

Year 22 • No. 19

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

The *aratoga*

# Special

Newspaper since 2001



## Middle Man

Asmussen's Epicenter takes control in Travers

Malathaat, Cody's Wish, Gufo,  
Jack Christopher star on Saturday card

Stakes Previews • Entries & Handicapping



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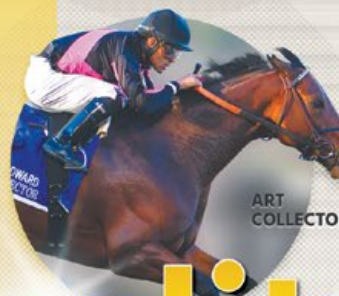
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Tod Marks

**Early Action.** The Travers field (from left) Early Voting, Epicenter, Ain't Life Grand, Artorius, Zandon, Cyberknife, Rich Strike and a sliver of Gilded Age head through the stretch the first time Saturday. Epicenter led everybody home the next time.

## Here&There...in Saratoga

### By The Numbers

**55,559,315:** Dollars wagered on Saturday's Runhappy Travers Day program at Saratoga Race Course, eclipsing the old record of \$52,129,346 from 2019.

**49,672:** Attendance Saturday, the highest paid attendance figure since 2015.

**6:** Mega-bottles of champagne that Moët, a sponsor of the Forego Stakes, presents annually for promotional purposes. Godolphin's Michael Banahan was happy to accept one after Cody's Wish upset Jackie's Warrior Saturday.

**7:** Times (each a graded stakes) Malathaat and Clairiere, born 10 days apart at Stonestreet Farm in Kentucky, have faced each other on the racetrack. Malathaat leads the series 5-2.

**3.61:** Seconds faster the Personal Ensign was than the Shuvee. Malathaat won Saturday's Grade 1 in 1:48.30 for 1 1/8 miles and was second in the July 24 Grade 2 in 1:51.91.

**16:** People watching Epicenter get his hooves cleaned at the barn after the Travers

**10:** Race win streak of Charles Town icon Muad'dib snapped by Art Collector in the Charles Town Classic Friday night. The previously undefeated West Virginia-bred ran hard and ran long to be beaten 4 1/4 lengths by the New York-based multi-millionaire while turning back six other shippers.

**61,055:** More dollars earned by Muad'dib in his second-place effort than in any other win of his career.

**1,995:** Career wins for trainer Tony Dutrow.

### Names of the Day

**Proven Innocent, first race.** Bred by Stuart Janney III and now racing for Bruton Street-US, the steeplechaser is by Blame.

**I'm Nervous Now, second race.** Dominique Damico's 3-year-old filly is out of She's Got Rules.

**Double Shot, eighth race.** The 5-year-old gelding is by Bourbon Courage out of Elegant Finish.



### Name of the Day Thursday

**Run For Cover, third race.** The 2-year-old filly – owned by Tina Casse, Rocky Top Stable and Tara Sweeney, is by Get Stormy out of Morethanawarning.

*The Saratoga*  
**Special**  
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# Here&There...in Saratoga

## By The Numbers

**9:12.** Time between Luis Saez's first ride and last ride Friday. He finished fifth in Saratoga's second and won Charles Town's 10th.

**9:** Tracks where Steve Asmussen ran horses from Aug. 22 to Aug. 29. He went 11-for-45 at Indiana, Colonial, Saratoga, Remington, Prairie Meadows, Ellis Park, Charles Town, Louisiana Downs and Albuquerque.

## T-Shirt of the Day

Luca Brasi's Fish Market.

## License Plates

TIPSTOGA, New York.  
I LOVE MO, New York (An Uncle Mo fan perhaps?).  
CURLIN, Massachusetts.

## Worth Repeating

"He could sleep on a flagpole."

**Owner Bruce Lunsford, about trainer and Charles Town Classic traveling companion Bill Mott**

"There's nothing that raises spirits like Seth Merrow and Steve Byk."

**TV host Steve Byk trying to convince The Special's Sean Clancy to join the show Sunday morning**

"I'm good with pizza, I'll stop by The Special office for pizza and beer."

**David Fiske, racing manager for Winchell Thoroughbreds, about dinner plans after Epicenter won the Travers**

"If we didn't win a race today, I was throwing them in the trash."

**Julie Asmussen, about the best shoes at the Travers (right)**

"We're big at Denny's."

**The Special's Rob Whitlock, on the popularity of the paper at a classy breakfast establishment**

"I like Kentucky-bred Epicenter."

**Bumper sticker on a Nissan Altima near Steve Asmussen's barn Tuesday morning**



Dave Harmon



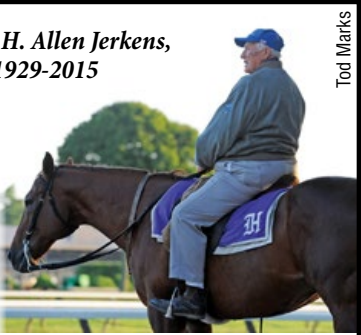
Tod Marks

**Dirt Devils.** Zandon (left) and Rich Strike take some kickback early in the Travers Saturday. They finished third and fourth in the Grade 1 stakes.

## The Chief

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

"Admiral Vee ended up being a good distance horse. Back in those days, nobody made any money working a horse a mile, he worked a mile a lot. Another thing that helped, he was hitting his hocks and they weren't doing a whole lot for it, just letting him hit, we got to tubbing him behind, and I bought those boots, I never see anybody with them anymore, you put the hind bandages on, then the boot and the top of the bandage goes through the loop and it fastens up above the hock with a little strap, we never worked without the boots, we ran him with pads, he got to running good."



Tod Marks



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## Quote of the Day

"Bring it. I want it."  
**Trainer Steve Asmussen, when told the Travers canoe painters had a brush for him**

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## **Darley**



# Here&There...in Saratoga

## Worth Repeating

“Tell them to shut up.”  
**Cody Dorman, to his father, Kelly, while listening to TV broadcasters proclaim Jackie’s Warrior virtually unbeatable in Saturday’s Forego Stakes. Cody’s Wish, named for Dorman, had the last word**

“On paper and in my pocket.”  
**Ron Lombardi of Mr. Amore Stable, when asked if he thought his Andiamo A Firenze had Friday’s Funny Cide Stakes over a barrel, indicating he may have had something to do with the \$3.30 win mutuel**

“I’ll tell him to do it.”  
**Erma Scott to The Special’s Sean Clancy, looking for a Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour Tuesday morning**

“I’m hard to miss.”  
**Rick the Union Avenue traffic cop after The Special’s Sean Clancy said he didn’t recognize him at the Horse Haven gap Tuesday morning**

“I got suspended for 95 days one year.”  
**Retired jockey Angel Cordero Jr., comparing the riding suspensions of his era to today**

“That would be a nice way to keep the band going.”  
**Trainer Rudy Rodriguez, on potentially closing the meet with a stakes win by Hot Peppers in Friday’s Prioress**



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## With Phil Bauer

Much is made of trainer's percentages. Some are high. Some are low. Some are accurate. Some are misleading. Some are deflated. Some are inflated.

And some are gaudy.

Phil Bauer has won races at 60 percent at Saratoga. That's right, the 37-year-old trainer has produced six wins from 10 starts during the meet. In his 10th year training privately for Richard and Tammy Rigney's Rigney Racing, Bauer bedded down 12 horses in the two-barn, four-sided enclave near the maintenance shed inside Horse Haven. With another 15 at Churchill Downs, Bauer has engineered a stellar season with 14 wins from 79 starts for \$1,160,546.

In his sixth season stabling at Saratoga, Bauer has already doubled his win total from all the previous years.

"Richard's put a good team in place and it's finally come together. The proof is in the pudding, the last two years, the horses we are leading over, it's an obvious change in caliber," Bauer said Tuesday morning. "It's not so much anything we're doing different, just better horses. That's the key to the game. Obviously, luck and fortune come into it, but it's been a big difference in quality of horses."

Bauer and Rigney Racing have won a maiden claimer, two claimers, a 2-year-old maiden and two allowance races. They lost two horses via the claim box and picked up two in the same genre.

"We brought a different cast this year. We had a good meet last year, but you would never anticipate anything like this year. This has been exciting. We're certainly going to enjoy it because you know how fast it can go the other way," Bauer said. "Up here, the goal is one or two, just make sure you're competitive, if you said you were going to win six out of 10 so far, you would have bet against that. Things just fell into place, the races went, most of them were 4-1 or lower so you know you have them spotted right."

Bauer hopped off his pony at the end of training hours Tuesday and walked his shedrow with The Special's Sean Clancy.

**Skrtach Kat.** The daughter of Arrogate won an allowance race at Churchill Downs July 1 and made her stakes debut in the Grade 1 Alabama Aug. 20. "Fourth in the Alabama. I thought the best-case scenario we could run third, but she didn't have



Tod Marks

**Played Hard** won for Phil Bauer (right) Aug. 4.

the pace to run into, proud of her effort, but unlucky the way the race set up. Nice, little 3-year-old filly who will run in an overnight stake at Churchill next start. She'll be able to get some black type somewhere down the road."

**Minute Waltz.** The daughter of Nyquist won her debut at Churchill Downs in 2020 and has earned checks in 11 starts since, including a third in the Audubon Stakes at Ellis Park last summer. "Stakes placed 4-year-old who still has her a-others condition. She's supposed to run on Monday. We've been unlucky with a couple of MTO spots and then had to scratch her when she was in the body of a race mid-meet. Nice filly in her own right and she'll join the breeding program at some point with Richard based on her pedigree and having a little black type there."

**Conagher.** The stakes-winning Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October graduate marches to the front of the stall to see Bauer three days after finishing third in the Allen Jerkens. "This isn't ours. (Michael) Tomlinson shipped in for the Grade 1, I thought based upon a horse who hadn't been training up here, he ran a pretty good race considering the fractions he carved out. He'll ship back to Kentucky today. I don't know what they have planned for him but he's a really nice 3-year-old."

**Warrior Johnny.** The 3-year-old son of Cairo Prince buried his head deeper in the feed tub as Bauer leaned over the red webbing. "This is Warrior Johnny, he ran a monster race up here to win his a-others. He'll run in an overnight stake at Churchill on the 24th, he just seems to get better the older he gets. Being a gelding, hopefully, he'll be around for many years and win some good races. He certainly impressed me the last time he ran. It was my fault to wheel him back at Churchill, he only got beat 2 lengths, he ran really hard for the energy level he probably had. We freshened him and he responded well to it. Big, pretty, has a low head carriage when he runs, he covers a lot of ground. I think the race at Churchill is a mile and three sixteenths, if he runs anything like he did last time he'll be tough. Race by race, if he keeps running the number he ran here, he's a stakes horse. It's just a matter of what kind. Hopefully you let the big dogs beat each other up and pick off something at the end of the year."

**Xigera.** The most recent and perhaps most impressive winner of them all, the 2-year-old filly rustled through her rubber hay manger in the back corner of her stall two days after carrying Julien Lejaroux to a 5 3/4-length win on the turf. "We're excited where she'll take us, just a rangy filly, very athletic and

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# Stable Tour —

Continued from page 8

done everything right so far. It seems like the more you run her, the better she'll get, just mentally. She rated well and punched home the way you're supposed to, bounced out of it well and I think we're going to run in the stake at Keeneland opening weekend and try to make the Breeders' Cup. I was glad to see her take a step forward mentally in this last race, going into the race, she sure seemed sharp and I was hoping she wasn't just rank. Julien did a good job getting her away and getting her to settle and punching the button at the right time. Going forward, you've got two two-turn races under your belt, you're ahead of the curve with a lot of them. Definitely a world of ability so far."

**Played Hard.** The robust daughter of Into Mischief added her third career victory when winning an optional claimer going a mile. She finished fifth in the Alabama last year before runner-up finishes in the Seneca Stakes at Churchill Downs and the Grade 3 Comely at Aqueduct. "Our first winner of the meet, she ran a bang-up race. We're going to point her to the Locust Grove at Churchill, try her in graded company. Fourth start off the layoff, her numbers have improved each time and hopefully that trend continues. We got the graded stake placing at 3 and hopefully we'll get the stake win at 4. She'll be a heck of a broodmare for the Rigneys. An Into Mischief with a lot of leg and scope. She's cut out to be good broodmare. \$280,000 is a bargain, right? No complaints about her except she can be a bull to train but a lot of the good ones are."

**The Prince's Spur.** Bauer claimed the 3-year-old gelding from Todd Pletcher Aug. 24. The son of Cairo Prince, now wearing Roderick's halter, won that day. "We picked him up out of the claim box for \$75,000. We lost Roderick when he won that day for 50. This horse looked appealing on paper, you cross your fingers when you spend that much. He got a pretty good number out of that and

he's a horse who has some upside. We'll try an a-other-than at Churchill. If he's not cut out for that, we'll put him in aggressively. Three starts on his page, you've got to figure he can improve a little bit. So far, so good. We've claimed two up here, tried for more, the ones we claimed we were the only one in for, got outshook on all the others."

**ClayntheLionheart.** Purchased for \$80,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July sale in 2017, the 6-year-old has earned \$333,782 in 28 starts, including a win here Aug. 11. "This is Mr. Saratoga. He's won four times up here and he's won four times in his life. He's MTO Thursday but the rain might be coming too early. We'll do everything we can to get him back in one more time up here, he just loves it. He's just a galloping grinder. All the races he's won, he just grinded through the wire. Go home to Churchill, the turns are a little tighter and I don't know if he can get his rally going in time. Real useful older horse, cool horse, fun horse to bring up here because it's the best place to win. Just an old war horse, put him in the right spot and he'll run his race. One of those barn favorites, the longer you have them, they become like a barn mascot."

**Joe.** Unleashed from Bauer's western saddle, the gray lead pony grazed in the center of the courtyard. "That's the pony. We lease him from a lady in Kentucky. He's a good one. I don't get on a pony anywhere else, up here, we're not short staffed but we don't have the full staff we have at Churchill. He'll go in his stall and then coming blowing back out, sometimes he goes in the other horse's stalls and tries to steal their feed. We just turn him loose in this little courtyard, that's what I like about this barn. He's been a good addition to the team. Just an old Thoroughbred, has feet like a Clydesdale."

**Commander Compton.** The son of Congrats owns one win from eight starts. "He was pretty disappointing when he ran up here. He's the only horse that we've been frustrated by their effort. It all boils down to him in between his ears, when he doesn't have it his way, he

Continued On Page 10

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# Stable Tour —

## ■ Continued from page 9

doesn't give it to you. We'll enter him back one more day here for an aggressive claiming tag and he should fit a little better. When you drop them down, they always seem to fit better. Just a galloper, one-paced. The mile and eighth should suit him here. Got to get him spotted right."

**Air Attack.** Stakes-winning 6-year-old has finished third in his last three starts. "We claimed him for 40 from Rob Atras, he actually ran second the day Claytnthelionheart won. We'll try to get him back in on Monday and see how he can run. Big, heavy horse, galloper. You put him in the right spot, he'll run his race."

