Cat Burglar, won five times and placed in graded stakes. Breeders’ Cup starter One Lucky Dane followed, as did Grade 1 winner Mor Spirit, multiple Grade 3 winner Mucho Gusto (who won a Grade 1 after being sold by Petersen) and now Gamine.

It’s a long way from watching Thoroughbreds walk through the neighborhood.

Continued On Page 21

Test —

■ Continued from page 20

"I grew up right next to the race-track in Copenhagen and hung out there every Saturday," he said. "I always loved it. Now I can afford to love it as an owner."

Petersen is now a regular at the Timonium sale, looking at horses with agent Donato Lanni and Baffert. They don't buy many, don't even bid on many, but they typically purchase at the top of the market. Other than some nervous pacing (and cigarette breaks), Petersen lets Lanni and Baffert do the work.

"No, no, no, no, no," he said when asked if he offers opinions on the horses. "Just because I was pretty good at selling jewelry does not mean I can pick out a horse. I ran my business by surrounding myself with people who are smarter than me and I do the same thing with racehorses."

Watching Lanni and Baffert evaluate horses is a big part of the ownership adventure for Petersen, who lives on a horse farm in Butler but leaves the riding to his wife Charlene and their children Axel and Olivia.

"To hear their conversations, to watch them go through it and look at horses is very special," Petersen said. "They are buying expensive horses, but there are other expensive horses they don't even look at. A lot of other people liked Gamine since I paid so much money for her, but she is the one we bought."

The sales-topper (and Timonium record) at \$1.8 million, Gamine was bred in Kentucky by Grace Thoroughbred Holdings and sold for \$220,000 at Keeneland September. Bobby Dodd and Brad Grady took her to Timonium the next year, and the daughter of Into Mischief wound up on every radar screen. From the back ring, Lanni and Petersen (with Baffert on the phone) outbid every other big player at Timonium — not that it was easy.

"Spending \$1.8 million is stressful as hell, but you know if you want to be in it you've got to step up to the plate once in a while," Petersen said while pacing the parking lot outside the pavilion afterward.

Unraced at 2, Gamine hit home runs in her first three at-bats — a March 7 maiden win at Santa Anita (by 6 ¼ lengths at 1-9), a May 2 allowance at Oaklawn Park (over future Grade 1 winner Speech) and the Acorn moon shot. She won that Grade 1 by 18 ¾ lengths in a stakes record 1:32.55 for a mile.

Gamine was subsequently disqualified from the Oaklawn win after testing over the limit for lidocaine, a therapeutic medication that carries a 72-hour withdrawal time. Baffert appealed on the grounds of environmental contamination from a pain patch worn by an employee. The ruling cost Gamine her perfect record, but the owner tries to look past it.

"It is annoying when I look up Gamine once in a while and read about

Continued On Page 22



Chris Crestik/Eclipse Sportswire

Venetian Harbor looks like the main threat to Gamine in the Test.

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Test —

■ Continued from page 21

the thing at Oaklawn,” Petersen said. “It was an honest mistake. I feel so bad for Bob and (assistant) Jimmy Barnes and everyone with the horse. It should be a small thing, not a big thing.”

The disqualification did little to smudge Gamine’s reputation, which was stellar even in her early days with the Hall of Fame trainer.

“Bob told me from the start, ‘This is a superstar, Michael,’ and he never told me any of my other horses were that good,” Petersen said. “He said that really early. He doesn’t need to promise me anything. I don’t need to hear things like that just to hear them.”

Gamine lived up to it in the Acorn, where she broke from the inside post and went to the front. Velazquez let her lope – it looked like a lope – through fractions of :22.48 and :45.28 while a length or so clear. By the time she passed three-quarters in 1:09.33, the jockey had peeked under his arm for competition once on the turn. In the stretch, he looked three more times as Gamine pulled away.

“That was crazy to watch, we had no clue she could do that,” Petersen said. “Velazquez kept looking. He didn’t understand he was that far in front of them. It must be like driving a Range Rover. If you drive 80 on the highway, you say ‘Oh my gosh, 80? It felt like 50.’ It comes so easily for her,



Tod Marks

Gamine coasts to the finish in the Acorn.

it’s effortless. I’m just enjoying the ride for as long as it lasts.”

Beyond the favorite, the Test drew another classy California-based runner in Venetian Harbor. Trained by Richard Baltas for Ciaglia Racing, Highland Yard, River Oak Farm and Dominic Savides, she won a Santa Anita maiden late last year by 10 ¾ lengths, then opened 2020 with a 9 ¼-length romp in the Grade 2 Las Virgenes. She’s been second twice since, to Swiss Skydiver in the Grade 3 Fantasy at Oaklawn Park and to Speech in the

Grade 1 Ashland at Keeneland. The daughter of Munnings, 8-5 on the morning line, breaks just to Gamine’s outside in post six for Joel Rosario.

Trainer Steve Asmussen sends out Wicked Whisper, who won her debut at Saratoga last summer and followed with a Grade 1 score in the Frizette for owners Alex and JoAnn Lieblong. The Liam’s Map filly opened 2020 with a fourth in the Grade 3 Beaumont at Keeneland in July. Ricardo Santana rides at 20-1 from post four. Mrs. Danvers (8-1, post three, Jose Ortiz) makes her stakes debut for Allen Stable and trainer Shug McGaughey. The homebred daughter of Tapit won a Saratoga maiden last summer and has been second in two allowance races against older horses this year – one to subsequent Shine Again Stakes winner Indian Pride.

Perfect Alibi won two graded stakes at Saratoga last summer and was fourth in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies for Tracy Farmer and trainer Mark Casse. The daughter of Sky Mesa opened 2020 with a well-beaten fifth behind Gamine in the Acorn, but tries again. Tyler Gaffalione rides at 20-1 from post two. Up In Smoke leads the squad in victories with four, all this year, for trainer George Weaver and owners Black Type Thoroughbreds and R. A. Hill Stable. The Florida-bred daughter of The Big Beast won three in a row at Gulfstream Park to start her career, then was fourth going 1 1/16 miles in the Hollywood Wildcat before going back to sprints and winning the Game Face Stakes at Gulfstream in June. She was fourth in Belmont’s Victory Ride July 4. Luis Saez rides from the inside post at 12-1.



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Familiar Digs

Beattie hopes for similar Grade 1 luck with Victim Of Love



NYRA Photo

Victim Of Love runs through the rain to upset the Vagrancy at Belmont Park in June.

BY TOM LAW

Todd and Amanda Beattie rolled into Saratoga Springs Monday, the filly Victim Of Love in tow traveling a day earlier than originally planned to avoid the rain from Tropical Storm Isaias, and were immediately greeted with a positive omen.

"Back in the same stall," Todd Beattie said while Victim Of Love trained Thursday in the designated late-morning period for out-of-town shippers.

The stall in the Clark Memorial Stakes Barn where the 4-year-old daughter of Speightstown lived for five days and nights leading up to today's Grade 1 Ballerina Handicap also housed the Beattie-trained Fabulous Strike leading up to his victory in the Grade 1 Alfred G. Vanderbilt in 2009.

"I can remember it vividly," Beattie said of the spot toward the back corner of private oasis that is

BALLERINA STAKES PREVIEW

the stakes barn. "I was here a few weeks with him. Great memories."

Beattie hopes to make more in the \$300,000 Ballerina, where Victim Of Love takes on 2019 Ballerina winner Come Dancing, 2019 Kentucky Oaks winner Serengeti Empress, multiple Grade 1 winner Bellafina and three others to kick off the stakes action on the Travers Day card. The 7-furlong Ballerina goes as the seventh of 12 races today with a post time of 3:42 p.m.

Beattie gave a leg up to his wife Thursday morning, watched her and Friday's Saratoga Special runner-up Therideofalifetime for trainer Ignacio Correas IV take several turns of the enclosed shedrow and liked what he saw when the filly galloped on

Saratoga's main track a few minutes later.