**Smarmy.** A \$700,000 2-year-old purchase, the daughter of Liam's Map owns two wins from 10 starts and is entered in the fourth race today. "This filly just shipped for a MTO spot. She's got a world of ability but tends to struggle to put it together. She's a brilliant athlete, just based on her workouts, she's probably one of our more talented horses except she's only been able to win a couple of races. We always thought she was a black-type filly, not yet, we won't give up on her just yet. We know

she's got the ability, we've just got to have her put a few together. I think we'll get lucky, the amount of rain we're going to get, they'll be forced to take them off. I know it's the last week, they might get a little more aggressive but it's a short field with a lot of MTOs so they probably won't feel too bad taking it off. She's always been one, you just shake your head and say, 'How is this horse not any better?' Her win at Churchill, she's swishing her tail down the lane. In the morning, she'll go :46 on the bridle, the right way, not the rank way, and then gallop out. She should run fine. I can't ever say a horse like that is going to win, she doesn't do anything wrong, most of her races, she's hitting the board, you're just disappointed because you know how much ability she has. If she wins, it'll be accolades to the Churchill crew, we just unloaded her (Monday), she trained well over the surface, that's about all we can do."

**Mariah's Princess.** The only Churchill-based member to make the Stable Tour, the stakes-winning filly hasn't run since taking the Mistletoe Stakes at Oaklawn Park in December. "We had her penciled in for here, but we had to slow down. She's coming off a layoff. She might be the best one. I haven't been able to get her back the way I wanted yet but she's doing fine. She's a special horse. A Ghostzapper filly, they're supposed to get better with age. We hope."



Sean Clancy

Phil Bauer and lead pony Joe finish up for the morning.

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# Front & Center

## Derby, Preakness runner-up rises to top

BY SEAN CLANCY

Steve Asmussen walked out of the paddock before the Travers and said what everybody had been thinking.

"Need a winner, man," the Hall of Famer said. "The day isn't going the way I thought it would."

First-time starter King's Glory finished fourth in the opener. Jackie's Warrior lost the Forego at 1-9. Gunite ran hard but couldn't catch Jack Christopher in the Allen Jerkens. Favorite Clairiere thrashed in the gate and finished last in the Personal Ensign.

Asmussen was down to his last throw. Sometimes you've got to call an audible.

"I'm going to the box," he said. "I've been getting my ass kicked on the apron all day."

With minutes to go before the Grade 1 stakes, Asmussen exited the side entrance of the paddock, hustled diagonally across the back apron, up the escalator, past the betting windows, past his son, Keith, checking a last-minute wager, to

### TRAVERS STAKES RECAP

the top of the clubhouse box seats. With most of the 49,672 fans already in place, it was a quiet backdoor stroll compared to the usual apron scrum.

At the top of the box seats, the chain had already been pulled across the gap signifying post time, Asmussen hesitated.

"You've got to let him go," a fan with a beer and a ticket said.

"I know, I know," the woman at the gap said, dropping the chain to the floor.

She knew.

Asmussen took the steps in twos and dropped into the center chair in a front-row box in front of the grandstand reserved seats. His wife, Julie, and sons Darren and Erik were already there. Keith showed up late, sliding his ticket into his pocket, and wound up on the step as six people

Continued On Page 14



Tod Marks

Epicenter and Joel Rosario hit the Travers finish line.



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Justify	11

Undefeated 2yo filly **Maple Leaf Mel**,  
winner of Saratoga's \$200,000 Seeking the Ante S.

 SPENDTHRIFT



# Travers —

■ Continued from page 12

wedged into a five-person box.

Asked if he was all right on the step, Keith smiled a nervous smile.

“I’ll tell you in two minutes.”

It took 2:00.72.

Breaking from the rail, Haskell winner Cyberknife shot to the lead as Iowa Derby winner Ain’t Life Grand moved forward to his outside. Epicenter broke sharply from post six as Joel Rosario stayed low, more like a catcher behind home plate than a jockey on the favorite. Reins dangling, Rosario gradually rose from his crouch after the first sixteenth of a mile, staying over his hands and keeping Epicenter off the bridle. Epicenter slid past Curlin winner Artorius to his left and set up inside Preakness winner Early Voting. Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike found a spot in sixth. Blue Grass winner Zandon settled outside and Curlin runner-up Gilded Age lagged in last.

Asmussen banged on the front ledge, three, four, five times, as the field went under the wire.

Cyberknife and Florent Geroux led Ain’t Life Grand and Tyler Gaffalione through the first quarter in :23.32 and a half in :47.63. Epicenter pulled into the pocket in third as Early Voting and Jose Ortiz tried to hem him in from the outside. Irad Ortiz Jr. placed Artorius, making just his fourth start,



Dom Napolitano/NYRA

**Epicenter (second from right) overtakes Cyberknife off the turn in the Travers.**

outside in fifth. Sonny Leon niggled at Rich Strike to keep pace as Flavien Prat switched off Zandon to his outside. Junior Alvarado took the sweeper role on longshot Gilded Age. After three-quarters in 1:11.43, Cyberknife led by three-quarters of a length over Ain’t Life Grand. Early Voting and Epicenter continued to track. Rich Strike, under a

drive, slid inside Artorius as Zandon aimed to swing around and Gilded Age tried to muster a miracle.

Erik Asmussen, in the front right corner, ignited the box, “Come on Joel. Come on Joel.” It rhymes with roll. Steve Asmussen followed his son, bellowing, “Come on Eppy. Come on Eppy. Come

**Continued On Page 16**

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# Travers —

■ Continued from page 14

on Eppy.” After that, it was a Texas chorus.

Midway on the turn, Cyberknife dispatched Ain’t Life Grand and Epicenter split inside Ain’t Life Grand and Early Voting and aimed at Cyberknife. The aim became the slain in a matter of strides as Epicenter rolled off the turn in the four path. Cyberknife battled but was beaten. Rosario slapped Epicenter on the shoulder underhanded near the quarter pole and again a few strides later, widening his reins, still loose before tightening up his cross passing the eighth pole. He uncocked his whip in his right hand, switched it to his left and offered one smack and a look under his right shoulder. He saw what everyone else saw, nothing in doubt. Rosario slowed his rhythm and took another quicker look under his right shoulder before easing up, a wrapped-up decimation job of the \$1.25 million stakes. Cyberknife hung tough on the rail to edge Zandon and a game Rich Strike in a three-way pho-



Dave Harmon

Joel Rosario checks for competition while pulling away from (from left) Rich Strike, Zandon and Cyberknife.

to. Gilded Age picked up a few pieces in fifth. Artorius ran evenly to finish sixth. Ain’t Life Grand faded to seventh. Early Voting was eased in last.

Epicenter, right ear pricked and left hear flicking, finished in 2:00.72 as Rosario rose in his irons strides before the wire like he was finishing a morning canter, offering Epicenter a soft pat below the white Asmussen braids and the leather Asmussen neck strap.

Nobody was holding a neck strap in the Asmussen box. Steve, gray hair and navy suit flying, threw his hands in the air, hugged his wife and each one of his sons, two, three at a time.

“Oh man, that was beautiful,” Asmussen said. “Let’s go paint that canoe, baby.”

Fans from the grandstand seats high-fived Asmussen, owners in the front row box seats shook his hand.

“Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you...”

It was a long walk.

“Oh man, two minutes and three-fifths. That’s racehorse time,” Asmussen said. “He’s a Grade 1 winner, baby.”

Bred by Westwind Farm and owned by Winchell Thoroughbreds,

**Continued On Page 18**

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## Travers —

■ Continued from page 16

the son of Not This Time earned his first Grade 1 stakes win in his 10th start. A winner of the Grade 2 Risen Star and Grade 2 Louisiana Derby this winter, the bay colt went off the favorite in the Grade 1 Kentucky Derby, did all the hard work and got nabbed late by Rich Strike. Sent off the favorite in the Preakness, Epicenter shuffled back and picked up everyone but Early Voting. Freshened and aimed at Saratoga, Epicenter crushed three rivals in the Grade 2 Jim Dandy July 30 to set him up for the Travers.

Epicenter entered the Travers as arguably the most talented but somehow less accomplished member of the 3-year-old class. He exited as the mid-term leader and favorite for championship honors.

Asmussen had seen it all week, all month, all summer.

"Like a carpenter with the biggest hammer. Swing it," Asmussen said. "He looked so good this week. When he schooled Thursday, he looked...athletic...strong...composed."

He used all three to dominate the Travers.

"Talent to confidence, that's the difference between him from the spring to the Jim Dandy. Talent became confidence," Asmussen said. "His ability. His ability. 'I can do this. I can do this.' What you're trying to create with him and with Joel is wherever you're at is exactly the pace you ought to be at. I've always thought races are from Point A to Point B. If you can keep your breathing and your rhythm. We train for the middle of a race, covering ground, taking as little energy out of you as possible and getting there, whether it's in front or behind."

In 10 starts, Epicenter has won from the front, from a stalking spot, from midpack and from last. Since a sixth in his debut at Churchill Downs in September, the \$260,000 yearling has won or finished second in every start. He's 2 lengths and a head from being 9-for-9 in that skein.

Most importantly, Epicenter provided Asmussen and owner Ron Winchell with their first Travers win after finishing third with Gun Runner in 2016 and second with Midnight Bourbon last year. The win also

helped ease the pain of two gallant tries in Triple Crown races this spring.

"It's good redemption on finishing second in the Derby and the Preakness and running second last year. It hurts when you run second and you lose by a neck," Winchell said. "Losing makes you want to try harder. Try harder. Find the next one. I don't know if I learned it, it's just the way it is, it's in your blood. You're not going to win them all, when you lose a big one, you just want to come back for the next one and try harder."

It wasn't certain if Winchell was speaking for himself, a dedicated owner who plays the long game or his horse, a hard-trying colt who shrugged off tough losses in the Derby and the Preakness to reclaim his perch at the top of the division.

Asmussen knew it was both.

"Ron's done it. The consistency of his plan, the direction and attitude is second to none. Never wavers. Emotionally, I'm all over the map. He is steady as a rock, follows the plan, stays in the plan," Asmussen said. "My confidence in Epicenter was the same as it was in Jackie, in all of them. We love who we have and we always believe they're going to get it done. We're always like that. He ran so hard and he got it done."

An hour after the Travers, Asmussen and his family piled into his Escalade, Kenny Chesney's Beer with my Friends came on channel 56 The Highway and they headed back to the barn to check on Epicenter.

Asmussen called his mom as they crossed Union Avenue.

"Oh, my Goodness, Steven, that is a feather in your cap," Marilyn Asmussen said.

"That's next level."

"You should be proud of those guys."

"Very proud of them, Mom."

"I love you."

"All right, Mom. I love you, too."

Then Asmussen called his dad.

"Turned out to be a hell of a good day," Keith Asmussen said.

"It's like horse racing, it's all how you finish."

"That's the only place that counts."

"He ran beautiful today, Dad. He's a great horse. I was proud of him."

"That's great. That's great. Everybody's happy."

"Love you, Dad."

"Love you, too."

A son, a father, a husband, a horse trainer. And a Travers.



A jockey in a dark helmet and silks is riding a grey horse on a racetrack. The horse is in motion, kicking up dust. The background is a blurred racetrack with a fence and some spectators. The lighting is warm, suggesting sunset or sunrise.

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# On Her Game

## Malathaat erases loss with rally in Grade 1

BY JOE CLANCY

Winner of her first five starts . . . Kentucky Oaks winner . . . Alabama winner . . . Champion 3-year-old filly . . . Seven wins, three seconds and a third in 11 lifetime starts with the third coming against older fillies/mares in the Breeders' Cup Distaff.

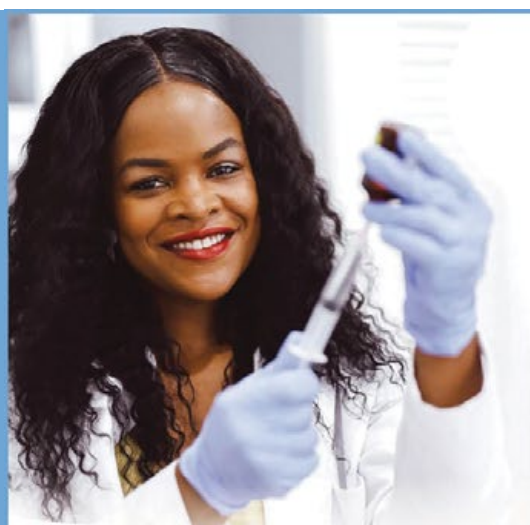
A horse such as Malathaat will raise expectations, which was why the people around her were so proud after she won the Grade 1 Personal Ensign Stakes at Saratoga Race Course Saturday.

Continued On Page 22



Malathaat (left) catches Search Results near the finish of Saturday's Personal Ensign.

Tod Marks



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# Personal Ensign —

■ Continued from page 20

“Vindication, baby,” trainer Todd Pletcher said in the middle of a fist bump.

“She’s back,” said jockey John Velazquez.

Pletcher and Velazquez were right, even if both followed up those comments with qualifiers. Owned by Shadwell Farm, Malathaat came into the Personal Ensign off back-to-back losses for the first time — each to Saturday rival Clairiere — with the latest preceded by a dull paddock presence, even duller warm-up and a flat effort while losing the Grade 2 Shuvee by 1 1/2 lengths to a horse she finished in front of four times last year.

“It’s not like she went away. It was not a disgrace, the last race, but we expect a little more from her,” Velazquez said. “She ran a good race, but at the same time she was a bit dull, and she didn’t do her best.”

“Disappointed in the outcome, I wasn’t disappointed in her,” Pletcher said. “We always have confidence in this filly. We love this filly so much



Dave Harmon

**Malathaat (5) breaks from the outside post and looks for a stalking spot early in Saturday’s Personal Ensign.**

in the barn, we want everyone else to appreciate her as much as we do.”

The Personal Ensign produced a five-horse gem as 2021 champion older female Letruska shipped in from Kentucky to face the first three from the July 24 Shuvee — Clairiere, Malathaat and Crazy Beautiful — plus

Grade 1 winner Search Results, coming in off a win in Monmouth Park’s Grade 3 Molly Pitcher July 23.

The public made Clairiere, whose lone defeat this year had come to Letruska in April’s Grade 1 Apple Blossom, the 8-5 favorite from post three. Letruska, Search Results and

Malathaat filled the next three slots at 3-1 or shorter. Unsettled in the gate, Clairiere charged the doors early with her head high, then sucked back before finding her footing just before the doors opened. She and Joel Rosario broke with the field, but dropped

**Continued On Page 23**

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# Personal Ensign —

■ Continued from page 22

back and to the rail and never got involved. From the inside, Letruska broke quickly and carried Search Results into the first turn as Malathaat navigated to the rail and found a spot in fourth. The leader covered a quarter-mile in :23.99, and had a length on Search Results who was 2 clear of Julien Leparoux on Crazy Beautiful with Malathaat along the rail.

“I told Todd I wanted to be in front of Julien’s horse or behind him where I could drop behind two horses,” said Velazquez. “Once I got to the first turn, I could follow the two horses that I thought were horses to beat and I still had Joel behind me. He was going to have to run to me. I had a good measure for the horses in front of me. If Joel had something, we were going to get together anyway.”

Velazquez advanced to third through a half-mile in :48.21, watched Search Results go after the leader exiting the turn after 6 furlongs in 1:11.74, came off the rail at the top of the stretch and went to work. Search Results and Flavien Prat took over from Letruska just before the eighth pole, but couldn’t withstand Malathaat’s final push as she

swept past to win by a half-length in 1:48.30. Letruska finished 2 lengths back in third with Crazy Beautiful fourth. Clairiere finished fifth, beaten 9 1/2 lengths. Asmussen told the NYRA communications team that she suffered a “significant” cut on her tongue, but was otherwise OK.

Pletcher said the race unfolded the way he hoped.

“We were just hoping that someone would keep Letruska somewhat honest and I thought Search Results did that to a degree,” he said. “I didn’t think they were going real fast early, but maybe just enough to keep her entertained and we were able to just keep contact with them and I felt like if we could get to the eighth pole with a chance, she could polish it off.”

Malathaat collected \$320,000 while winning her eighth race and fourth Grade 1 stakes. The daughter of Curlin, like Clairiere bred by Stonestreet Thoroughbred Holdings, pushed her career earnings to \$2,378,825. Pletcher has been a fan since the Keeneland September yearling sale, where Malathaat joined the Shadwell team for \$1.05 million, but goes back even further with the bay filly out of Grade 1 winner Dreaming Of Julia.

“She’s a beautiful filly, we trained

Continued On Page 24



Tod Marks

Jockey John Velazquez greets trainer Todd Pletcher after Malathaat’s win.

CHURCHILL DOWNS

## 2022 September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 2

### IROQUOIS (GIII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 17  
Closes Sept. 3  
\$300,000  
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF  
Two Year Olds  
1 1/16 Miles

### LOCUST GROVE (GIII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 17  
Closes Sept. 3  
\$400,000  
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF  
Fillies & Mares, Three Years Old & Up  
1 1/16 Miles

### POCAHONTAS (GIII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 17  
Closes Sept. 3  
\$300,000  
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF  
Fillies, Two Year Olds  
1 1/16 Miles

### LOUISVILLE THOROUGHBRED SOCIETY

Runs Sat., Sept. 17  
Closes Sept. 3  
\$275,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Three Year Olds & Up  
6 Furlongs

### OPEN MIND (Listed)

Runs Sat., Sept. 17  
Closes Sept. 3  
\$300,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Fillies & Mares, Three Years Old & Up  
6 Furlongs

### SENECA OVERNIGHT STAKES

Runs Sat., Sept. 24  
Closes Sept. 10  
\$160,000  
Includes \$65,000 from KTDF  
Fillies, Three Year Olds  
1 1/16 Miles

### BOURBON TRAIL

Runs Sat., Sept. 24  
Closes Sept. 10  
\$275,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Three Year Olds  
1 3/16 Miles

### HARRODS CREEK

Runs Sat., Sept. 24  
Closes Sept. 10  
\$275,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Three Year Olds  
7 Furlongs

### DOGWOOD (GIII)

Runs Sat., Sept. 24  
Closes Sept. 10  
\$275,000  
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF  
Fillies, Three Year Olds  
7 Furlongs

### ACK ACK (GIII) “Win and You’re In Dirt Mile Division”

Runs Sat., Oct. 1  
Closes Sept. 17  
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Three Year Olds & Up  
1 Mile

### LUKAS CLASSIC (GII)

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# Star 4-year-old filly Malathaat thrills team at Shadwell Farm

BY JOE CLANCY

You see the long bay filly, her even longer strides and that cool flag-flying blaze between her eyes but the people at Shadwell Farm see plenty more when it comes to Malathaat. The 4-year-old filly spent some down time there this winter, and made friends with pretty much everybody.

"She was home back for a winter break with us," said Shadwell's Brittany Carter, in Saratoga to watch Malathaat win the Grade 1 Personal Ensign Saturday. "That was great for the farm to have her come back, hang out with us for a little bit. She was basically in my backyard, and it just brings it a little bit closer to home to watch her run like she did today."

Somewhere, even Carter's German Short-Haired Pointer Maker – a regular visitor to Malathaat's paddock in Kentucky – was happy.

"Shadwell bought her, so she'd never been on the farm so to have her come home and have us get to know her was special," Carter said. "Everybody took turns to meet and greet her."

Shadwell owner Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum died in 2021 and the international operation has gone through a transition under the

leadership of his daughter Sheikha Hissa. The racing stable is smaller, with some horses selling last fall, but the quality is still there with Malathaat in the United States and the undefeated Baaeed leading the way in Europe.

Malathaat finished third in the Breeders' Cup Distaff in November for trainer Todd Pletcher and was dispatched to Kentucky for some down time along with Grade 1 winner Zaa-jel and Zainalarab (a Saratoga allowance winner last year). In adjacent paddocks and stalls, the 4-year-old fillies kept the schedule light.

"Absolutely nothing," Carter said when asked what Malathaat did in Kentucky. "She went out, she came in, just lived the best life. She'd be outside all day, probably at 7 in the morning. She'd come in at 3, have some dinner, get groomed and call it a day."

The vacation lasted until early January, when the champion 3-year-old filly of 2021 rejoined Pletcher's team in Florida to launch her 4-year-old campaign – now four starts in with two wins and two seconds.

"She was the perfect horse to have," Carter said. "She was so calm and classy about everything. Obviously, we're all big fans of her."



Tod Marks

Shadwell Farm's Brittany Carter helps lead Malathaat to the winner's circle Saturday along with groom Byron Lopez.

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Photo by Dan McCanna





# Back to Back

## Gufo repeats score in Gr. 1 turf marathon

**BY PAUL HALLORAN**

Stephen Cainelli wasn't trying to be presumptuous, but he is now the owner of a 3-time Grade 1 winner, so he couldn't help but play the what-if game.

"I was talking to my wife (Candi) and I told her if a horse is really good, they might name a race after him," Cainelli said. "Can you imagine as an owner who has put up multiple thousands of dollars to have a horse running in the Gufo?"

That may or may not ever come to pass, but Cainelli's homebred – whose name means owl in Italian – did become only the seventh back-to-back winner in the 47-year history of a race named for the 1959 Horse of the Year when he made his patented late run to take Saturday's Sword Dancer Stakes at Saratoga Race Course.

"We think if he is (within) 5 or 6 lengths at the top of the stretch, he's probably going to win or come pretty darn close," said Cainelli, a retired obstetrician from Texas who was ill last week and did not travel to Saratoga for the race.

Trainer Christophe Clement would agree, which is why he knew the son of Declaration Of War would need to be closer than the 15 1/2 lengths he trailed by with 3 furlongs to run in the Grade 1 United Nations Stakes at Monmouth Park in his previous start.

"At Monmouth he was 17 lengths off the pace at one stage and he only got beat by (2 1/2) lengths," Clement said. "He ran very well; he just could not make up that much ground."

The morning before the Sword Dancer, Clement stressed the need for Gufo to be more in touch with the field, which he hoped reintroducing blinkers would facilitate. Jockey Joel Rosario did his part, placing the horse only 6 lengths off the pace set by Tribhuvan with a quarter-mile to go in the 1 1/2-



Dave Harmon

**Gufo rallies in time to win Saturday's Sword Dancer for the second consecutive year.**

mile race. From there, Gufo unleashed his usual furious rally, catching Mira Mission, who had taken the lead at the stretch call, to win by a half-length and earn an automatic berth into the Breeders' Cup Turf at Keeneland.

"He had a great trip," said Clement, who won the Sword Dancer with Honor Glide in 1999, Winchester in 2011 and Gufo last year. "He was never

that far back and he was traveling very well. When Joel asked him, he just exploded in the stretch. We're delighted."

As he did last year, Gufo prevented famed Irish trainer Aidan O'Brien from winning his first Saratoga race. A year after O'Brien's Japan ran second in the Sword Dancer, 8-5 favorite Broome was last of 10 with a quarter mile to go under Ryan Moore and could get no closer than fourth. Clement's other runner, Soldier Rising, finished third.

"We have to credit the jockey," Clement said. "It was a perfect trip and a perfect ride. We're very happy. He came out of it in very good shape. We're still enjoying it."

The notoriously superstitious Cainelli, who stayed in the bathroom last year during the race because he had not seen the horse win in person, didn't even watch on TV this time around.

"I was out running errands," said Cainelli, who races as Otter Bend Stables. "My wife called me and told me he won."

The Sword Dancer was the ninth win in 19 starts for Gufo, who took the Grade 1 Belmont Derby as a 3-year-old and has won five graded stakes overall

**Continued On Page 27**



Amira Chichackly/NYRA

**Tribhuvan (right) leads the way early in the Sword Dancer.**



# Sword Dancer —

■ Continued from page 26

and earned \$1,983,030. Not bad for the first horse Cainelli ever bred (along with John Little) and owned.

“It’s always better to be lucky than good,” he said. “Christophe and Miguel (Clement) and their whole crew have done a great job. And Rosario has worked really hard with him. It worked out really well.”

Gufo ran in blinkers in his last four starts of 2021, including the Sword Dancer win, but Clement thought he was too keen for the Breeders’ Cup Turf, in which he finished 10th, so he removed them heading into this year. He won the Grade 2 Pan American at Gulfstream Park, ran second in the Grade 1 Man o’ War and third in the Grade 1 Manhattan, before the fifth in the United Nations.

“I probably should have put them on for the race at Monmouth,” Clement said before the Sword Dancer. “He still ran OK, but he was too far back with too much to do.”

That was not the case Saturday.

“It was a good trip. He really came with run when asked,” Rosario said. “He responded to everything I asked



Gufo heads back to the barn after the Sword Dancer.

Tod Marks

him to do. He looked like he likes it here. He won it last year and did it again this year.”

The blinkers will stay on with the Joe Hirsch Turf Classic Oct. 8 during the Belmont at the Big A Meet the likely next target, according to Clement.

“We’ll talk to the owner, but we race in New York and there is a big turf race to run in (before the Breeders’ Cup),” he said.

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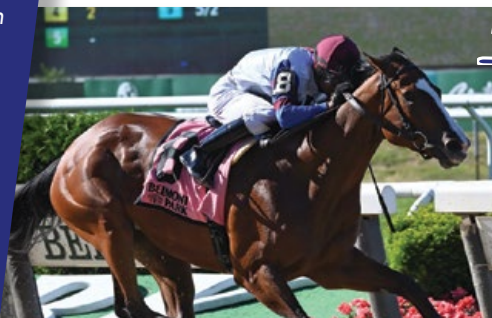
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# Fairytale

Cody's Wish delivers emotional upset for namesake in Gr. 1

BY PAUL HALLORAN

The announced crowd of just under 50,000 made plenty of noise as Cody's Wish roared down the Saratoga stretch in the Forego Stakes Saturday, but Kelly Dorman isn't sure they were much louder than the commotion in his house in Richmond, Ky.

"I told Danny (Pride, of Godolphin USA), I should probably check the drywall and make sure all the windows are still there," Dorman said. "It got pretty rowdy here."

Cody Dorman isn't able to verbalize his emotions, but the look on his face as he watched his namesake overtake 1-9 favorite Jackie's Warrior spoke volumes, according to his father.

"During the race, Cody was holding his sign and a No. 5 saddle cloth that he got at Churchill last fall," Kelly Dorman said, the same number Cody's Wish wore Saturday.

Cody made the sign in a therapy session last Thursday, a good-luck wish for his favorite horse. Cody, who communicates through a tablet, had told his parents Saturday morning that Cody's Wish would win Saturday, but only if the horse saw the sign.



Tod Marks

Cody's Wish heads back to the barn with a Grade 1 win for namesake Cody Dorman.



Dave Harmon

Cody's Wish sweeps past Jackie's Warrior in Saturday's Forego.

"Bill (Mott) had it on his phone and he showed the horse before the race," said Michael Banahan, Godolphin USA director of bloodstock. "It's a fantastic story, like Disney."

Disney produced the movie "Miracle" and Saturday Cody's Wish proved to be the equine equivalent of Mike Eruzione and his 1980 USA hockey teammates. Jackie's Warrior looked unbeatable on paper, having won 12 of 16 starts while becoming the first horse to win a Grade 1 in three consecutive years at Saratoga with a score in the A.G. Vanderbilt Stakes July 30 (to go with the 2020 Hopeful and 2021 H. Allen Jerkens).

"We were coming in knowing we were running against a champion in Jackie's Warrior," Banahan said. "He's a superstar horse, but our horse deserved a chance at the Grade 1 level. He's progressed each race he's run. We felt like there was more in the tank as well."

The son of Curlin out of the Tapit mare Dance Card had plenty left under Junior Alvarado Saturday, coming from sixth after a :45.10 half-mile in which Pipeline harangued Jackie's Warrior every step of the way and getting by the 2021 champion male sprinter to win by 1 1/4 lengths in a brisk 1:20.95 for 7 furlongs. Pipeline held on for third.

"We weren't coming in here thinking we were going to win," Banahan said. "We thought if he ran a good second it would be a good run for him, and if that horse stubs his toe or something, we were going to be there to pick up some pieces. He's pro-

gressively gotten better and better. We were happy having him in here and taking that chance."

And why wouldn't Godolphin and Mott be willing to roll the dice with a horse who had won five of nine lifetime and has a stable's worth of intangibles on his side?

"Four years ago we never dreamed we'd be sitting in a situation like this," Kelly Dorman said.

How could they?

Cody was born Dec. 18, 2005 with Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome, a rare genetic disease which can cause congenital heart defects, intellectual disability, seizures and delayed growth and development. He spent the first 12 days of his life in the neonatal intensive care unit at Central Baptist Hospital (now Baptist Health) in Lexington. He had two heart surgeries by the time he was 5 weeks old. One doctor told Kelly and his wife, Leslie, that Cody probably wouldn't make it to his second birthday.

That physician might have been interested to see Cody watching Cody's Wish become a Grade 1 winner.

"I knew he would win," Cody told his dad, through his tablet, in response to a few questions from The Special. "I'm proud of him. I had no doubt about what he was going to do."

Cody, who is wheelchair-bound, was asked about the unlikely bond he has developed with a horse he met for the first time Oct. 11, 2018, when

Continued On Page 29



# Forego —

■ Continued from page 28

a foal and mare were brought out of a stall at Godolphin's Gainsborough Farm in Versailles to meet him as part of a Make-A-Wish event sponsored by Keeneland.

"He's my buddy," he said. "I love him. He gives me so much motivation."

Those who were privileged to witness that first encounter were touched.

"The foal went right over and put his head in Cody's lap," said Mary Bourne, office manager at Gainsborough, who coordinates the farm's participation in the annual Make-A-Wish day. "You could see there was a connection. It was a special moment on a special day, but none of us had any idea it was going to turn into this."

The immediate bond was obvious to Cody's parents.