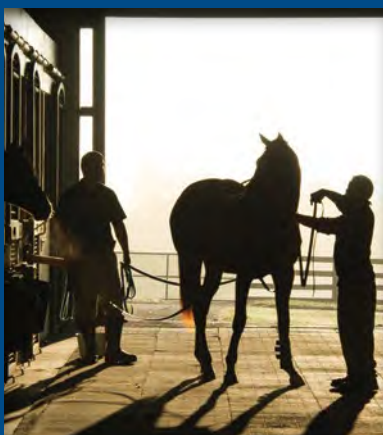
"She won't be coming short of confidence, she's pretty confident in what she's doing," Beattie said. "She's real bold and real forward."

Bettors weren't overly confident in Victim Of Love in her last start, against Come Dancing in the Grade 3 Vagrancy Handicap at Belmont Park June 27. The Penn National-based filly went off at 27-1, the longest of six in the field for the 6 1/2-furlong stakes, and she upset Come Dancing by 1 3/4 lengths under Jose Lezcano.

Victim Of Love might not be 27-1 in the Ballerina but she's 15-1 and again the biggest price in the group with Bellafina at 9-5, Serengeti Empress at 5-2 and Come Dancing at 3-1 on the morning line.

Victim Of Love let the other three equine and the

Continued On Page 24



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Ballerina —

■ Continued from page 23

human occupants of the Stakes Barn know she was there Thursday. Her connections were not surprised.

"She's usually one of the first ones to go out," Amanda Beattie said. "Every time we'd walk near her with the tack she'd let us know. She's a very vocal filly anyway. We call her the barn greeter. Her stall is one of the first ones you walk past when you walk in back home and she nickers at everybody that walks in."

"She's a real sweet filly that way, has a neat personality. From the day we got her she was always like that. We all liked her before we knew how she could run, just because she was just a neat horse to be around. And it helps that she can run. We've been around those that are complete knuckleheads that can run but that are not easy to deal with. She's easy to deal with."

Team Beattie took over the filly's training late last spring when owner Tom Stull's Tommy Town Thoroughbreds transferred her from Henry Dominguez, who trained her out of Los Alamitos Race Course in California and Zia Park and Sunland Park in New Mexico in 2018 and early 2019.

She won two of six for Dominguez, including a small stakes at Sunland, before making the move to Beattie's

barn at Penn National Race Course.

Beattie experimented with her last spring and summer, running her 7 furlongs on dirt, a mile on dirt, synthetic and in an off-the-turf race on the main track before keeping her mostly in sprints late last fall and this winter. Victim Of Love won Laurel Park's What A Summer at 6 1/2 furlongs in mid-January to earn a trip back to Maryland for the Grade 3 Barbara Fritchie at 7 furlongs, where she finished second.

The Vagrancy was her second graded attempt and there she topped not only Come Dancing but multiple graded stakes winner Royal Charlotte and stakes winner Chalon.

"I was feeling her out a little bit, I didn't know exactly what she wanted," Beattie said. "She's a middle-distance horse, 6 1/2, 7, those are real good distances for her."

Come Dancing returns to 7 furlongs for the first time since finishing sixth in last fall's Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint at Santa Anita. She won last year's Ballerina going 7 to improve to 2-for-3 at Saratoga and her connections are optimistic the 6-year-old daughter of Malibu Moon can defend her title.

"We're hoping she's the Come Dancing of the last Ballerina," trainer Carlos Martin said Friday while training wound down on the main track. "I'm cautiously optimistic, but

Continued On Page 25



Tod Marks

Come Dancing smiles for the camera in last year's Ballerina.

Ballerina —

■ Continued from page 24

I like what I've been seeing here the last few weeks she's been training and the works and everything. Everything's been going so smooth."

Come Dancing breezed three times between the Vagrancy and the Ballerina, with regular jockey Javier Castellano aboard. Martin said he purposely slowed the big mare down in her works - :47.89 July 12 at Belmont, 1:00.44 July 21 at Saratoga and 1:00.82 July 31 at Saratoga - instead of her sub 1-minute 5-furlong drills or even her :57.94 move before the Vagrancy.

"We slowed her down a little in the morning," Martin said. "She was getting away from Javier a little bit with those fast works. We trained her a little bit differently and hopefully it will pay off. With a 6-year-old mare and everything she's done I don't think we need to break any more track records in the morning. Let's see what we do in the afternoon again."

Castellano rides Come Dancing from the outside post for Martin and owner Blue Devil Racing Stable.

Martin hopes for some extra speed in the Ballerina and figures to get it with Serengeti Empress, who led most of the way in last year's Grade 1 Test before yielding to eventual champion female sprinter Covfefe, and others in the mix.

Joel Politi's Serengeti Empress makes her first start around one turn after showing speed in nearly all of her six starts since the Test, including the Breeders' Cup Distaff, Azeri and Fleur de Lis. Luis Saez takes the mount from the rail on the 4-year-old daughter of Alternation for trainer Tom Amoss.

Kaleem Shah's and Coolmore's Bellafina, who ships in from California for trainer Simon Callaghan, looks to break through with her first win away from home. She's won seven of 16 starts but lost when shipping to Churchill Downs for the 2018 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies and 2019 Kentucky Oaks, Parx Racing for the 2019 Cotillion and Oaklawn Park for this year's Carousel. Jose Ortiz takes the mount on Bellafina, a distant third in last year's Test at Saratoga.

"I think Victim Of Love is going to get a little company with Seren-



Tod Marks

Serengeti Empress returns to sprinting.

geti, Cookie Dough and Letruska, it should be a good pace," Martin said. "They won't be going 23-second quarters tomorrow, I'll tell you that."

Arindel's Cookie Dough shortens up after finishing last of 14 in Oaklawn's Grade 1 Apple Blossom - where Serengeti Empress finished 11th and Come Dancing finished 12th - and winning the Grade 3 Royal Delta at Gulfstream in February. John Velazquez rides the 12-1 long-shot for trainer Juan Alvarado.

St. George Stable's Letruska won the Added Elegance Stakes last time out, at the immediate expense of Thursday's Summer Colony winner Nonna Madeline, for Florida-based trainer Fausto Gutierrez. Ricardo Santana Jr. takes the mount on the daughter of Super Saver who is 5-1 on the line.

Shug McGaughey sends out Gainesway Stable's and Andrew Rosen's Pink Sands, 3-length winner of the Grade 2 Inside Information two starts back on the Pegasus World Cup undercard and fifth in the Grade 1 Ogden Phipps at 1 1/16 miles at Belmont June 13. The 5-year-old Tapit mare is 2-for-8 at 7 furlongs and broke her maiden at Saratoga going 6 1/2 furlongs in 2018. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides Pink Sands.



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)

"WIN AND YOU'RE IN BREEDERS' CUP JUVENILE FILLIES DIVISION"

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 Year 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)

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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Dan Bork, Asst. Racing Secretary, Stakes Coordinator

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Rolling River

Already a Saratoga graded winner, Mrs. Sippy makes 2020 debut



Maggie Kimmitt

Mrs. Sippy and Anne Sinchak gallop at Fair Hill Training Center.

BY JOE CLANCY

It takes about three months for water to travel the length of the Mississippi River – from Lake Itasca in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico.

It takes even longer for Mrs. Sippy to get back to the races in 2020. Andrew Stone's 5-year-old mare makes her seasonal debut in today's Grade 3 Waya at Saratoga Race Course. The 1 ½-mile race on the inner turf drew seven entrants including one main-track-only runner, and starts at 5:02 p.m. as the ninth of 12 races on the Travers Day card.

Mrs. Sippy was supposed to have been back weeks ago, but got delayed by the pandemic, a tying-up issue when entered in the Grade 2 New York at Belmont Park in June and a scratch when Delaware Park's Robert G. Dick Memorial came off the turf. In her first race in more than nine months, the

WAYA STAKES PREVIEW

daughter of Blame goes 1 ½ miles while her rivals have all made 2020 starts.