"We all got quiet and took in the moment," Kelly said. "My wife and I grew up on farms and we can't put into words what we saw that day. There was nothing planned or fabricated. They had brought out four of five mares and foals and the Dance Card foal kept creeping up to Cody."

When it came time to name the horse, Bourne suggested Cody's Wish and Cody's Dream, along with a third name she could not recall. The first choice was approved.

"We were flattered," Kelly said, and if the story had ended there the family would have been thrilled.

"If that horse had never set foot on the racetrack, he had already done more for us than we could ask," Kelly said. "From the first time they met, it was like he was saying to Cody, 'Hey, bud, you and I are going to be friends. I'm not going to let you down.' It means the world to us to see the fulfillment and happiness he's put in his heart."

A true friend is there when you need him most and Cody's Wish was there when Cody was battling depression from the death of his grandfather, Lester Spoon, in February 2019 and the lockdown necessitated by the pandemic in 2020.

"It was a dark time for Cody," his dad said. "With everything we have



Tod Marks  
Assistant trainer Riley Mott (left) and Godolphin's Dan Pride react to the Forego win by Cody's Wish.

been dealing with since he was born — dozens of surgeries, two strokes, thousands of seizures — that was the hardest thing when he started getting depressed."

Kelly and Leslie figured if anything could snap their son, whom they said has received excellent care at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, out of the doldrums, maybe a reunion with "his" horse could do the trick. They called Bourne and set up a visit, but in the fall of 2020 Cody's Wish was an unraced 2-year-old with appreciably more energy than the gentle foal Cody first encountered.

"He was full of vim and vigor, not like when he was a foal," Banahan said. "We wanted to be careful and make sure Cody would be safe."

The Dormans were content to keep their distance, as recommended, but Cody's Wish had other ideas, acting like any of us would upon seeing a good friend after two years apart.

"They brought the horse out and it took my breath away. I didn't realize he was that big," Kelly said. "They said he could be rowdy, but he looked at Cody and never took his eyes off of him. He never got aggressive. He let Cody rub his nose."

And then something happened that truly caught the parents off-guard: Cody laughed.

"Cody doesn't show a lot of instant emotion," said Kelly, noting that Cody has the "best little sister in the world" in 8-year-old Kylie. "He started laughing out loud with a deep belly laugh. I can count on one hand the number of times that has happened. Seeing that horse put the fire back in his belly."

Continued On Page 30

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## Forego —

### ■ Continued from page 29

Cody's Wish did not debut until June of his 3-year-old season, running a troubled-trip third in a maiden special weight at Belmont Park.

"After the race, my wife said the horse ran the way Cody has lived his life, with no quit," Kelly said. "That's the way Cody has always been."

The horse failed to break his maiden in two tries at Saratoga last summer, finishing behind Pipeline, the colt who would play a role in the Forego win, both times, but Cody had an explanation for that.

"He told my wife the horse wouldn't win until he was there," Kelly said.

That happened Oct. 2 when the Godolphin homebred won a maiden special weight at Churchill Downs. He won two allowance races to close out the year, with Cody in attendance for one of them.

Cody's Wish started his 2022 campaign with a second in the Grade 3 Challenger Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs in March, a loss predicted by Cody. "He kept saying, 'He's not ready. He's going to finish second,'" Kelly said. "I don't question it. I'm just happy to be enjoying a front-row seat for it."

Mott sent out Cody's Wish to win the Grade 3 Westchester at Belmont May 7 and was considering running him in the Met Mile on Belmont

Stakes Day, but a fever a few weeks before the race nixed that idea. He sent him back to Churchill for the Hanshin Stakes July 4 and the colt won by a neck with Cody cheering him on. That led the connections to take on Jackie's Warrior in the Forego, while sending their other accomplished sprinter, Speaker's Corner, to Del Mar to run in the Pat O'Brien Stakes Saturday, where he finished fourth.

"We were hoping that the scenario that played out would play out," Banahan said of the Forego. "We knew there was a bit of speed in the race. We weren't too sure anyone would take on Jackie's Warrior, but we were hoping someone would and maybe soften him up a little bit. He's a champion racehorse. To be able to run him down proved that our horse is in that elite league as well."

Their horse is named for a champion human, someone who has beaten the longest of odds and is deriving incalculable enjoyment from a relationship with a four-legged friend.

"I don't know how Cody would be doing right now if it wasn't for Cody's Wish," Leslie Dorman said. "He's living his best life."

And, whether he realizes it or not, teaching the rest of us how to live.

"If everyone looked at the world the way he does, it would be a better place," Kelly said. "It's a good story at a good time. I hope it puts a lot of smiles on a lot of people's faces."

To go with the tears of joy.



Cody's Wish stretches for the finish line in Saturday's Forego.

Tod Marks



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# Cutback

## Sprint return pays off for Jack Christopher

BY TOM LAW

Jim Bakke's initial foray to racing came more than two decades ago.

The president and chief executive officer of a luxury refrigeration company in Madison, Wisc., dabbled in racing on a small scale with his brother-in-law Fred Schwartz, with limited success. They later campaigned graded stakes winner Champali in the early 2000s with Tim Sweeney through their Lloyd Madison Farms partnership. Bakke teamed up with Gerald Isbister with Mr Freeze, a multiple graded stakes winner who finished second to Mucho Gusto in the Grade 1 Pegasus World Cup in 2020.

Then came Jack Christopher.

"I've been doing this for 25 years and never had a Grade 1 win until him, and now we have three," Bakke said Saturday after the 3-year-old son of Munnings won the \$500,000 H. Allen Jerkens Memorial. "It was a long wait, but it was worth it. To win here at Saratoga, in this kind of race, is a dream come true."

Jack Christopher delivered on the dream with another professional performance in the 7-furlong Jerkens, tracking the early pace, taking over ap-



Tod Marks

Jim Bakke leads Jack Christopher to the winner's circle.



Tod Marks

Jack Christopher charges to victory in Saturday's H. Allen Jerkens Stakes.

proaching the stretch and fending off gritty Grade 1 winner Gunite to win by 1 1/4 lengths.

Jack Christopher, who improved to 5-for-6 and bounced back from his lone defeat in the Grade 1 Haskell in late July at Monmouth Park, won in 1:21.15.

"He ran fantastic," said Isbister, one of Jack Christopher's owners with Bakke, Coolmore Stud and Peter Brant. "He's a great horse with a great heart, so we're very excited. After the Haskell we couldn't be happier. We stretched him out a bit there; that was a question mark but he ran a heck of a race, getting beat by two excellent, superb racehorses and ran on strong to end. We were pleased with it, but this was a great race."

Jack Christopher added the Jerkens to his victories in last year's Grade 1 Champagne and this year's Grade 1 Woody Stephens, both at Belmont Park. He also won the Grade 2 Pat Day Mile on the Kentucky Derby Day undercard at Churchill Downs.

Jose Ortiz, who rode two other winners on the Travers Day card including the Grade 2 Ballston Spa, was aboard Jack Christopher. He's ridden Jack Christopher in all six starts, including the loss to eventual Travers runner-up Cyberknife and Santa Anita Derby winner Taiba in the Haskell.

Ortiz fell in agreement with many – including gamblers who hammered him down to 1-2 in the field of eight – that the Haskell loss wasn't as bad as it looked despite losing the lead in the stretch at odds-on. He also relished the chance to get the colt back in a race around one turn like the Woody Stephens two starts back when he won by 10 lengths.

"He ran huge; he gave me everything he had and a very good race," Ortiz said. "At the three-eighths pole he picked up little by little and I knew when I got next to (Conagher), I knew I got him."

"From then on he just kept going the same pace. I knew if he didn't stop, he was going to run them off their feet because he was running the whole way. Seven is a tricky distance. I'd rather go a mile. Seven-eighths is tricky. The pace is a little bit faster, and you have to run the whole way and he did."

Jack Christopher broke sharp, but relinquished the early lead to speedy Kentucky shipper Conagher leaving the chute and heading onto the main track. Conagher opened up by 2 lengths through the opening quarter in :22.18, tracked by Jack Christopher and Ortiz with Runninsonofagon, Gunite and Actuator not far back.

Conagher continued on around the far turn, past the half-mile split in :44.53. Jack Christopher

**Continued On Page 33**



# Jerkens —

■ Continued from page 32

inched closer to that point, just a length back and tipped a few paths off the rail around the bend. Jack Christopher rolled up to Conagner while three-wide approaching the quarter pole and took command turning for home.

Runninsonofagun cut the corner and almost drew on even terms before Jack Christopher accelerated and opened up by 2 ½ lengths in midstretch past 6 furlongs in 1:08.44. Gunite, winner of last year's Hopeful and the Grade 2 Amsterdam last time out, continued a sustained run but couldn't catch the winner inside the final furlong.

"He just kept taking a run at that colt," said Gunite's jockey Tyler Gaffalione. "That's a very talented colt, the winner, and my horse never gave it up. It was a big effort."

Gunite finished 2 3/4 lengths clear of 41-1 longshot Runninsonofagun, who came home 3 1/4 clear of Conagher at the finish.

Jack Christopher earned \$275,000 for the win to push his earnings past the seven-figure mark, to \$1,216,400 from a half-dozen starts. The third foal out of Rushin No Blushin — a half-sister to Grade 1-winning sprinter Street Boss — Jack Christopher cost Bakke and Isbister \$135,000 at the 2020 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October yearlings sale. Jack Christopher made his first start — an 8 3/4-length Travers Day maiden win last summer — for Bakke and Isbister, with Coolmore and Brant coming on board as partners before the Champagne.

The Champagne earned Jack Christopher an automatic berth in last year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile and Del Mar's oddsmaker installed him as the morning-line favorite for the race. He missed a chance at the Juvenile — and the 2-year-old male championship — when an issue with his left shin forced a scratch the day before the race.

"He's been a very consistent horse," Brown said. "He's never disappointed us in a workout or a race. Jose rode another fantastic race on him. He broke sharp and used good judgment to rate him just a touch. Every pole, he was in control of the race. I'm so proud of both Jose and the horse."

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# Local Love

Technical Analysis improves to 3-for-4 at Spa with Gr. 2 win

BY CHRISTIAN AVARD

Technical Analysis made it clear in Saturday's 34th Ballston Spa Stakes that she's a bona fide Saratoga horse-for-the-course.

Klaravich Stable's 4-year-old daughter of Kingman improved to 3-for-4 at Saratoga with a half-length win over stablemate Fluffy Socks in the \$388,000 Grade 2 for fillies and mares on the grass. Ridden by Jose Ortiz, Technical Analysis established the early lead with pressure from Our Flash Drive the quarter-pole. Technical Analysis held off the late run from Fluffy Socks and jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. in the stretch to win in 1:42.90 for

Continued On Page 35



Tod Marks

Technical Analysis (right) holds off Fluffy Socks in Saturday's Ballston Spa.

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# Saturday —

## ■ Continued from page 34

the 1 1/16 miles over the firm Mellon Turf Course.

Technical Analysis won her third stakes at Saratoga and bounced back from her second to record-setting stablemate In Italian in the Grade 1 Diana July 16.

“As you start to run the horses here season-to-season, you find the horses that have an affinity for it,” said trainer Chad Brown, who won his eighth Ballston Spa. “I was telling (Seth) Klarman before the race, of all the courses I run on, Saratoga is the at the top for a horse-for-the-course type of place. Horses that have previously run well here, do find their form here.

“She particularly likes Saratoga, as do others, and I can count on them to run their best races when they find their way back here.”

Technical Analysis won last year’s Grade 2 Lake Placid and Grade 3 Lake George at Saratoga.

Ortiz isn’t all-in on horse-for-course angle.

“She likes everywhere,” said the jockey, who won two more races on the Travers Day card including the Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens on Jack Christopher. “She’s won at Pimlico and she’s won at Aqueduct. She’s just good. She handles the tight turns here at Saratoga nicely. She accelerates on them and it’s hard to accelerate on them.”

Brown said he hoped to point Technical Analysis to the Grade 1 First Lady Stakes Oct. 8 at Keeneland Race Course, as a possible stepping-stone to the Breeder’s Cup.

“That’s really Chad’s call,” Klarman said. “Under the right set up, she certainly could be (a Breeders’ Cup horse), but I don’t push Chad on that. Let’s see how she comes out, who else is around. We have lots of options.”

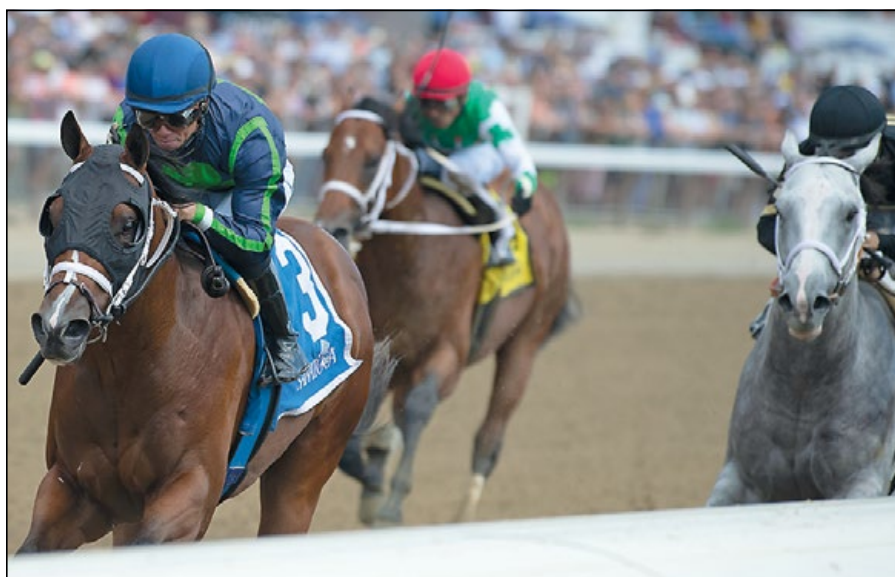
- Trainer Brad Cox brought his 6 1/2-year-old son Brodie, who he dubbed his good luck charm, with him to the winner’s circle after sending out Verifying to take the Travers Day opener.

The 2-year-old son of Justify and a half-brother to champion Midnight Bisou won his debut on the lead by 1 3/4 lengths over Track Mate. Joel Rosario rode the 3-5 favorite in 1:10.26 for 6 furlongs.

“When he came to us, he was an immature baby and he had to show me a little bit before I got super high on him,” Cox said of the \$775,000 Keeneland September yearling. “He showed us a move at Keeneland and I thought he deserved an opportunity to come to Saratoga. I got him up here and he’s been spot on week after week.”

Cox said the Grade 3 Iroquois Sept. 17 at Churchill Downs comes up too quick for Verifying’s next start but that he’d most likely look for a spot this fall in Kentucky. He also

**Continued On Page 36**



Tod Marks

Verifying wins the Travers Day opener for trainer Brad Cox.



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3. **Nest.** And that's that. Star filly dazzles in CCA Oaks and Alabama sweep.
4. **Snap Decision.** Yes, really. He carried 164 pounds for 2 3/8 miles and made it look easy.
5. **Malathaat.** Erased Shuvee loss with grind-it-out win in G1 Personal Ensign.
6. **Jackie's Warrior.** Three Gr. 1 Saratoga wins in three years? He's like a mini-Fourstardave.
7. **Cody's Wish.** Runs fast, for a cause, in stellar Forego victory.
8. **Gufo.** Goes back-to-back in G1 Sword Dancer to make turf case.
9. **In Italian.** Her Diana score was something. Grade 1 win, course record. Bellissimo.
10. **Casa Creed.** Went a mile in Fourstardave the way he did 6 furlongs in Jaipur.

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Dave Harmon

Feathers Road (2) wins a battle to the wire in Saturday's 12th race, part of a double for jockey Jose Lezcano and trainer Linda Rice.

## Saturday —

### ■ Continued from page 35

has high hopes for the colt after racing for his Coolmore Stud-affiliated ownership group.

"He can be a stallion," Cox said. "That's what they are hopeful for and that's what I'm hopeful for. It's our job to manage him properly, hopefully win a Grade 1 with him and keep him with a nice clean race record."

Verifying was one of four winners on the Travers Day card for Rosario, who also won the Travers on Epicenter, Sword Dancer on Gufo and seventh aboard Life Changer.

- Life Changer won the sixth, a starter allowance going



Dave Harmon

Life Changer wins Saturday's sixth for trainer John Terranova.

7 furlongs on the main track, to give Gatsas Stables its first winner of the meet.

Life Changer, a 5-year-old son of Oxbow ridden by Joel Rosario, finished second in a similar 6-furlong starter July 29. He stalked in third early behind Jet Speed and Baltasar before a four-wide run into the stretch. Life Changer won by 2 lengths over Luni Sima with Baltasar third in the field of eight.

"He has been in good form all season," said trainer John Terranova. "Life Changer had a tight trip two back and then his last trip he was stuck down inside the rail. It wasn't the place to be and he got forced down inside. Today we drew an inside post so we were worried about that. But Joel knows him well now and he's been on him several times."

Terranova wasn't sure of Life Changer's next race, but was happy to get the Gatsas family a Saratoga win.

"We've been together for 22 years now this summer and they are like family," Terranova said. "They are special for all of us."

- Two-year-old maidens got rained off the turf in the second, leaving main-track-only entrant Funtastic Again to run away with a 6 1/2-length win for Three Chimneys Farm and trainer Wesley Ward . . . Trainer Linda Rice won two, a 7-furlong New York-bred allowance with Majority Partner for Cloud Nine Racing and the 12th as a co-owner/breeder with A Shares Stable's Feathers Road. The latter won a four-way photo over Kreesa, Empire Sky and Fuoco in the New York-bred maiden. Jose Lezcano rode both Rice winners . . . Gumpster Stable's Wicked Groove closed the day by winning the 13th, a 1-mile turf allowance for fillies/mares, for trainer Rob Atras and jockey Manny Franco.



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# Good Seats

## Goodnight Olive lands Grade 1 sprint for First Row Partners

BY TOM LAW

First Row Partners are just that. Partners from the first row.

“We met because we sit right beside each other in the boxes,” Steve Laymon, the head of the group, said as he pointed to the clubhouse boxes Sunday afternoon at Saratoga Race Course. There are six of us that sit together, and that’s where the name came from. We’ve been very blessed. This is our fourth year in operation. We’ve had a Grade 3 winner, two Grade 2 winners and now a Grade 1 winner.”

Goodnight Olive delivered that Grade 1 Sunday, winning the \$500,000 Ballerina Handicap in her stakes debut for First Row and Team Hanley, trainer Chad Brown and jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. The 4-year-old daughter of Ghostzapper improved to 5-for-6 with her 2 3/4-length win over Caramel Swirl in 1:21.40 for the 7 furlongs.

“This is pretty cool; and she’s pretty cool,” said Laymon, also involved in champion, multiple Grade 1 winner and \$2,288,892-earner Dayatthespa with a different group of partners.

Laymon, Marty Scheinman, Will Robbins, Frank Romeo, John Eaton and Roger Kaplan make



Janet Garaguso/NYRA

Goodnight Olive returns after the Grade 1 stakes win.



Dave Harmon

Goodnight Olive speeds to victory in Sunday's Ballerina.

up First Row. They’ve known each other for about 15 years.

“I was doing horses and Marty was kind of getting out of horses and one day said to me, ‘I want to do horses with you.’ That got things rolling,” Laymon said. “We have five horses in training. We don’t do big numbers. We’re trying to emphasize quality. We want to put quality in Chad’s barn.”

Goodnight Olive showed that quality first at the 2019 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October yearling sale. Laymon identified the Stonestreet Thoroughbred Holdings-bred filly out of multiple Grade 3-winning Smart Strike mare Salty Strike as a top prospect. So did Liz Crow, working the sale for Hanley and other clients.

“Jay was on a mission to buy Stonestreet-bred horses that year,” Laymon said. “We lined up on this filly. Liz called and said, ‘Jay Hanley called me and asked me to go look at this filly. Would you take Jay on as a partner?’ Sure, he can have a piece. What he started doing was taking little pieces of our horses along the way. What he does brings in a lot of people that otherwise might not get to this level of racing. It’s lovely to bring people into racing.”

Unraced at 2, Goodnight Olive started her career in March 2021 at Gulfstream Park when second in a 6-furlong maiden race. She hasn’t lost since, rattling through her conditions in the fall of 2021 and again this spring and summer before Brown put her in the Ballerina against last year’s Breeders’ Cup Fil-

ly and Mare Sprint winner Ce Ce, Grade 1 winners Bella Sofia and Obligatory, Grade 2 winners Caramel Swirl and Travel Column and Grade 3 winner Lady Rocket.

Goodnight Olive didn’t even have a stakes appearance coming into the Ballerina, never mind a win. Ankle chips – removed and dealt with twice – were to blame for her limited starts to Sunday, late in the filly’s 4-year-old season.

Goodnight Olive’s connections hoped she’d make a stakes start in the restricted Shine Again but the race drew insufficient entries to be carded Aug. 3. Brown pegged a 6 1/2-furlong optional claimer Aug. 7 and Goodnight Olive throttled five opponents by 3 3/4 lengths.

“The team of owners always let me do the right thing, take my time with this horse and never push her beyond what she was ready to do,” Brown said. “That’s another example of some patience. The Shine Again didn’t go and there wasn’t really an option. I said, ‘Let’s run in this allowance race and not just try to train up to this race. I know it’s back in three weeks, but I think she’ll need a race in between.’ You run the risk of back in three weeks and she doesn’t run as well. Like they’ve always done, they deferred to me and said it’s fine. We had not planned on running in an allowance at Saratoga. We did it, she was successful (and) escaped the allowance healthy and had to come back in three weeks and do this.”

Continued On Page 39



# Ballerina —

■ Continued from page 38

Bettors sent Goodnight Olive to post for the Ballerina as the 5-1 fourth choice in the field of seven, behind 3-2 favorite Ce Ce, Obligatory and Bella Sofia. Travel Column came out a bit at the break and bumped Goodnight Olive in the first few strides before taking the lead leaving the chute and heading onto the main track.

Travel Column and Bella Sofia battled through the opening quarter-mile in:22.09, about a length clear of Goodnight Olive. Travel Column dispatched Bella Sofia heading into the far turn and led past the half in :44.50 as Ortiz guided Goodnight Olive past Bella Sofia ahead of Caramel Swirl,

Lady Rocket and Ce Ce.

Goodnight Olive ran up to Travel Column approaching the quarter pole and edged past at the 3/16ths pole, opening up past 6 furlongs in 1:08.62. Caramel Swirl and Obligatory, two of the three runners in the race for Bill Mott along with Travel Column, continued to make late runs without seriously threatening the winner.

“She always wins the right way,” Ortiz said. “In the allowance races, you could see how easy she won. She’s a nice filly but she had never faced Grade 1 horses in the afternoon, but she did it today and she showed up. ... She’s very tactical. She can do anything. She can be on the front. She can sit off of the speed. She can be at the back and she always shows up. She’s nice.”



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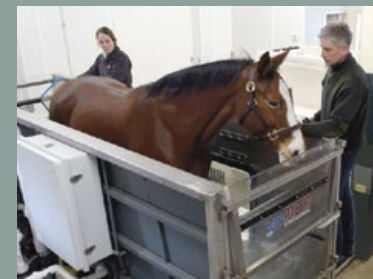
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**— Trainer Wesley Ward**

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# Green Up

## Sanford winner Wit adds turf stakes score

Todd Pletcher thought about it – for not even a second – and then dismissed the idea that a turf career might have been in the cards for Wit this time last year. The Practical Joke colt won his debut by 6 lengths, added the Grade 2 Sanford in an 8-length home run trot and was aiming for the Grade 1 Hopeful on the meet's final day.

"No, nah . . . nah," the trainer said with a squint. "I guess with the Medaglia d'Oro mare, maybe . . ."

But not really.

Wit, a \$575,000 yearling purchase, was headed to big things on the dirt last year. Of course, he finished second to Gunite in the Hopeful and third behind Jack Christopher in the Champagne to cap 2021. This year, he opened with a win in the Bay Shore before finishing 14 lengths behind Jack Christopher in the Grade 1 Woody Stephens on Belmont Stakes Day.

Owned by Repole Stable, St. Elias Stable and Gainesway, Wit headed to Saratoga with a question mark next to his name. Twice a Grade 3 winner, he wasn't breaking through to the next level. Not on dirt anyway. Pletcher sent him out for a turf work July 22, and Wit delivered a half-mile in a bullet :47.95 at Oklahoma. The move, plus another July 30, sent Wit to the Grade 2 Hall of Fame Stakes going a mile on the turf Aug. 5. Second there, Wit went back to the grass for Sunday's Better Talk Now restricted stakes – and marched off with a 2 3/4-length win.

Ridden by Jose Ortiz, Wit let Fluid Situation open a big early lead through fractions of :22.93 and :46.98 before taking over in the stretch and drawing off through a mile in 1:36.87. Long-shot Ohtwoohthreefive finished second with Napoleonic War third.

"Really it was just about kind of looking for an opportunity and, when we worked him on it, it was obvious that he took to it," Pletcher said of the turf. "It's sort of like you can see some renewed enthusiasm, he was happier, enjoying himself. He's run some good races on the dirt, but it seems like he just kind of got happy again on the turf."

Bred by Rosilyn Polan, Wit won for the fourth time in eight starts and earned \$74,250 while pushing his career bankroll to \$500,250. Restricted to 3-year-olds who had not won a stakes, other than state-bred, at a mile or over,



Dave Harmon

### Wit makes it look easy in Sunday's Better Talk Now Stakes.

the Better Talk Now offered an opportunity. The only stakes winner in the field started as the 3-5 favorite and lived up to it.

"He was very good early on, on dirt, and I thought he could be a very good horse," said Ortiz, aboard for the maiden win and in the Bay Shore. "Todd asked if I could work him on the turf and it was like he found another life, a second chance. He liked it. The two times he has run on turf he's been great."

– Joe Clancy

Hall of Fame jockey Javier Castellano spent Travers Day at Monmouth Park – riding Nest's

half-brother Lost Ark to victory in the Sapling Stakes – and returned to Saratoga Race Course with three winners on Sunday's card.

Castellano won the second aboard 5-2 second choice Cryo, the fifth on Call Me Harry and the sixth aboard The Great Maybe. Castellano's 26 wins at the meet through Sunday put him in a three-way tie for fifth with Jose Ortiz and Manny Franco.

"It's a competitive and tough game," Castellano said after riding The Great Maybe. "We have the best jockey colony for 20 to 30 years. We come from everywhere, they are all equal and everything is about opportunity and being lucky and in the right place at the right time. That's where I am right now."

The 26 wins are double what Castellano put up last year at Saratoga, when he was working his way back from hip surgery in late 2020, and match his total from the 2020 Saratoga season. He won the meet in 2013 and 2014.

The Great Maybe, a 2-year-old daughter of Upstart, won her debut going 6 furlongs for owners Lael Stable and trainer Cherie DeVaux. A \$425,000 purchase at the OBS March sale of 2-year-olds, The Great Maybe brushed the gate at the start and raced just behind I'm A Country Girl early. She took over near the half-mile pole and cruised to an 8-length victory in 1:10.24.

"What I'm most impressed with is how she kept going," DeVaux said. "It opens up more

**Continued On Page 41**



Dave Harmon

**Xigera wins Sunday's opener for trainer Phil Bauer.**



# Sunday —

## ■ Continued from page 40

options if she can go a bit more.”

Castellano rode the filly in each of her four works at Saratoga, DeVaux said.

“He knows her better than anyone else,” she said.

Cryo started Castellano’s big day with a 5 ½-length win in a 9-furlong starter allowance on the main track for Zilla Racing Stables, Black Jack Racing and Acqua Nova Stable and trainer Orlando Noda. Call Me Harry, a 6-year-old New York-bred gelding by Street Sense, won an open-company 1-mile allowance on the inner turf for owner Jordan Wycoff and trainer Joe Sharp.

— **Christian Avard**

• Jockey Julien Leparoux and trainer Phil Bauer teamed to win Sunday’s opener when Rigney Racing’s Xigera improved off her debut second in the \$105,000 maiden for 2-year-old fillies on the grass. The daughter of Nyquist won by 5 ¾ lengths over Justifiable Belle as the 6-5 favorite.

“We liked her first time out, but she was still a little green,” Leparoux said “She ran a good race last time, she just got beat by a nice filly (Pink Hue). Today, we rode her very confidently. She likes being amongst the leaders and she showed a nice kick at the end.”

Xigera gave Bauer his sixth win in 10 starts at the meet.

“Julien knows her,” Bauer said. “He’s been on her every work up here. I told him ‘I’m worried she might be too sharp today.’ He did a good job going into the first turn and knowing she wanted to press the pace. He took a hold of her and told her, ‘it’s OK to relax.’”

Bauer said Xigera will head back to Kentucky, where he hopes to run the filly in the Grade 2 Jessamine Oct. 7 at Keeneland Race Course.

— **Christian Avard**

• Bettors waiting for a bomb Sunday were rewarded when Outlaw Kid won the finale at 25-1.

Outlaw Kid, a 3-year-old Ontario-bred 3-year-old Violence gelding, returned from seven months on the sidelines to win the 5 1/2-furlong maiden special weight by 1 1/4 lengths over Rocket’s Red Glare with 3-1 favorite Java Buzz third.

Trained by George Weaver, Outlaw Kid hadn’t been out since finishing sixth in his debut Jan. 28 at Gulfstream Park.

“It was pretty tough on paper, I was looking for an easier race,” Weaver said. “We made him a gelding after his first start (and) he was breezing well since he got here.”

Outlaw Kid, owned by R. A. Hill Stable and SGV Thoroughbreds, might run next at Woodbine.

“I have to look at Ontario next,” Weaver said. “I’ll just enjoy the win and figure it out. That’s what we always do.”