"She's been ready to run for a month or so," trainer Graham Motion said of the 6-5 favorite. "She was in training at Palm Meadows so it's not an issue, fitness. She's been ready to run for a long time."

Motion targeted the June 27 New York as a comeback, but horses who haven't run in six months or more must visit the starting gate in training and Mrs. Sippy tied up after her trip at Fair Hill and was scratched. Stablemate Mean Mary won that turf stakes, as Mrs. Sippy regrouped from the setback – akin to severe muscle cramps in humans – and instead aimed for the July 11 Robert G. Dick

at 1 3/8 miles. After rain in Delaware, the race came off the turf and Motion had to scratch again.

With Mean Mary eyeing the Diana Aug. 23, Mrs. Sippy gets her chance today. Bred by Stone in Kentucky, she began her career in England with trainer David Simcock and won twice including a stakes in France and a Group 3 placing in England. Brought back to the United States last summer, she won the Grade 2 Glens Falls going 1 3/8 miles at Saratoga last summer and was beaten just three-quarters of a length by Sistercharlie in the Grade 1 Flower Bowl at Belmont. Mrs. Sippy finished a well-beaten ninth in the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf at Santa Anita, but Motion figures he has a reason for that.

"She was so impressive when she won the first time at Saratoga and then she ran very well against

Continued On Page 27

Way —

■ Continued from page 26

Sistercharlie,” said the trainer. “The Breeders’ Cup was disappointing, but I have a feeling it came at the end of a long season and that’s always a little difficult when they come over from Europe. At some point that catches up with them.”

Mrs. Sippy had run in May and June in England, traveled to the U.S. and run twice more in five weeks before flying to Santa Anita for the Breeders’ Cup in November.

Planned or not, she’s had plenty of time to recover since – including 13 breezes on the Tapeta all-weather surface at Fair Hill – and breaks from the inside post position for jockey Joel Rosario.

The meet’s third leading jockey with 27 wins through Friday, Rosario takes the reins from exercise rider Anne Sinchak who sounded confident Thursday.

“Riding her this week, she feels like a million bucks,” Sinchak said. “It’s been a bummer that it’s taken so long. She was ready, on point, and just ran into some setbacks. Now she’s back. I love her. She’s got this presence about her. She loves going out and she loves her job. She’s not necessarily a happy horse all the time. She’s a grumpy horse and has given me some bruises, but sometimes it’s the tough ones you love.”

Sinchak’s Saratoga experience goes back to her childhood. She grew up on a Morgan Horse about 50 miles southwest of Saratoga in Fort Plain, rode in horse shows, did 4-H programs and went to Saratoga with her family a few times every summer.

While taking Thoroughbred Management courses at SUNY Cobleskill, she got an “internship” at Saratoga.

“They had a program where we would go and work with different trainers at Saratoga for a day or a couple days,” Sinchak said. “I was placed with Jonathan Sheppard and on my first day they let me get on a horse and jump some straw bales. It was the coolest thing.”

Sinchak also worked for former trainer Dennis Brida and his wife Julia, and eventually turned her connection with Sheppard into a proper internship in Pennsylvania with then farm assistant Jim Bergen for the winter. That turned into a job and Sinchak stayed 10 years. She was there for champions Forever Together and Informed Decision, plus Breeders’ Cup starter Cloudys Knight, graded stakes winners Fantasia and Rainbow View and scores of other stars.

“I learned so much from Jim, Dani Hodsdon and just the whole crew there,” she said. “Just the setup and everything. That was a really good learning experience.”

After a short stint with Arnaud Delacour, Sinchak has been with Mo-

Continued On Page 28



Tod Marks

Fools Gold scores in last year’s Waya, her most recent victory.

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Waya —

■ Continued from page 27

tion for going on six years and is a regular on Mrs. Sippy and others in the barn though she's also become a Reiki practitioner in the last three years.

"Horses are in my blood, and there's always more to do if you look for it," she said of her career in racing. "I'll do something with them forever. Right now, I get to ride without having to pay for the horses. I get paid to do what I love."

Trainer Chad Brown brings two to the Waya led by 2-1 second choice My Sister Nat. The Group 3 winner in France has yet to win in five American tries, but has placed in the Grade 3 Long Island and Grade 2 New York. Jose Ortiz rides the daughter of Acclamation from post four for owner Peter Brant. Wise Racing's Fools Gold completes the Brown double. She won last year's Waya, and was fifth behind Mrs. Sippy in the Glens Falls. The daughter of Medaglia d'Oro opened 2020 with a fifth behind Mean Mary in the Grade 2 New York in June.

Javier Castellano rides from the outside stall at 5-1.

Christophe Clement entered Olympic Games, whose two American starts have been seconds – in the Treasure Coast at Gulfstream Park in June and the River Memories at Belmont in July. Owned by Martin Schwartz, the 4-year-old filly won her first three in her native France last year. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides from post five at 4-1.

The streaking combination of Three Diamonds Farm and trainer Mike Maker show up with Quiet Dignity, a recent purchase from Schwartz's stable at the Fasig-Tipton horses of racing age sale. The 4-year-old daughter of Kitten's Joy won once in France in 2018, and finished third in an allowance at Indiana Grand for trainer Brad Cox June 16. Tyler Gafalione rides from post three at 20-1. Mark Anderson's Beau Belle (Manny Franco, 10-1) breaks from post two and exits a third in the River Memories for trainer Tom Albertrani. The daughter of Giant's Causeway won twice going 1 3/16 miles on the turf at Saratoga last summer.

Trainer Todd Pletcher entered stakes winner Another Broad as a main-track only for Farfellow Farm.



Tod Marks

Beau Belle seeks her third Saratoga turf win for trainer Tom Albertrani.

One Horse

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



SEPTEMBER

SUN. 13 - FRI. 25

THOUSAND WORDS, 2018

Ned Toffey, Albaugh Family & Spendthrift Farm

"He was just a really, really nice yearling. He was up on the hill with Brookdale. Just a gorgeous horse, one of those who turned out to be a nice horse too. He's one of those that, when you looked at him, it was just easy. We kept going back to look at him and I'm sure they wondered why we kept coming back. Did we love him that much? A million dollars later . . . we had him and he'll get his shot in the Derby.

"For us, one of the added challenges when we're buying colts is we are thinking about that horse ending up in the stud barn. Does he, from a pedigree standpoint, work? We'll give on that, we're there for an athlete first and foremost and we err on the side of stretching on the pedigree to find an athlete, but it's always in the back of our minds

"He was just a very easy horse to look at and as I go through a sale I'm surprised at how few I see and have a ta-da moment like that."

Bred by Hardacre Farm in Florida, Thousand Words has won four of seven starts, including the Los Alamitos Futurity, Robert B. Lewis and Shared Belief stakes, and earned \$327,000 for Albaugh and Spendthrift. The Pioneerof The Nile colt aims for the Kentucky Derby Sept. 5.

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Tall Order

Imprimis makes first start since BC Turf Sprint



Eclipse Sportswire

Imprimis (here winning at Pimlico in 2018) makes his first start since the Breeders' Cup in today's Troy.

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Imprimis has run at nine tracks in three countries, yet when the accomplished 6-year-old enters the starting gate for the today's Grade 3 Troy Stakes at Saratoga Race Course it will mark his first start at the Union Avenue cathedral of racing.

If Imprimis, owned by Breeze Easy LLC and trained by Joe Orseno, is going to log his eighth victory from 14 starts, pad his \$444,548 bankroll and add his second graded stakes win, he will have to do it off a nine-month layoff, having last run in the 2019 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint, where he was a decent sixth.

"He had throat surgery, then he had a setback so they had to go back in and fix it," said Orseno. "He needed a rest anyway. Going back and forth to Ascot really wiped him out."