— **Christian Avard**



Dave Harmon

Two-year-old filly The Great Maybe wins Sunday’s sixth.

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# Turf or Dirt?

## Rain threatens chance of With Anticipation turf stakes for 2YOs

Wayne Catalano stood outside his small string on the Oklahoma Training Track Tuesday morning, alternating glances at his phone and a big, bay colt on the wash rack.

"Look at him; he's a monster," Catalano said while members of his team gave Andthewinneris a bath after he trained on the main track before the break. "He's a big boy. A good boy. Does everything good."

Catalano hopes the 2-year-old son of Oscar Performance gets the chance to show how good in Wednesday's Grade 3 With Anticipation. Thus the phone, and specifically a weather app that showed chances of rain in the 80-, 90- and 100-percent range into the night Tuesday.

Significant rainfall, which washed away grass races on multiple cards last week including Friday's Saratoga Showcase Day card for New York-breds, might move the 1 1/16-mile With Anticipation to the main track. Andthewinneris ran on the dirt in his last start, finishing third behind Gulfport and Owen's Leap in the Bashford Manor Stakes at Churchill Downs, but Catalano wants a long grass race for his colt.

### Saratoga Leaders

TRAINERS .....	1ST	JOCKEYS .....	1ST
Chad Brown .....	37	Irad Ortiz Jr. ....	47
Todd Pletcher .....	31	Luis Saez .....	35
Mike Maker .....	15	Joel Rosario .....	34
Bill Mott .....	14	Flavien Prat .....	30
Christophe Clement..	14	Javier Castellano .....	26
Steve Asmussen .....	11	Manny Franco .....	26
Linda Rice .....	10	Jose Ortiz .....	26
Brad Cox .....	9	John Velazquez .....	19
Wesley Ward .....	9	Tyler Gaffalione .....	15
Tom Morley .....	7	Jose Lezcano .....	15
Phil Bauer .....	6	Junior Alvarado .....	10
David Donk .....	6		
Jeremiah Englehart .....	6		
George Weaver .....	6		

Through Tuesday



Tod Marks

Saratoga maiden winner Lachaise is part of the With Anticipation field.

"I don't want rain; I've been waiting all this time for grass," Catalano said. "We've been waiting since April for this race."

Catalano trains Andthewinneris for his breeder, Susan Moulton, and considered the colt out of the Scat Daddy mare Run Like The Boss for the \$135,000 Chesham Stakes at the Royal Ascot meeting. Run at 7 furlongs on a straightaway, the Chesham is open to colts, geldings and fillies whose sire or dam won at 10 furlongs or more. Run Like The Boss won two races – at 4 1/2 and 5 furlongs – but Oscar Performance won twice at 1 1/4 miles in the Grade 1 Belmont Derby and Grade 1 Secretariat.

"I'm not worried about the distance," Catalano said. "He's bred to go a mile and a half and he's trained well up to this race."

Listed as the co-third choice on the morning line at 5-1, Andthewinneris comes into the With Anticipation with a bullet half-mile breeze in :47.19 on the Oklahoma turf Aug. 14 and a 7-furlong move on the Oklahoma dirt in 1:31.06 Aug. 22.

"That was an amazing workout on that track," Catalano said of the half-mile work. "It was one of 74. ... Black lettered every pole and galloped out strong. Then the other work, that was a little slow but he did it without company and these tracks have been slow. He got the air. We know he's fast. The fast work was on the turf. We didn't need fast in that one we needed the air."

A field of 10 was entered in the body of the race with the maiden Determinedly on the also-eligible list. Battle Of Normandy, a first-out winner for Shug McGaughey on Whitney Day Aug. 6, is the

3-1 favorite from post one. Our Dream Rye'd, who ran against likely Hopeful favorite Mo Strike in his debut on dirt at Churchill then won a two-turn maiden on the grass here July 30, is the 4-1 second choice for Ian Wilkes. Lachaise, another colt by Oscar Performance and a half-brother to New York-bred champion Runaway Rumour, is also listed at 5-1 off an Aug. 4 state-bred maiden win for trainer Jorge Abreu.

– Tom Law

### Be Your Best takes next step

The day after Be Your Best rolled to a 3 1/4-length debut maiden win, Horacio De Paz hinted that he wouldn't be surprised if the Irish-bred filly wound up in someone else's barn for her next start.

She's owned by Mike Ryan, who buys and sells horses for a living. He bred Be Your Best in the name of his St Croix Bloodstock, and always listens to offers. That's what he does and De Paz knows the drill.

"I've been going back and forth with Mike about what makes sense," De Paz said. Obviously, he's getting offers, too. We'll see how that goes."

Be Your Best didn't sell – at least not yet – and goes in Thursday's \$150,000 P.G. Johnson for 2-year-old fillies on the grass. She figures to be among the favorites – along with Idea Generation, who comes out of the no-contest turf maiden July 24 – from post six in the field of eight drawn into the body of the 1 1/16-mile stakes.

Continued On Page 43



# Previews —

## ■ Continued from page 42

“She didn’t go. So far. She’s still here and we’ll give this race a try,” De Paz said Tuesday. “She’s doing good, training very forwardly. Very steady.”

De Paz said he’d discuss the chances of running with Ryan depending on how much rain came down Tuesday and how saturated the turf course would be Thursday.

“I guess you don’t really know until you run,” De Paz said. “She gets over the dirt surfaces really well, in her breezes and gallop outs. I’ll talk to him after we see how much rain we get.”

Idea Generation crossed the finish second, a nose behind Towhead, in the July 24 race ruled a no-contest with a tractor malfunction that prevented the starting gate to be removed in a timely manner. Be Your Best was originally entered in that race but didn’t debut until a week later.

“We were in that same race with Chad’s filly but we ended up scratching because it was hot,” De Paz said. “Then it became a non-contested race, so we ended up looking like geniuses. That was Mike’s call, too, he didn’t want to start her out on a hot day. He thought to get a good read on her it would be better if we didn’t have any excuses because of the weather.”

— Tom Law

## Hot Peppers eyes Prioress

Stop by trainer Rudy Rodriguez’s barn at Saratoga Race Course to ask about Hot Peppers and the trainer will be honest.

“She’s right there, looking at you. She’s not much to look at, not very big, but she tries hard.”

On cue, the 3-year-old filly arrives at the stall door to say hello. Small and sleek, she looks fast standing still — backing up her five-win career and a spot in Friday’s Grade 2 Prioress Stakes. Owned by Michael Dubb and Michael Caruso, the daughter of Khozan takes on nine others in the 6-furlong stakes, the ninth of 10 races on the card, while looking to go one better than her second in the Grade 1 Test here Aug. 6.

Owner/trainer Ronnie Spatz spent \$16,000 to buy the bay filly at OBS last June. Second in her debut in October, she dominated a Florida-bred

maiden race at Gulfstream Park Jan. 6. The 14 1/4-length win drew attention, and was purchased by Dubb who left her with Spatz for another Florida-bred win three weeks later. She added an open-company allowance Feb. 20 at Gulfstream before finishing last of seven in a Florida-bred stakes at Tampa Bay Downs in March.

Shipped north to Rodriguez, Hot Peppers returned with an easy score in the Jersey Girl Stakes at Belmont Park June 12 and hit the big time with a win in the Grade 3 Victory Ride July 9.

“Michael Dubb has a lot of trainers, very, very salty trainers, so we were lucky,” said Rodriguez. “We just thanked him for sending her to us.”

Rodriguez aimed for a Grade 1 next and Hot Peppers was sent off as the 6-1 second choice in the Test as Matareya was bet down to 3-2. Hot Peppers set the pace through fractions of :22.54 and :45.28 before getting passed in the stretch by longshot Chi Town Lady as Matareya settled for third.

“She had a tough race last time, she ran a winning race, she was just second, it happens, sometimes they run like that and don’t win,” said Rodriguez, who enters the final week at Saratoga with two wins from 78 starts. “The meet has been like that, up and down, but we keep working hard and we’re happy to get a chance to run.”

Back to 6 furlongs, where she is 2-for-2, Hot Peppers breaks from post two for Luis Saez against a solid group. Half Is Enough and Sterling Silver, second and third to Hot Peppers in the Victory Ride, return. Wicked Halo exits back-to-back stakes wins at Churchill Downs. Lady Scarlet won the Grade 3 Miss Preakness two back. Bank On Anna beat older fillies and mares in the Union Avenue. Angitude shortens up from the 1-mile Wilton. Smash Ticket exits a win here July 20. Union Lake has won two in a row. Mischievous Diane won against older at Belmont in June.

“She’s got to deal with the post because the inside seems very difficult right now,” Rodriguez said. “She has a lot of heart and she knows how to win races. I prefer to have a nice, solid horse that wins than a horse that doesn’t want to try. She’s a very easy filly, lets you do what you want. She wants to be on the pace, but she breaks and gallops along. We just try to keep her relaxed like that.”

— Joe Clancy



NYRA Photo

Hot Peppers won the Jersey Girl in June.

## Need Space?

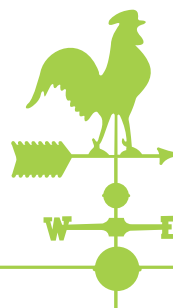
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1ST (1:05PM). \$70,000, ALW, 4 YO’S & UP, 2 3/8M (HURDLE)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double			
1	.....1.....	Bandua.....	G. Galligan..... N. Morris..... 2-1
1a	.....5.....	Project Two (IRE).....	T. Garner..... L. Young..... 2-1
2	.....2.....	Ancient Times.....	R. Geraghty..... A. Kingsley, Jr..... 8-1
3	.....3.....	Who's Counting.....	S. McDermott..... S. McDermott..... 6-1
4	.....4.....	Fightinirishtabit.....	H. Beswick..... R. Hendriks..... 10-1
5	.....6.....	Bright Eyed Eagle (IRE)...	B. Foley..... K. Neilson..... 10-1
6	.....7.....	Baltimore Kid (IRE).....	P. Hendriks..... K. Brion..... 7-2
7	.....8.....	Proven Innocent.....	J. Bargary..... J. Fisher..... 5-2

2ND (1:39PM). \$50,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO’S & UP, F & M , 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double			
1	.....1.....	Duckphat.....	O. Hernandez Moreno..... J. Ferraro..... 6-1
2	.....2.....	Maddie's Surprise.....	J. Ortiz..... G. Sciacca..... 5-1
3	.....3.....	Laughter.....	L. Saez..... R. Lerman..... 3-1
4	.....4.....	Yogi.....	E. Cancel..... J. Antonucci..... 15-1
5	.....5.....	Kukaro.....	J. Lezcano..... J. Ryerson..... 8-1
6	.....6.....	I'm Nervous Now.....	J. Alvarado..... S. Joseph, Jr..... 4-1
7	.....7.....	Frosty Invasion.....	M. Franco..... D. Schettino..... 8-1
8	.....8.....	Summer Snow.....	D. Davis..... M. Hennig..... 6-1
9	.....9.....	Flattering Gal.....	J. Samuel..... O. Noda..... 10-1

3RD (2:13PM). \$83,000, MSW, 2 YO, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double, Quinella			
1	.....1.....	Wicked Secret.....	J. Leparoux..... D. Stewart..... 10-1
2	.....2.....	Webslinger.....	L. Saez..... M. Casse..... 7-2
3	.....3.....	Closethegame Sugar.....	J. Ortiz..... A. Rice..... 4-1
4	.....4.....	Own the Field.....	D. Davis..... T. Amoss..... 6-1
5	.....5.....	Rock Chalk.....	E. Cancel..... G. Weaver..... 5-2
6	.....6.....	Iron Man Jimmy.....	K. Carmouche..... C. Summers..... 8-1
7	.....7.....	Three Zero.....	F. Prat..... F. Abreu..... 6-1
8	.....8.....	Nieuwendyk.....	J. Velazquez..... J. Begg..... 12-1
9	.....	AE-MTO.Winning Connection.....	Rider TBA..... P. Reynolds..... 8-1

4TH (2:49PM). \$120,000, AOC \$62,500, 3 YO’S & UP, F & M , 1M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double			
1	.....1.....	Emilia's Moon.....	K. Carmouche..... M. Hemingway..... 15-1
2	.....2.....	Baby Blythe.....	L. Saez..... C. McGaughey III..... 5-1
3	.....3.....	Zainalarab.....	M. Franco..... C. Brown..... 5-2
4	.....4.....	Nevisian Sunrise.....	J. Velazquez..... C. Brown..... 2-1
5	.....5.....	Scotish Star (ARG).....	F. Prat..... T. Pletcher..... 5-2
6	.....6.....	Secret Time (GER).....	J. Ortiz..... D. Gargan..... 6-1
7	.....	AE-MTO.Smarmy.....	J. Leparoux..... P. Bauer..... 9-2
8	.....	AE-MTO.W W Fitzy.....	Rider TBA..... R. Diodoro..... 5-2
9	.....	AE-MTO.Halo City.....	Rider TBA..... N. Lynch..... 10-1
10	.....	AE-MTO.Vegas Weekend.....	J. Lezcano..... L. Rice..... 7-2
11	.....	AE-MTO.Family Time.....	J. Alvarado..... D. Romans..... 10-1

5TH (3:21PM). \$32,000, CLM \$14,000, 3 YO’S & UP, 1 1/8M

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 6, Daily Double			
1	.....6.....	The Big Grey.....	D. Davis..... R. Persaud..... 6-1
1a	.....7.....	Forever Wicked.....	D. Davis..... R. Persaud..... 6-1
2	.....1.....	Convertible Freeze.....	J. Ortiz..... M. Kantarmaci..... 8-1
3	.....2.....	Revenio.....	J. Lezcano..... N. Zito..... 15-1
4	.....3.....	Will E Sutton.....	M. Franco..... R. Falcone, Jr..... 7-5
5	.....4.....	Dontbelate.....	L. Cardenas..... D. Donk..... 8-1
6	.....5.....	Road to Success.....	E. Cancel..... G. Weaver..... 2-1
7	.....8.....	Scotty.....	L. Rodriguez Castro..... G. DiPrima..... 8-1

6TH (3:55PM). \$50,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO’S & UP, F & M , 1M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double			
1	.....1.....	So Are You.....	S. Uske..... P. Meadow..... 50-1
2	.....2.....	Honor Star.....	E. Cancel..... J. Ferraro..... 20-1
3	.....3.....	Bourbon Diversion.....	D. Davis..... B. Tagg..... 12-1
4	.....4.....	Eau Claire.....	M. Franco..... A. Delacour..... 5-2
5	.....5.....	Sals Dream Girl.....	F. Prat..... D. Gargan..... 2-1
6	.....6.....	Lacey Underall.....	J. Lezcano..... J. Jerkens..... 12-1
7	.....7.....	Wine Goddess.....	J. Ortiz..... H. De Paz..... 8-1
8	.....8.....	Shesadancingqueen.....	K. Carmouche..... M. Nevin..... 15-1
9	.....9.....	Take Charge Lisa.....	J. Velazquez..... R. Klesaris..... 15-1
10	.....10.....	Cerretta.....	L. Saez..... H. Bond..... 4-1
11	.....AE.....	Skyward Princess.....	M. Franco..... C. Brown..... 6-1
12	.....AE.....	Treat Street.....	E. Cancel..... M. Hennig..... 9-2
13	.....AE.....	Bern Rosey Bern.....	K. Carmouche..... M. Giangulio..... 10-1
14	.....AE.....	Quiet Type.....	L. Saez..... B. Brown..... 15-1
15	.....AE.....	Oak Loves a Fight.....	D. Davis..... O. Noda..... 6-1
16	.....AE.....	False Hope.....	H. Diaz, Jr..... D. Schettino..... 20-1

7TH (4:29PM). \$64,000, CLM \$32,000, 3 YO’S & UP, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double			
1	.....1.....	Shiraz.....	L. Saez..... M. Maker..... 8-1
2	.....2.....	Ballydooley (GB).....	E. Cancel..... M. Nevin..... 6-1
3	.....3.....	Duress.....	F. Prat..... T. Albertrani..... 8-1
4	.....4.....	Xy Speed.....	J. Ortiz..... M. Maker..... 5-2
5	.....5.....	Spirit Animal.....	K. Carmouche..... E. Caramori..... 12-1
6	.....6.....	Seven Scents.....	D. Davis..... B. Cox..... 2-1
7	.....7.....	Not Phar Now.....	M. Franco..... G. Weaver..... 7-2

8TH (5:05PM). \$36,000, CLM \$12,500, 3 YO’S & UP, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double			
1	.....1.....	Somebody.....	F. Prat..... H. Bond..... 8-1
2	.....2.....	Banyan Breeze.....	J. Alvarado..... J. Acquilano..... 6-1
3	.....3.....	Bodreflex.....	C. Camilo..... R. Rohena..... 7-2
4	.....4.....	Joe Di Baggio.....	D. Davis..... C. David..... 3-1
5	.....5.....	Manifest Destiny.....	T. Howell..... W. Younghans..... 30-1
6	.....6.....	Double Shot.....	L. Saez..... J. D'Angelo..... 2-1
7	.....7.....	Durkin's Call.....	J. Lezcano..... L. Rice..... 9-2

9TH (5:39PM). \$175,000, STK - THE WITH ANTICIPATION, 2 YO, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double			
1	.....1.....	Battle of Normandy.....	K. Carmouche..... C. McGaughey III..... 3-1
2	.....2.....	Andthewinneris.....	F. Prat..... W. Catalano..... 5-1
3	.....3.....	Noble Huntsman.....	M. Franco..... M. Friedman..... 8-1
4	.....4.....	Bourbon Therapy.....	L. Saez..... M. Maker..... 20-1
5	.....5.....	El Conejito.....	J. Torres..... J. Stephens..... 12-1
6	.....6.....	Bramble Blaze.....	J. Lezcano..... M. Dini..... 8-1
7	.....7.....	Quincy Cafe.....	E. Cancel..... L. Gaudet..... 20-1
8	.....8.....	Lachaise.....	J. Ortiz..... J. Abreu..... 5-1
9	.....9.....	Our Dream Rye'd.....	J. Leparoux..... I. Wilkes..... 4-1
10	.....10.....	Boppy O.....	D. Davis..... M. Casse..... 8-1
11	.....AE.....	Determinedly.....	J. Velazquez..... M. Casse..... 6-1

10TH (6:13PM). \$42,000, MCL \$25,000, 3 YO’S & UP, 6 1/2F

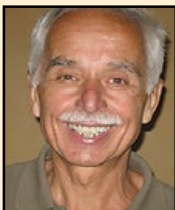
Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta			
1	.....1.....	Makart.....	J. Lezcano..... J. Ryerson..... 15-1
2	.....2.....	Capt' Remington.....	D. Davis..... E. Davis..... 8-1
3	.....3.....	Devil Boy.....	J. Ortiz..... J. Englehart..... 5-2
4	.....4.....	Southern Civility.....	O. Hernandez Moreno..... P. Reynolds..... 30-1
5	.....5.....	Sinful Dancer.....	E. Cancel..... G. Weaver..... 3-1
6	.....6.....	My Slick Nick.....	K. Carmouche..... S. Klesaris..... 20-1
7	.....7.....	Cumberland Blues.....	J. Alvarado..... C. Martin..... 12-1
8	.....8.....	Beach Boy Al.....	F. Prat..... G. Weaver..... 9-2
9	.....9.....	He'sgottashortfuse.....	L. Saez..... C. David..... 15-1
10	.....10.....	Basis Risk.....	M. Franco..... C. Brown..... 5-1

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# the Power grid

Race #



**John  
Shapazian**



**Tom  
Law**



**Charles  
Bedard**



**Rob  
Whitlock**



**Jessica  
Paquette**

**1**

Proven Innocent  
Smith entry  
Baltimore Kid

Proven Innocent  
Bandua  
Who's Counting

Who's Counting  
Proven Innocent  
Baltimore Kid

Proven Innocent  
Baltimore Kid  
Ancient Times

Bandua  
Proven Innocent  
Baltimore Kid

**2**

Laughter  
I'm Nervous Now  
Maddie's Surprise

Laughter  
Summer Snow  
Frosty Invasion

Laughter  
Duckphat  
Maddie's Surprise

Laughter  
I'm Nervous Now  
Frosty Now

Laughter  
I'm Nervous Now  
Summer Snow

**3**

Webslinger  
Rock Chalk  
Winning Connection

Webslinger  
Own The Field  
Rock Chalk

Rock Chalk  
Three Zero  
Webslinger

Webslinger  
Winning Connection  
Own The Field

Rock Chalk  
Wicked Secret  
Webslinger

**4**

Scottish Star  
W W Fitzy  
Nevisian Sunrise

W W Fitzy  
Smarmy  
Nevisian Sunrise

Zainalarab  
W W Fitzy  
Nevisian Sunrise

Scottish Star  
Smarmy  
Baby Blythe

Zainalarab  
Nevisian Sunrise  
Baby Blythe

**5**

Will E Sutton  
Road To Success  
Dontbelate

Road To Success  
Will E Sutton  
Dontbelate

Scotty  
Will E Sutton  
Road To Success

Road To Success  
Dontbelate  
Will E Sutton

Dontbelate  
Convertible Freeze  
Will E Sutton

**6**

Sals Dream Girl  
Oak Loves A Fight  
Eau Claire

Wine Goddess  
Sals Dream Girl  
Eau Claire

Cerretta  
Sals Dream Girl  
Eau Claire

Sals Dream Girl  
Lacey Underall  
Wine Goddess

Eau Claire  
Cerretta  
Take Charge Lisa

**7**

Not Phar Now  
Xy Speed  
Seven Scents

Not Phar Now  
Seven Scents  
Shiraz

Xy Speed  
Seven Scents  
Ballydooley

Not Far Now  
Xy Speed  
Duress

Not Phar Now  
Seven Scents  
Shiraz

**8**

Double Shot  
Joe Di Baggio  
Bodefex

Double Shot  
Durkin's Call  
Bodefex

Double Shot  
Durkin's Call  
Joe Di Baggio

Double Shot  
Banyan Breeze  
Durkin's Call

Somebody  
Durkin's Call  
Banyan Breeze

**9**

Battle Of Normandy  
Andthewinneris  
Lachaise

Andthewinneris  
Battle Of Normandy  
Our Dream Rye'd

Lachaise  
Our Dream Rye'd  
Battle Of Normandy

Battle Of Normandy  
Andthewinneris  
Our Dream Rye'd

Battle Of Normandy  
Our Dream Rye'd  
Bourbon Therapy

**10**

Devil Boy  
Capt' Remington  
Basic Risk

Devil Boy  
Sinful Dancer  
Beach Boy Al

Devil Boy  
Sinful Dancer  
Capt' Remington

Sinful Dancer  
Devil Boy  
Cumberland Blues

Basis Risk  
Hesgottashortfuse  
Myslicknick

2022 Records

**113/349**

**112/349**

**93/349**

**100/349**

**75/349**

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# Solid Team

## Thin White Duke eyes turf-sprint stakes for Gleaves, Donk

BY JOE CLANCY

Dave Donk interrupted Phil Gleaves in mid-story.

“Do you want to see that horse go or not?”

Gleaves quit talking – about Never Bend, Devil’s Bag, Conquistador Cielo, Miswaki or some other historic horse from the Woody Stephens barn – hopped in a golf cart and zipped to the Clare Court training track in the woods behind the 7-furlong chute on the main-track side. There, Yes And Yes padded around on a loose rein. The five-time winner was content, composed, calm, a horse putting in his work.

“He’s on the wrong lead but we’re not going to worry about that,” said Gleaves. “Beautiful. That is a sight to behold. At the farm in Ocala, he’s great. Up here on these tracks, he gets himself so ramped up. You cannot hold him. But he comes out here to Clare Court every day and he gallops like a baby. Look at him, loose rein, I love that. That horse is so happy.”

And, despite the interest and keen eye, Gleaves doesn’t even train horses anymore.

He retired when Saratoga ended in 2021, calling it a career after 36 years highlighted by a Travers Stakes win by Wise Times in 1986 and graded wins by Mambo Meister, Csaba, Evening Kris, Phantom Jet and Rashes Warning among a long list of trainees. But Gleaves wouldn’t miss a few days out in the morning at Saratoga Race Course – watching horses, talking horses, doing things a trainer does without the pressure a trainer feels.



Sean Clancy

Phil Gleaves grazes a horse at Saratoga.



Tod Marks

Thin White Duke (left) exits this third-place run against Golden Pal (center) in the Troy.

“I love being in the shedrow,” he said. “I love being here. I love training, watching training. I look at horses’ faces much more now. Before I didn’t have a chance to look at a horse’s face. You’re on to the next one when you’re a trainer, you’re looking at legs and things, worried about payroll or the feed bill or something. When you’re retired, you have time to look at them instead of rushing to the racing office or talking to an agent or a jockey or an owner.”

Gleaves and his partners sent three horses to Donk, a former Stephens assistant like Gleaves, this year. Yes And Yes won his first three at Belmont Park in May and June. His half-brother Thin White Duke won at Aqueduct in April and placed in the Grade 3 Troy Stakes at Saratoga Aug. 5. Succulent, a 3-year-old filly, finished second in a maiden race here Aug. 11.

The stable gets a chance at another win Friday when Thin White Duke tackles the Lucky Coin Stakes.

Owned by Gleaves, Steve Crist and Ken DeRegt, the 4-year-old Dominus gelding has run well twice at the meet – a second in an open allowance July 28 and a third (beaten a neck by Golden Pal and True Valour) in the Troy eight days later at 30-1. The New York-bred is part of an eight-horse field in the Luck Coin at 5 1/2 furlongs on the turf. It’s the eighth of 10 races on the card which also features the Grade 2 Prioress for 3-year-old fillies.

Stephens gained a reputation for running horses when they were ready, most famously winning the Met Mile and the Belmont Stakes five days apart with Conquistador Cielo in 1982. Thin White Duke

is not Conquistador Cielo, but handled the short time between starts – by today’s standards – and arguably ran better the second time. Gleaves said he and Donk talked about it beforehand, and of course leaned on a Stephens story to make the point.

“When we talk about Conquistador Cielo, we talk about the Met Mile and the Belmont – unheard of, right?” Gleaves said. “But, and I had forgotten because at the time it wasn’t a big thing to me, the Belmont was his fourth race in 28 days. Dave and I worked for Woody in different times, but we both left with the same mentality. If anything went wrong, he wasn’t going to force it. If that horse hadn’t eaten up that week or had very low energy, he wouldn’t have run in the Belmont. Woody didn’t do it for the sake of doing it, but he’d give himself and the horse the opportunity.”

The same thought came up with Thin White Duke, bred in New York by Gleaves from the Distorted Humor mare Aberdeen Alley.

“Dave didn’t force him to do it,” Gleaves said. “If something was wrong one of those days he would have stopped. Dave and I discuss things like that. We ran Thin White Duke back in eight days and I said to Dave, I didn’t have to say it, ‘Look if we get in the middle of the week and you tell me he didn’t eat last night then we’re not running.’ It’s based on the horse. We said we’d like to run, but only if everything was right.”

Last of seven early, Thin White Duke nearly ran down Golden Pal. The 4-year-old doesn’t face the Breeders’ Cup Turf Sprint winner Friday, but gets a chance at his first stakes win since taking the Funny

**Continued On Page 47**



# Friday —

## ■ Continued from page 46

Cide and the Aspirant as a 2-year-old in 2020. John Velazquez rides from post five. The field includes The Critical Way, a 10-time winner who captured Monmouth Park's Get Serious Stakes in May for trainer Jose Delgado; Donk's New York-bred Big Package, second in open allowance races in June and July; five-time winner Proven Strategies from Mark Casse; back-to-back winner Dancing Buck from Michelle Nevin; four-time winner Voodoo Zip, who exits the Grade 2 Highlander at Woodbine; Fauci, who was third to Dancing Buck July 29; and Maxwell Empire, a winner at Saratoga in 2020. Wendell Fong and Wudda U Think Now are entered for the main track only.

"We'll lead him over there," Donk said with a shrug Tuesday morning. "I don't know if we're going to get :21 and :44 and change (for early fractions) again, but that would help."

Look for Thin White Duke, who won going 1 1/16 miles at Aqueduct in April, to come running. He won twice on the dirt as a 2-year-old for Gleaves, and lost all three starts last year, before joining Donk this winter. Gleaves, 65, planned to retire this year but made the decision a year early.

"I knew there would be a time where I wanted to walk away," said Gleaves, who with his wife Amy splits time between Ballston Spa and Ocala, Fla. "It was supposed to be this year but the help situation kind of put me over the top. You end up doing all the work yourself. It's a huge problem on the racetrack, the labor shortage. Most of the people gravitate toward the bigger outfits because they can make more money. That's normal, but you used to have grooms and hot-walkers walking along here asking for jobs. You don't have that anymore. It's a double whammy for the smaller trainer. Your help is everything."

Thin White Duke, Yes And Yes and Succulent all got a winter vacation, did some early prep work in Florida and joined the Donk string at Belmont in March and April. They came with background research.

"I sent Dave an email on each horse this long," Gleaves said, holding his hands a foot apart. "We talked

extensively about them. All the idiosyncrasies on each horse. My idea was to give Dave as much information as possible and then leave him alone. I gave him everything I knew and said, 'These are your horses now. You're the trainer.' And they came out running. Dave has done a tremendous job."

Gleaves and Donk never actually worked together for Stephens, splitting the five consecutive Belmont Stakes wins (Conquistador Cielo, Caveat and Swale for Gleaves; Crème Fraiche and Danzig Connection for Donk). Gleaves started in 1977 after six months or so with Lucien Laurin before leaving for a training job with Frank Stronach in 1985.

Donk, with a push from Bill Wilmot, accepted an offer to replace Gleaves and stayed six years before re-starting his training career in 1991.