After Imprimis closed from eighth to win the Grade 2

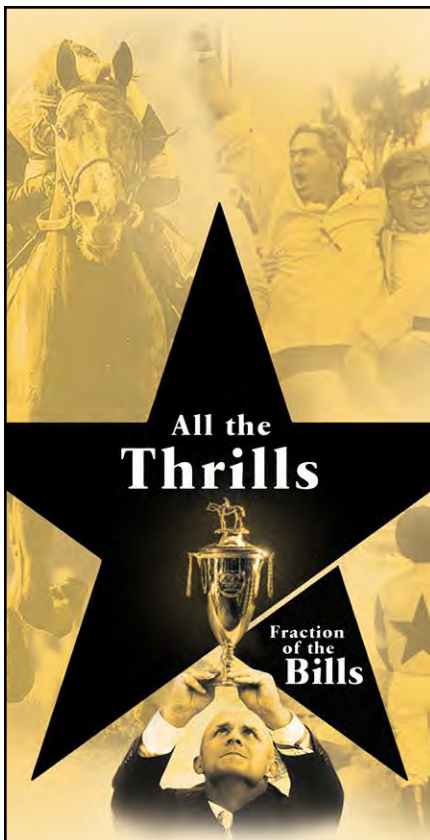
TROY STAKES PREVIEW

Shakertown at Keeneland in April 2019, Breeze Easy partners Mike Hall and Sam Ross decided to send him to the Royal Ascot meeting for the Group 1 King's Stand Stakes, a year after the owners won the Norfolk at Ascot with Shang Shang Shang. Ridden by Frankie Dettori, Imprimis ran sixth, beaten by 4 3/4 lengths.

"He was looking for a turn and there was no turn," Orseno said of the 5-furlong race run on the straight. "He ran well and it was a great experience."

The overseas trip did seem to take its toll, as he was fourth in the Grade 3 Turf Sprint at Kentucky Downs and third in the Grade 2 Woodford at Keeneland after returning, but Orseno felt he had an excuse in both.

Continued On Page 31



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Troy —

■ Continued from page 30

“He had a horrendous trip, trapped inside, at Kentucky Downs and he had nowhere to go at Keeneland,” said Orseno, who is approaching 1,900 wins in his 44-year career, including the Preakness and two Breeders’ Cup races in 2000. “He ran his race in the Breeders’ Cup, but he probably didn’t have much left in the tank.”

Breeze Easy has only been in racing for four years, but Hall and Ross have already experienced the ups and downs of the sport. They won the 2019 Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint with Four Wheel Drive, three years after shelling out a sale-topping \$1.2 million at a 2-year-olds in training sale for a Broken Vow colt that, according to Hall, “never worked out.”

“We’re not very smart,” Hall quipped when asked what prompted him and Ross to jump into the ownership pool. “That’s the best thing I can tell you.”

With more than 100 horses, from weanlings to broodmares, they would seem to be in it for the long haul.

“Sam and I have had several different businesses together,” said Hall, who owns an oil and gas company in West Virginia. “This is

kind of our hobby. There are a lot of lows in this business and very few highs, but they make you keep going. We enjoy it.”

Imprimis, who shipped in after a long van ride from Gulfstream Park Wednesday and has been in the care of Horacio DePaz in Clare Court, will break from the hedge as the 8-5 morning-line favorite today. He will have to deal with the venerable 9-year-old Pure Sensation (3-1) and Shekky Shebaz, a former Jason Servis trainee who is the 5-2 second choice for the meet’s leading trainer Christophe Clement.

Bill Mott will give a leg up to Joel Rosario on Chewing Gum, while Wayne Potts has American Sailor, who figures to be on or near the lead early for Tyler Gaffalione.

The field also includes a pair of longshots whose trainers say deserve a look.

Bob Ribaudo sends out Pulsate for longtime client Marc Keller and Keith O’Brien runs Lonhtwist for Aiden Devaney’s Corrib Racing.

Pulsate, 4-year-old son of Speightstown who is 15-1 on the morning line with Manny Franco, finished a nose behind the 9-2 Chewing Gun last time out in a 7-furlong optional claimer on the grass at Belmont. Ribaudo hoped to run in a three-other-than allowance last week but it didn’t fill, so he opted for the Troy.

“It was a whisker between Billy Mott’s

Continued On Page 32



Tod Marks

Sixth in the Jaipur, Lonhtwist returns for Keith O’Brien.



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1. **Vexatious:** Vanquished champ in Grade 1 Personal Ensign.
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2. **Improbable:** Beat quality group in Grade 1 Whitney.
3. **Volatile:** Speedster made it look easy in Vanderbilt.
4. **Starship Jubilee:** Four in a row this year, and getting better?
5. **Echo Town:** Big noise in powerhouse Jerkens romp.
6. **Decorated Invader:** He's starting to remind us of someone...
7. **Paris Lights:** Brave effort in the Coaching Club American Oaks.
8. **Indian Pride:** Won a thriller vs. Blamed in Shine Again.
9. **Cross Border:** Two stakes wins at the meet... going for three?
10. **Jackie's Warrior:** Special 2-year-old dominated Special.

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2020 Virginia Horse Racing Schedule

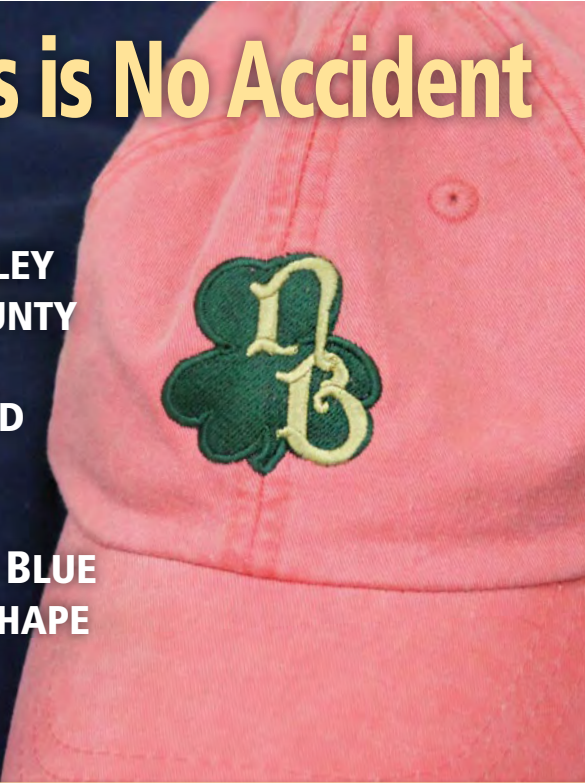
July 27 - September 2: Thoroughbred Racing at Colonial Downs
Sept. 18 - Oct. 17: Harness Racing at Shenandoah Downs
Oct. 4 - Foxfield Fall Races
Oct. 10 - Middleburg Fall Races
Oct. 24 - International Gold Cup Races
Nov. 7 - Montpelier Hunt Races



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Troy —

Continued from page 31

horse and mine and it was my first start this year; he had three or four starts," Ribaud said. "I think we're on the same level as him. Joe's horse, he's vulnerable. He's the best horse in the race class wise. He's had surgeries, one recently, and has had some nice works but you don't know how those surgeries will affect you until you run.

"The good thing for him is he's come out of that hot weather and this weather probably makes him feel great. He's a class act, but it's asking a lot."

O'Brien will ask another big question to Lonhtwist, a son of Lonhro he thinks can answer.

Lonhtwist is 20-1 on the morning line but adding the services of O'Brien's brother-in-law John Velazquez. Lonhtwist comes out of a sixth, beaten 4 lengths with some trouble, in the Grade 1 Jaipur Invitational at Belmont June 20.

"I love the fact that Johnny is on him of course. I've been trying to get him all year. Finally I was able to get him for this race," O'Brien said. "We were a little bit unlucky last time, we did get fouled and it probably cost us fourth, which would have been enormous.

"It's been frustrating with him this year because we haven't been able to find a race that suits him. He's a sprinter, he's a come-from-behind sprinter. The 7-furlong race is just too far for him, he doesn't quite stay. The 5 1/2 hopefully will hit him just where he needs."

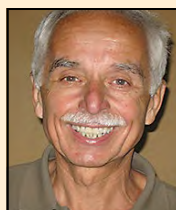
Additional reporting by Tom Law.





Saratoga Race Course – Saturday, August 8

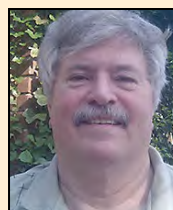
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**John
Shapazian**



**Tom
Law**



**Charles
Bedard**



**Rob
Whitlock**

Race #

1	Doswell Bay Street Money Compliant	Doswell Pletcher entry Bay Street Money	Doswell Compliant Maker entry	Bay Street Money Doswell
2	Atras entry Shalako Hammerin Aamer	Shalako Hammerin Aamer Lil Commissioner	Atras entry Hammerin Aamer Shalako	The Angry Man Shalako Atras entry
3	Light In The Sky Risky Mischief Graetz	Light In The Sky Saratoga Love Risky Mischief	Strongerthanuknow Light In The Sky Risky Mischief	Hammerin Aamer Light In The Sky Risky Mischief
4	Drawing Away entry Hieroglyphics Golden Spear	Drawing Away entry Hieroglyphics Golden Spear	California Night Hieroglyphics Golden Spear	Ava K's Girl Hieroglyphics Golden Spear
5	Mutasaabeq Guana Cay Bottle Rocket Man	Mutasaabeq Bottle Rocket Man Shackleford Strong	Mutasaabeq Bottle Rocket Man Guana Cay	Bootlegger Mutasaabeq Bottle Rocket Man
6	Restored Order Secret Potion Hidden Enemy	Restored Order Secret Potion Incitatus	American Monarch Hidden Enemy Bellafina	American Gentleman Mystical Man Pivotal Mission
7	Serengeti Empress Letruska Bellafina	Come Dancing Pink Sands Victim Of Love	Seregenti Empress Letruska Imprimis	Secret Potion Serengeti Empress Letruska
8	Imprimis Shekky Shebaz American Sailor	Lonhtwist Shekky Shebaz Imprimis	Imprimis Shekky Shebaz Chewing Gum	Pink Sands Chewing Gum Imprimis
9	Another Broad My Sister Nat Mrs. Sippy	Mrs. Sippy Olympic Games My Sister Nat	Another Broad Mrs. Sippy My Sister Nat	Gamine Shekky Shebaz Mrs. Sippy
10	Gamine Venetian Harbor Mrs. Danvers	Gamine Venetian Harbor Mrs. Danvers	Gamine Venetian Harbor Up In Smoke	Olympic Games My Sister Nat Gamine
11	Tiz The Law Uncle Chuck Caracaro	Tiz The Law Max Player Uncle Chuck	Tiz The Law Max Player Uncle Chuck	Venetian Harbor Up In Smoke Tiz The Law
12	Misty Taste Tiny Magoo Monificent	Bankers Beast Sweet Sneak Tiny Magoo	Monificent Tiny Magoo Bankers Beast	South Bend Max Player Bankers Beast
2020 Records	61/163	56/163	53/163	40/163

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Burner

Jackie's Warrior makes quick work of fellow juveniles in Gr. 2

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Fast food. Faster horse.

Jackie's Warrior owner Kirk Robison moved from California to Texas in 1973 to operate a Wienerschnitzel franchise. He and his wife, Judy, parlayed that into a restaurant empire, with more than 80 Peter Piper Pizza and Burger Kings combined.

The focus Friday at Saratoga Race Course was on neither a piper nor a king, but rather a Warrior – Kirk's speedy 2-year-old colt, Jackie's Warrior, who led every step of the way in winning the Grade 2 Saratoga Special Stakes.

"With the babies, we wanted to get a clean break as he did in his first race and let his talent take over," said

SARATOGA RACING RECAP

trainer Steve Asmussen. "At Saratoga, there's a lot of nice form, but when you get to Saratoga not everyone likes the surface."

Jackie's Warrior, a \$95,000 Keeneland September yearling purchase, clearly loved it, while Asmussen's other burgeoning star, 8-5 favorite Cazadero, was a different story, finishing a never-threatening fifth.

"Ricardo (Santana Jr.) didn't think he handled the racetrack," Asmussen said. "He was 2-for-2 at Churchill, so we'll probably look to go back there."

Jackie's Warrior, by Maclean's Mu-

Continued On Page 35



Chelsea Durand/NYRA

Jackie's Warrior rolls to the finish for Joel Rosario.

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Recap —

■ Continued from page 34

by the A.P. Five Hundred mare Unicorn Girl, was coming off a June 19 maiden score at Churchill with Santana aboard. After increasing his career earnings to \$127,564, he will have a return date at the Spa, with Asmussen indicating he would point for the Grade 1 Hopeful on Closing Day. If you're looking for omens for today, Maclean's Music is out of the same dam – Forest Music – as Travers hopeful Uncle Chuck.

Asmussen watched from his usual spot on the apron, against the fence, about 50 yards from the finish line. As Jackie's Warrior was bounding to a length lead after a quarter-mile in :22.06 under Joel Rosario, Asmussen walked toward the top of the stretch, as if to greet his horse, who had only two serious threats at that point, Therideofalifetime on the outside and Momos in between horses.

Jackie's Warrior made sure Asmussen, who won his fifth Saratoga Special, didn't have to sweat, staying inside and pulling away to win by 3 lengths over Therideofalifetime in 1:09.62. Momos, coming off a dominant debut win for Christophe Clement three weeks ago, faded to third, with Garoppolo fourth.

"He broke really well," said Rosario, who won two races Friday. "I thought there was going to be a little more speed. I thought we might chase some-



NYRA Photo

Hungry Kitten (with a stylish Jose Ortiz) makes like a hurdler and leaps to victory in Thursday's seventh race.

body, but he broke well and I let him do his thing. When they came close to him, he wanted to go and I felt even more confident."

The other eight horses – Roderick scratched to run in today's Grade 2 Best Pal at Del Mar and 99-1 shot Caramel Chip was a gate scratch – were the ones doing the chasing and it was to no avail.

With Miller Lite as the sponsor, Asmussen emerged from the winner's circle with a lawn jockey and cooler emblazoned with the Lite logo. It was suggested that the cooler seemed a little light, i.e. empty.

Continued On Page 36

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Recap —

■ Continued from page 35

“That will be corrected,” he said. We will check back to see if it tasted great or was less filling. Or both.

Friday Notes: Three trainers, none of whom need any introduction on the NYRA circuit, picked up their first wins of the meet and each did it with his only entry of the day.

Jimmy Jerkens got the ball rolling in the opener when Klickitat led all the way as the 2-5 favorite, winning by 4 1/2 lengths to break his maiden in his 10th attempt. It was the ninth starter of the meet for Jerkens and the 12th winner for Javier Castellano.

Charlton Baker had only sent out four starters before Honor Way closed from sixth to win the fifth race and bring Baker into the winner's circle for the first time. For Jockey Jose Ortiz, it was his third smile-for-the-camera moment of the day.

English-bred Invincible Gal wore down favorite Mad Maddy to give Graham Motion his initial Saratoga winner of 2020 with his 12th starter.

John Velazquez, who has teamed with Motion for some big wins this year, including the Grade 3 Old Forester Mint Julep at Churchill, was happy to be aboard.

“It's nice to get that first one (for Motion) out of the way,” said Velazquez, who heads into today with eight wins in 56 mounts. “You start a little slow and you second-guess yourself. The horse was so professional. You couldn't ask anything better than what she did today.”

Trainers without a win on Day 17? Orlando Noda has no idea what you're talking about. The exuberant conditioner is now batting .400, after Archumybaby nailed Keep Your Distance on the wire in the seventh, a 7-furlong claiming race. Noda, who has six wins, two seconds and two thirds in only 15 starts, was again whooping it up on the way to the winner's circle, and you got the feeling you would have been able to hear him even if the stands weren't empty.

Jose Ortiz's other two wins came in the second, for Mike Maker with Lookin For Trouble, who had to survive an inquiry and objection, and the

Continued On Page 37



Chelsea Durand/NYRA

Jolting Joe scores in Thursday's Cab Calloway.

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Recap —

■ Continued from page 36

third, with Bean Counter for Todd Pletcher. That gave him 28 wins, one behind brother Irad, the leading rider, who was blanked Friday.

Ray Handal, battling Noda for ‘Young Gun Trainer of the Meet,’ picked up his sixth win when Kemba went gate to wire in the fourth, a maiden claimer on the turf at 8.5 furlongs. Handal has six wins in 21 starts.

H. James Bond, another high-percentage trainer, got his sixth win in 20 starts thanks to a last-to-first effort by favored Giacosa, whom he also owns with his wife Tina, in the eighth, a mile allowance on the turf. Tyler Gaffalione joined Castellano in the dozen-win club with a text-book ride.

Dylan Davis picked up his third win of the meet with a wire-to-wire score aboard Yellen in the nightcap for trainer Wesley Ward.

Thursday Notes: Mike Maker continued his run in turf stakes at the meet with a victory in Thursday’s Cab Calloway division of the New York Stallion Series with Skychai Racing’s Jolting Joe.

Running off 12 days rest and as a maiden from four prior starts, the 3-year-old son of Mission Impazible won the \$100,000 Cab Calloway by 1 3/4 lengths over Turbo Drive to complete a 1-2 finish for Maker.

Maker added the Cab Calloway to turf stakes at the 2020 meet with Cross Border in the Lubash and Grade 2 Bowling Green and

Somelikeithotbrown in the Grade 2 Bernard Baruch. A half brother to Somelikeithotbrown, Jolting Joe finished second in an Ellis Park maiden race July 25 at 1 1/16 miles on the grass before his Cab Calloway victory under Tyler Gaffalione. Prior to that he finished second to Kentucky Derby-bound duo of King Guillermo and Art Collector in separate maiden races last fall.

“The horse ran a credible race at Ellis Park,” Maker said. “He seems to find some tough competition and he proved our high hopes. Some of the seconds we were disappointed with, but it turns out they were some pretty live races.”

- Maryland-based trainer Brittny Russell sent out her first Saratoga winner when Mike Ryan’s King’s Honor won Thursday’s finale, a \$40,000 claimer going 1 mile on the grass. Russell, who launched her public stable in 2018, made her Saratoga debut last year with four starters.

King’s Honor, an Irish-bred son of Kingman coming off a seventh in a starter allowance at 7 furlongs on the grass at Belmont Park June 27, was Russell’s second Saratoga starter of 2020.

Saratoga Leaders

TRAINERS	1ST
Christophe Clement	15
Todd Pletcher	14
Mike Maker	13
Chad Brown	10
Linda Rice	7
Steve Asmussen	6
Jim Bond	6
Ray Handal	6
Orlando Noda	6
Rudy Rodriguez	6
Wesley Ward	6
Jorge Abreu	4
Shug McGaughey	4
Bill Mott	4

JOCKEYS	1ST
Irad Ortiz Jr.	29
Jose Ortiz	28
Joel Rosario	27
Javier Castellano	12
Tyler Gaffalione	12
Manny Franco	9
Jose Lezcano	9
Luis Saez	9
John Velazquez	8
Ricardo Santana Jr.	6
Junior Alvarado	5
David Cohen	4

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Great Seats

Longtime friends turn annual tradition into winning partnership

BY MARY EDDY

When Massachusetts native Mark Wheeler started visiting Saratoga Race Course as a teenager, the dream began of the day that he could stand in its hallowed winner's circle with a horse of his own. That dream became reality for Wheeler and Section M Stables last Thursday when Adios Amigos scored in the 10th race, a maiden claimer for New York-breds.

"It was just so incredible. Our first win and it's at Saratoga, our home track," Wheeler said. "It's beyond amazing to me. I always said in my mind, 'We're never going to win up here. This is Saratoga.' It was just surreal to us. This is truly a bucket list moment for me."

For the past several years, Wheeler

and his wife, Kathi, have been season ticket holders in grandstand Section M, and are lifelong racing fans. Through the years they formed a close friendship with Tom Potter and his wife Andrea, as well as Mike and Janet Bradley, who shared seats in the same section.

"We've all sat together for ages and we could afford to sit in the clubhouse, but we loved Section M," said Wheeler. "These guys are some of my best friends. We were together every summer, every day."

Tom Potter was one of the six owners present for Adios Amigo's victory and was happy to be on-track to cheer his horse home. A retired attorney from Syracuse, Potter started

Continued On Page 39



NYRA Photo

Adios Amigos scores for Section M July 30.



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Section M —

■ Continued from page 38

attending the races in 1988 when his wife took him to Saratoga for the first time.

“We’ve sat in Section M for the last 30 years,” Potter said. “Seeing each other every day, you rub elbows with people and have small talk. It’s what led to (the creation of) Section M Stables.”

Adios Amigos was making his seventh career start for Section M and trainer John Terranova and had been runner-up in his other two starts this year. The 4-year-old Adios Charlie gelding was a \$10,000 purchase as a 2-year-old for the partnership, and initially started training with Brian Lynch.

After a start at Saratoga last summer, he was found to have bone bruising and was given 10 months off from training. Lynch decided to stay in Kentucky for the summer this year, and Adios Amigos was transferred to the Terranova barn.

“He’s got an amazing closing kick,” laughed Wheeler. “The pace was fast early and he closed into it like a champion. He was just really good. We call him ‘The Bear.’ He’s really developed into a racehorse now. He’s such a nice horse, a good guy.



NYRA Photo

Section M meets in the winner's circle after the victory.

Anybody can go up to him, my grandchildren love him.”

Patience and determination have been key in the partnership’s journey to their first win, having experienced several setbacks with their three previous horses. The partnership lost one of their runners in a training incident last year, one was claimed away after one start and another had his own set of physical issues.

Continued On Page 40

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Section M —

■ Continued from page 39

"We are a one-horse operation right now. We've had a lot more downs than ups in our racing luck so far. Lightning struck for us last Thursday," said Potter. "He got an outside draw, and coming down the stretch I thought again, 'He's just gonna be a little bit short.' But he just kept coming and coming and coming. It was unexpected and fantastic."

As for what is next for Adios Amigos and Section M, both Wheeler and Potter will leave that up to Terranova, but expect him to make another start at Saratoga before the season is over.

"We leave it up to John," Wheeler said. "We like to go through the condition book, we have our ideas, but it all comes down to what John wants to do."

Even without fans present, there was plenty of cheering for Adios Amigos as he came running down the stretch, his ecstatic group of owners screaming louder than any other connections.

Potter felt a bit of remorse for how loud the group was as their horse crossed the wire in front, but simply could not contain his joy as the moment unfolded.

"We'll try to be a little bit more subdued in the winner's circle next time; we were pretty animated," he said. "We were going nuts, raising our hands, jumping up and down screaming. There were other connections there that didn't win so I felt a little bad afterwards, but the emotions took over. You lose more times than you win, so you just have to enjoy it."

"There's lots of fantastic racecourses in the U.S. I've been to places all over the country, and to Royal Ascot, but this is the place you really want to win."

With no spectators in the stands, Wheeler did wish fans could have been there for the milestone win. However, he is grateful to have been allowed in as an owner, sharing the moment with his closest friends.

"I'm not complaining, believe me, but I can't wait to win in front of a huge crowd," he said. "I love (sitting in) Section M, but I'll take that winner's circle any day."



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It is one of those events where everybody says they were there, even if they weren't. The Birdstone Travers – the one with the storm, the rain, the floods, the darkness. It was 2004, *The Special* was there. Sean Clancy wrote about it. Tod Marks got the shot somehow. In his words, it was “one chance, one frame, pitch black, 3200 ISO film, hand-focused, slow-speed pan . . . and pray for good luck.” And Joe Clancy came up with one of his favorite headlines.

August 29, 2004. Thunder Bird. Belmont winner beats weather, horses in Travers. By Sean Clancy

The first raindrop fell at 5:57. The seven Travers runners went in the gate at 6:21 – in virtual darkness. Rain pelted down, the skies were Ichabod Crane-dark, the infield fountain was blowing sideways.

And 2:02.45 later, the Belmont Stakes, run 12 weeks earlier, suddenly got a lot easier to take. On that day, Birdstone upended Smarty Jones' Triple Crown bid. Everyone and everything, from rival jockeys to Smarty Jones' exuberance, were blamed for upsetting the coronation. Rarely, if ever, was it considered that it was Birdstone himself who deserved credit.

Well, he just won the Travers, pushing his record to five wins from eight starts, with three Grade I victories. Believing yet?

Edgar Prado engineered the Belmont and the Travers. He's a believer.

“I told you, the Belmont wasn't a fluke,” Prado said after the Travers. “I was very confident. He was training good, he was looking good. He ran his race.”

And what is his race? A perfectly executed plan of stalking the pace and getting a jump on the closers. Favorite Lion Heart went to the lead like he always does. He managed the first quarter-mile in a reasonable 24.48 while Jim Dandy-winner Purge kept watch just off his tail. Long-striding Eddington found a spot on the inside third. Sir Shackleton and Birdstone, both from Nick Zito's barn, came next with longshot Suave and Zito's third ace, the late running The Cliff's Edge, in last.



As they went down the backside, a half-mile mark of 49.15 came to pass with Lion Heart and Purge rolling on the pace. Rounding the turn, shading 6 furlongs in 1:12.82, Lion Heart was retreating. Purge was hanging. Eddington was paddling. Birdstone was rallying. The Cliff's Edge was looming.

Purge had nothing to counter the resoluteness which propelled Birdstone to the lead. Shane Sellers implored The Cliff's Edge to the edge of contention but he couldn't find another gear. Birdstone had not just extra gears, but overdrive.

“He gave me three gears today. One when he ran out of there, one when I called on him down the backside to keep position and one in the stretch,” Prado said. “As soon as he gives me a burst, he'll come back to me. That's class. Good horses have two gears, he has three. You're in a position to hold your spot and be

Continued On Page 43

Best of —

■ Continued from page 42

able to make your move whenever you want. He will do that and then relax. Some horses will give you a burst but you have to fight them to slow back down, not him — he's always there for you."

Birdstone has always been there for Zito and owner Marylou Whitney. The small but smart-looking colt won his debut by 12 ½ last year, right here at Saratoga. He failed in the Hopeful, finishing 6 ½ lengths behind Silver Wagon. The son of Grindstone then won the Grade I Champagne in his final juvenile start. It's been stop and start for the Kentucky-bred in 2004. He won a second-level allowance at Gulfstream in his 3-year-old debut. The Lane's End and the Kentucky Derby were flops. The Belmont was a triple gainer with a twist. And the Travers was better.

"When you ride those kind of horses, you have to ride with confidence," Prado said. "In the Belmont, he kept on trying, trying, trying. Today he showed me all the gears he has. He impressed me."

During the Belmont, questions dominated Prado's mind.

"In the Belmont, he was going against an undefeated horse going for the Triple Crown — there wasn't that kind of horse in there today. In the Belmont, there are all these questions. 'Can he get the distance? If I move too early I'm going to come up



empty? If I wait too long...?' A mile and a quarter, it's a different story. And there's no horse that's undefeated today."

No, Smarty Jones is long gone and Birdstone is solidly atop the present 3-year-old crop. The Cliff's Edge had every chance to run down Birdstone but didn't, though he put in another solid effort. Lion Heart stopped like he'd been lassoed. Purge was dynamic in the Jim Dandy and soft in the Travers. Eddington has yet to keep it on boil. Suave and Sir Shackleton are a notch below the best.

And Zito, who was passed up on the Hall of Fame ballot this year, completed a training 10. From his Saratoga base, he produced Birdstone for the Travers off works alone.

"When we brought him back to Saratoga, I noticed a change in him," Zito said. "I talked to John (Hendrickson) and Marylou, 'Let's forget about those prep races, let's just go for the big one because I have a feeling that he's going to fire.' He's got such a big heart that he's going to fire on the right day, on the right time. And that's what he did."

The Travers capped off a five-win day for Prado. His 10-percent commission for those five winners came to \$84,060.

"I'm very thankful for what I have, every day. I come in and do my job and don't think about the money. It's nice when you win a race and there are people behind you, happy for you. When you win a race and nobody says anything, they walk away from you, that's bad," Prado said. "If you put a smile on someone's face, everybody high fives you, the crowd is cheering for you. That's the biggest victory. When you earn the respect of everyone. I go home and enjoy my family. It doesn't matter if you sweep the whole card of the Breeders' Cup if people don't respect you."

It was only 1999 when Prado came to Saratoga as a Maryland phenom trying to crack the the jocks' room. He's come a long way fast.

"Saratoga is a very political place to be. You have to go out and do political things," Prado said. "When you go home and enjoy the family, that's the best thing. There is no price on that. I'm happy to have this great day but I'm more happy for having a nice relationship with everybody."

Most especially Birdstone.



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Religious Experience

Everyone has a Travers story. I've got more than a handful.

I'm fairly certain my first Travers was in 1992, when Thunder Rumble became only the second New York-bred – and first in 125 years – to win the race. No need to wait until 2117, Mr. Tagg. Today will be fine.

I remember the heartwarming story in 1993, when Sea Hero, who had won the Derby but was off the board in the Preakness, Belmont and Jim Dandy, returned 86-year-old owner Paul Mellon and 71-year-old trainer Mack Miller to the Saratoga winner's circle.

I wasn't there for the 1997 Travers, but being a Boston guy I was especially touched when the pride of Dorchester, Chris McCarron, rode Deputy Commander to victory the day after his mother's funeral. And I was happy to accept the generous 4-1 odds in Helen's honor. (That won't be the last time you read about a wager memorializing the passing of a parent.)

In the early 2000s, I had the bright idea of running a day trip by coach bus from Boston's North Shore to Saratoga on Travers Day. Looking back, it was somewhere between idiotic and insane, but we pulled it off at least twice. We were there in 2004, when Birdstone won in the dark, followed by a monsoon that kept us stuck in the parking lot for 90 minutes. Then it was a 4 1/2-hour ride on a bus with broken AC, marking the end of my career as a tour guide.

I had an excruciating beat in 2008 when the late, great Garrett Gomez and Colonel John nipped Mambo In Seattle by half a nostril. I was also there for the only dead-heat – Alpha and Golden Ticket in 2012 – but the DH was four years too late for me.

Last year, in my rookie year writing for The Special, I covered two of the stakes on the undercard and had already written both stories when I got back to my car, or should I say to where my car had been parked at the Oklahoma. Apparently, there was a reason there were so many spaces available 10 hours earlier. A call to NYRA Security revealed that it had been towed, but only to the farthest possible point on the property, the outer reaches of the free general parking area on the Oklahoma side. It was about a 7-furlong walk, but one that did not negate the Code Of Honor winnings.

I could go to 50 Travers, however, and nothing could ever come close to what happened in 2018.

Catholic Boy ran them off their feet in the 149th Travers, winning by 4 lengths and paying \$16.20. I had felt a special connection to Catholic Boy since the previous November, when I bet him in the



Catholic Boy gets it done – for Paul Sr. and Jr. – in the 2018 Travers.

Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf in honor of my father, Paul K. Halloran Sr., the best Catholic boy I have ever known.

Dad's instructions the night before I left for the Breeders' Cup were to "take \$100 of my money and bet it." That turned out to be the second-last thing he ever said to me, just before "I love you."

Dad had been hospitalized with heart issues for two weeks, though he was actually feeling a little better as I was preparing to leave, to the point of virtually ordering me not to cancel the trip and backing it up with the request for \$100 worth of action (and he was not a gambler).

The day after I arrived in San Diego I got the call. Dad, who had already beaten the odds by living almost four years in my care since my mom had died very suddenly in 2013, had finished his race.

On Friday, the first day of Breeders Cup 2017 at Del Mar, I remembered his instructions and looked through the PPs for a horse to bet. When I got to the eighth race, it became obvious: Catholic Boy in the Juvenile Turf.

Catholic Boy ran a competitive fourth and I started to follow him, though I could never connect. When he won, I did not bet him, either through mindlessness or sheer stupidity. When he lost, I was all in. Then came the Travers.

I can actually remember looking skyward as they were going into the gate and thinking, "OK, Dad, it's about time, don't you think?"

I got my answer just inside the quarter pole, when Catholic Boy rolled by Mendelssohn and drew away with such ease that, in the words of Larry Collmus, "the others didn't even have a prayer." I can promise you that no one in the crowd of 49,417 was yelling louder. And it's a safe bet no one else was wiping away a tear.

I was determined to meet this Catholic Boy. Sunday would be no day of rest as I set out with my good friend and equally insane horseplayer Dr. Jeff Morer to find the Travers winner. When we eventually located him in Barn Nine on the main track, he was getting his morning bath and dining on green grass.

Trainer Jonathan Thomas was gracious and generous with his time. He explained that the horse's name could be traced to owner Robert LaPenta's Catholic heritage – he's a graduate and benefactor of Iona, where the business school bears his name – and the horse's dam, Song Of Bernadette, named for a 1943 movie chronicling the life of Bernadette Soubirous, later canonized as St. Bernadette.

Tod Marks

It was a thrill to spend some quality time with the Travers champ, before heading to the 10 a.m. Mass at St. Clement's on Lake Avenue (you think I was missing Mass that weekend?). Father George Blasick greeted the faithful with this: "I trust all you people who made money on Catholic Boy yesterday will be putting extra money in the collection."

That was a sure thing, Father.

The story didn't end there. I decided Catholic Boy needed a logo so he could have his own hats and T-shirts. First thing Monday morning, I told the very talented graphic designer I work with, Tori Faieta, that she was going to design a logo for a horse. She mentioned something about having real work to do for paying clients, but I wouldn't hear such blasphemy.

Next up was tracking down LaPenta, whom I reached through his son, Robert Jr. I told him what I had in mind, he connected me with his "marketing manager," wife Laurie Winters, and we were off and running. Six weeks later, Bob Mullins and I pulled into LaPenta's driveway in Connecticut to deliver boxes of Catholic Boy hats and shirts, something for them to wear at the Breeders' Cup.

LaPenta was a terrific host, showing us his many mementos, sharing some untold stories and even insisting we all drink a shot to toast Catholic Boy – and my dad.

Amen to that.

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BY SEAN CLANCY

It is Travers Day. Like none other.

A month earlier than usual, somehow sandwiched between the Belmont Stakes and the Kentucky Derby, Saratoga's premier race, the Midsummer Derby, serves as a date, rather than a denouement. The Travers on Aug. 8, without the fans, without the buzz, without the clarity, without the clamor, another upheaval, another disturbance in a year when everything is on the table and off the table all at the same time.

No matter if it's the quaint month-long meet of yesteryear or the eight-week, 40-day behemoth of today, the Travers has been and always will be the apex of Saratoga. The pillar, the post, between buildup and cooldown. You know it's coming and then you know it's over, the race, the meet, the summer. This year, it's the Travers on the 18th day of a surreal Saratoga instead of the Travers on the 33rd day of a real Saratoga.

But, don't dare call it a prep. Just as the son is no prep for the holy spirit, the 2020 Travers should be considered as a singular race, a singular accomplishment, for whomever wins it.

If it's Linda Rice with Max Player, it's the first for a woman trainer. If it's Chad Brown with Country Grammer, it's a new brick in an indelible wall. If it's the Noda Brothers with longshot First Line, it's the breakthrough. If it's Ralph Nicks with Florida shipper Shivaree, it's the moment when all the toil is worth it. If it's Bob Baffert with Uncle Chuck, it's another precise attack in a career built on them. If it's Javier Castellano aboard Caracaro, it's an unfathomable seventh. If it's Bill Mott and just received South Bend, it's the first in a career that seemed to have it all until you looked it up. If it's Barclay Tagg, trainer of the once-beaten favorite Tiz The Law, it's at long last, the home plate of the 3-year-old home run.

Tagg wonders if there will be an asterisk on everything the white-faced overachiever accomplishes



this year. Not in our book. For the horse and his connections, it's still the Travers.

As for The Special, the closest thing to Pete Hamill's newsroom is quiet. On a day when it's meant to be the loudest, the most vibrant, the most energetic, the most electric, when the biggest issue of the year comes to life.

But, this is 2020. There is no office. There is no newsroom. There is no clattering of keys. There are no cell phones vibrating on wobbly desks. There are no Gabby Gaudets, Travis Stones or Jim Mulvihills squawking about looking for a Calder gyp in the back of the receiving barn for the all-quotes-all-stakes tradition. There is no Joe, the leader, the gatekeeper, the steerer of the wobbly ship, slamming his fist down after another computer crash and another intern concern. There is no Tom, hopping off his bike, grabbing his recorder and press pass and heading back to the track for another stakes, another stake-out of winners who seemed to have taken it for granted. There is no reminder to untuck his pant leg from his sock.

And, yeah, I guess there is no Friday-written Cup of Coffee or Saturday-written Travers recap in their traditional forms, somehow coming to life, to light, from a back-corner room in another makeshift office during another summer in Saratoga. No Miles Davis on the headphones trying to drown out the drunks looking for one more Vermont-brewed IPA from the office fridge. No Tom gingerly walking to

my door as the clock turns to midnight, holding the sign, "Land the Plane," made for Gaudet so many years ago and still in use so many years later.

I type this from an antique table in Virginia. The noises are foreign, certainly foreign in August, my first August away from Saratoga since 1988. Miles throwing dirty clothes down the back steps. The toilet running upstairs. The corner fan in the front shed whirring as three retirees stand blithely by, another summer day drifting past. A distant mower groans. A UPS truck clatters cinders on the front stoop. John Imbriale choreographs Friday's action, but there is no one here to share the wins or lament the losses.

I think again of Hamill, the journalist's journalist, the columnist's columnist, who died Wednesday. I read his obituary again, landing and hovering over his take of the newsroom.

"The room was more exciting to me than any movie, an organized chaos of editors shouting from desks, copy boys dashing through doors into the composing room, men and women typing at big manual typewriters, telephones ringing, the wire service tickers clattering, everyone smoking and putting butts out on the floor."

He would have enjoyed the Travers edition, the Travers tradition, the Travers newsroom.

The room was more exciting to me than Holy Bull's moxie, an unorganized chaos of writers and interns shouting from fold-up tables, cold pizza, iced coffee, day-old donuts, Joe's kids bombarding through the door for another stack of papers, trainer's kids putting innate nuances into actual words, locals wondering why they signed up for this gig as their friends cavort at the track, keys clipping rather than clacking, but with the same urgency as Breslin, Talese and Hamill, races from across Union Avenue rolling past on a corner TV, racing fans coming and going along the East Avenue sidewalk, another Travers, but one like no other, come and gone.

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The Big Picture

with Tod Marks

Thunder Bird. Our cover shot from 2004 – Birdstone reaching the finish line in the darkest and stormiest Travers Stakes ever (we'll guess) for owner/breeder Marylou Whitney, trainer Nick Zito and jockey Edgar Prado.