"I got to know Phil, and we always maintained a really good relationship over the years," said Donk. "He approached me last summer, said he was going to retire. I said, 'Are you sure?' He asked me to take a couple horses and it's been a lot of fun, it's worked out well for all of us. At the end of the day, I'm honored to be thought of."



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# The Big Picture

with Tod Marks

**Close Quarters.** Malathaat (left, John Velazquez) and Search Results (Flavien Prat) reach the finish of Saturday's Personal Ensign Stakes.







  
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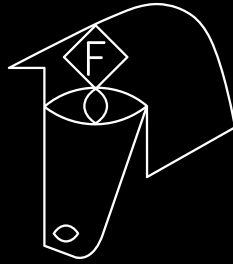
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Grace Clark

# Love Fest

## Gr. 1 winner returns for Opening Day feature

**BY SEAN CLANCY**

Do you want the good news or the bad news? For Paulo Lobo, there's a little bit of both in the \$400,000 Fanduel Tapit Stakes on opening day at Kentucky Downs Fanduel Thursday. Restricted to horses who haven't won a sweepstakes during the current season, the 1-mile, 70-yard stakes provided In Love with his first stakes victory last year, a triumph that contributed to a three-race win streak culminating in the Grade 1 Keeneland Turf Mile. That's the good news. The bad news is the 6-year-old Brazilian-bred returns in the same condition, winless since that Grade 1 score. The son of Agnes Gold finished seventh in the Breeders' Cup to conclude 2021 and finished eighth in the Grade 1 Maker's Mark Mile in April and eighth in the Grade 1 Manhattan at Belmont Park this season.

That hasn't dampened Lobo's confidence.

"He ran a very game race in the Breeders' Cup," Lobo said. "He had a lot of traffic with a slow pace and he was finishing strong that day. Our main goal has always been this race. He has trained so well, he likes it over there and I'm happy. Let's see what happens. He's better now than he was earlier this

year. I don't know if he's as good as he was last year because he ran so good over there, but we are hoping he can get back to that point."

Kentucky Downs' seven-day turf festival provides the perfect spot for In Love to bounce back. Despite drawing the outside post in the field of 12, In Love earned 7-2 favoritism for Bonne Chance Farm and Stud R D I. Five-time winner Atone is 4-1 for Jordan Wycoff and Mike Maker. Floriform, a nose ahead of Atone at Saratoga in their most recent start, is the third choice at 9-2 for Juddmonte and Bill Mott.

In Love began his win streak at Arlington Park last summer, earning a neck win against allowance foes and then added two stakes.

"The turning point for this horse last year was when we shipped him to Arlington Park. He won and then we added blinkers, he ran huge at Kentucky Downs and won the (Keeneland) Mile," Lobo said. "We gave him a rest after the Breeders' Cup. He's run twice, in very tough races, he didn't run bad, but he gave us question marks. We skipped the Arlington Million and shipped him to Mountaineer for an easier spot, but unfortunately it rained and



Tod Marks

**In Love headlines Thursday's Opening Day feature.**

they moved the race to the dirt. He's trained very well for the race."

The Fanduel Tapit highlights a 10-race Opening-Day card of the highly anticipated meet in Franklin, Ky. The festival includes \$150,000 maiden races, three \$1 million stakes and more than \$10 million in stakes purses. Trainers peppered the entry box with 139 horses Opening Day.

Last year, Godolphin led all owners with four wins and \$1,071,376 in purses. The blue silks will be in action Saturday with Pixelate in the WinStar Mint Million Stakes and Pearl Earring in an allowance race.

**Continued On Page 51**



# Kentucky Downs Thursday Selections

the  
**Power**  
grid



**John  
Shapazian**



**Tom  
Law**



**Charles  
Bedard**



**Rob  
Whitlock**



**Jessica  
Paquette**

Race #

<b>1</b>	Carnaby Street Master Sum Boudica	Carnaby Street Dias Alegres East Shore	Love Tank Master Som Carnaby Street	Flowerdew Master Som East Shore	Desert Tempest Fabulosity Master Som
<b>2</b>	Hawk Of War Be Here Jimmy Dan	Palace Coup Hawk Of War Be Here	Be Here Hawk Of War Argentello	Hawk Of War Freedom Matters Artie's Rumor	Be Here Palace Coup Hawk Of War
<b>3</b>	Russian Mafia Federalist Papers Roughly A Diamond	Federalist Papers Fairchild Russian Mafia	Fairchild Russian Mafia Roughly A Diamond	Federalist Papers Fairchild Viburnum	Viburnum Fairchild Designer Ready
<b>4</b>	Evaluate Decanted Junipero Serra	Margaret Burbidge Decanted The Red Fox	Margaret Burbidge Donegal Factor Evaluate	Margaret Burbidge Sivaka Lots Of Mischief	Donegal Factor Fortune Decanted
<b>5</b>	Red Ghost Amalfi Princess Saranya	Amalfi Princess Saranya Risky Reward	Pyramid Princess Thundering Creed Amalfi Princess	Amalfi Princess Saranya Social Chatter	Amalfi Princess Thundering Creed Red Ghost
<b>6</b>	Wicked Genius National Security Bonus Appreciation	Wicked Genius Ronstadt National Security	National Security Wicked Genius Just Call Ray	Wicked Genius Can't Hush This National Security	Ronstadt National Security Unleash The Power
<b>7</b>	Therapist Max K.O. Running Ray	Therapist Lamplighter Jack Sonneman	Therapist Lamplighter Jack Endorsed	Next Max K. O. Therapist	Therapist Runnin Ray Endorsed
<b>8</b>	Hey Kitten Aaliyah Ezri Plus Chic	Shannon Hey Kitten Storm Kiss	Shell Shock Hey Kitten Fast As Flight	Shannon Duplicitous Fast As Flight	Shannon Code For Success Storm Kiss
<b>9</b>	Floriform Ramsey Solution Atone	Floriform Atone In Love	Floriform In Love Atone	Floriform Atone Like The King	Floriform Atone Souper Dormy
<b>10</b>	Growth Capital Mint Heir To Greatness	Mint Growth Capital Miracle On Ice	Growth Capital Tolkien Mint	Heir to Greatness Growth Capital Mint	Growth Capital Heir To Greatness Blue Devil

Mike Maker, Steve Asmussen and Brendan Walsh tied at the top of the trainer standings with three wins apiece in 2021. Maker entered 32 horses over the first three cards. They include Megacity, Atone, Towhead, Bourbon Therapy, Really Good, Schlofmiz and Camp David in stakes. Asmussen aimed 17 runners, including Princess Pauline and Red Run in stakes. Walsh countered with nine runners over the first three cards, including New Year's Eve in the Exacta Sys-

tems Dueling Grounds Oaks Sunday.

Joel Rosario dominated the jockey standings, winning 17 races to best Tyler Gaffalione with eight last season. Saratoga's leading graded stakes jockey this summer is named on eight horses, including Vergara in the Exacta Systems Dueling Grounds Oaks and Ready To Purrrform in the Big Ass fans Dueling Grounds Derby Sunday. Gaffalione is named on 38 horses, six of them in stakes, over the first three days.

## Names of the Day

**Dream Role, first race.** Amerman Racing's 2-year-old filly is by Oscar Performance out of Dream Fuhrever.

**East Shore, first race.** Pipe Dream's 2-year-old filly is by West Coast out of Switcheroo.

**Laver, fourth race.** G. Watts Humphrey's homebred is out of Centre Court.

**Ronstadt, sixth race.** Spin some Linda Ronstadt vinyl and enjoy your day.

**Seduce, eighth race.** Stone Farm's 4-year-old is by Into Mischief out of Assertive.

**Mint, 10th race.** Peter Blum's colt is out of Flawless.



# Give & Take

Pick a side. Are you a giver or taker?

It's something I've been thinking about for a while, mostly after deciding to write a story about a couple barbers from Schenectady who decided to produce video vignettes highlighting the work of the valuable and often forgotten men and women of the backside. The story ran in *The Horsemen's Journal*, which we help produce for the National HBPA.

The concept of givers and takers seems to pop up from time to time, either during my own *Real Players Inside the Backstretch* video last week, on Steve Byk's radio show or Seth Merrow's *Capital OTB* program. Cheryl Johnson, the widow of my former high school track coach Randy Johnson, liked the concept when I bumped into her and a friend and brought it up over coffee at the Morning Line Kitchen early in the meet.

The industry is full of givers and it's full of takers. Way more givers, the ones that do things with meaning. Sometimes they're asked, sometimes not. The takers? Well, we know the takers. They do it for the show, the check, the pat on the back, the false admiration.

Which are you?

Are you Robbie Davis? Coming off the main track aboard one of his, he spotted a large group congregating along the fence in front of the Morning Line, veered left, across the blacktop and over to the group, letting children give his horse a scratch and rub on the head. Giver.

Are you Rick Schosberg? How many hours does he spend working on and promoting the aftercare efforts, while training his small string and serving on the NYTHA board. Giver.

Are you Rasi Harper and Maurice Davis? The creators and the hustlers behind the *Real Players Inside the Backstretch* initiative, they saw a void and stepped to the plate on their own dime. They tell the stories of the people that make the engine run. Givers.



Are you Humberto Chavez? Chaplain and tireless advocate for the backstretch workers, he'll do anything. About 15 minutes before the first race on Opening Day there was Humberto, front and center at the main entrance on Union and East, directing traffic, apologizing to folks who couldn't get into the full main lot, sweating through his shirt and in the best mood possible. Giver.

Are you Cindy Hutter? I don't know her, but have spoken to her and know plenty of people who look up to her. They learned from her, emulated her and owe a lot to her. She's battling back from a horrific accident on the Oklahoma a few weeks ago, in a hospital bed unconscious. A fighter, and a giver.

Are you Jonathan Levy? NYRA security guard, if you've met him you'll never forget him. I don't see him as much the last few seasons, after seeing him every day during the spectator-free pandemic meet. He greeted me every day walking into the empty clubhouse. The greatest attitude on the track, without equal. Always upbeat, always positive, always smiling, always complimenting. Walk away from him and you'll feel better the rest of the day. Giver.

He's no longer with us and missed every day, but are you Rick Violette? NYRA ran the Rick Violette Stakes on New York Thoroughbred Aftercare Day, the perfect combination. Doing a little research for a story that appeared in *The Special* last weekend, I looked back at Rick's obituary. One listed 20 bullet points highlighting everything he'd done from

working on uniform medication reform to raising money for children of backstretch workers. And none of the bullets listed his training feats, which stand out. Giver.

Speaking of no longer with us, how about Dr. David Richardson? Doc's memory lives on through his stories and his friends, who continue to gather at their favorite spot near Bill Mott's barn on the Oklahoma. Doc calling on me to serve on a panel to pick finalists for the Thoroughbred Industry Employee Awards is one of the biggest honors of my life, and an enormous responsibility made all the easier with his calm and positive demeanor during the process. Giver.

Here's another. Steve Asmussen. How about North America's all-time leading trainer and Hall of Famer watching major races where he's a major player on the grandstand apron, shoulder to shoulder with the \$2 bettors and vacationers. He makes their day – their meet – when he stops for photos, dishes out high fives and lets out some of those signature whistles. Giver.

What about Ramon Dominguez? Pick a charity event during the summer here in Saratoga and chances are you'll see Ramon and his wife Sharon on hand, helping out, giving credibility and making a difference. All while being a 16-minute 5k runner – yes, we're quite jealous – and helping provide content for Spanish-speaking publications and broadcasts. Giver.

Last but not least. Are you Sean and Joe Clancy? They'll probably edit this out, oh well, at least they'll see it (*Editor's Note: Thanks Tom, but these others are far more worthy*). Decided to start a newspaper in 2001 – a newspaper! – and 22 years later here they are with a long list of former interns making their mark in the game, an even longer list of readers and supporters who clamor for our product. They've won a ton of awards for writing and receive way more compliments, but I know what gives them the most satisfaction. Givers.

## BIG DAYS BIG WINS

NEST wins TWO Grade 1 stakes at Saratoga!

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Steve Asmussen said it about Travers winner Epicenter. Matt Shirer said it about Grade 1-placed Kneedeepinsnow. Phil Bauer said it about every horse he has at Saratoga this summer.

Horses do better in Saratoga.

It's hard to pinpoint why but it's got to be a combination of the air, the space, the trees, the back windows, the strolls, the round pens, the track options, the cooler nights, the vibe. Maybe it's because the people are in a better mood at Saratoga. Whatever the reason, horses do better in Saratoga and have always done better in Saratoga.

And we commend Glen Kozak and his team for the job they've done this summer and all the summers. But can we do better?

Horses are crammed into nooks and crannies of historic and decrepit barns. They train on congested tracks, the best horses get the best tracks, right after the breaks and the others make do. Round pens and grazing areas fight for space with parking lots and parked cars. Horses walk to and from the tracks on pavement, jarring overtaxed joints. Do you run? I run. When I run on pavement, it hurts (more) and it takes days to recover. When I run on trails, it hurts less, way less. Why do we subject our horses to walking on pavement? Walking with two sets of Wesley Ward's early in the meet, they weaved in and out, trying to stay on the grass or dirt horse paths, instead of the pavement. It's like an etch a sketch. In today's world, why are we etch-a-sketching our horses' safety?

Create jogging areas. Revert the Horse Haven track back to a training track. Hear me out on this. Restrict it to horses jogging or ponying, taking pressure off the Oklahoma and main track. Perhaps, open it later to help with horses crossing to the main track or the Oklahoma. Go clockwise three days a week, counterclockwise the other four. It'll offer a respite to our horses, surely help them recover from races, recover from bleeding in races. And it's safer,

# Capital Improvement



possibly driving down insurance costs from fewer injuries to riders on busy tracks.

What about the old showgrounds between the Horse Haven track and Union Avenue? Who owns that? Can NYRA lease it? Buy it? Years ago when I worked for Leo O'Brien, we trespassed and began jogging horses over there, we made figure eights, hacked long and slow, hopped logs. Horses loved the change of scenery, the change of pace. In days, the place was packed. And then closed.

For an easy day, we jog horses on a track where they just breezed or raced while other horses are breezing and galloping past. They are herd animals, when part of the herd is going the other direction, it's disconcerting. They do it, because they're generous, not because it's the right thing to do. Our horses train in chaos.

The sport has made great strides in recent years to protect the horse. More stringent vet checks. Waiver claiming races. Voided claim rules. Outlawing anabolic steroids. Tightening medication rules. Retirement and rehabilitation programs have become part and parcel of the sport. Commendable and appreciated.

But are we focusing enough on the health and wellbeing of our equine athletes? For example, as the sport moves closer and closer to outlawing Lasix, have we concentrated on ways to prevent a

horse from bleeding?

Create a proper equine performance center with state-of-the-art therapies for our horses. It's worked at private facilities around the country, but it needs to be implemented in New York. In Saratoga. Offer horsemen the opportunity to use a hyperbaric chamber, salt-water spas, vibrating floors, walking trails, jogging trails, turn-out paddocks.

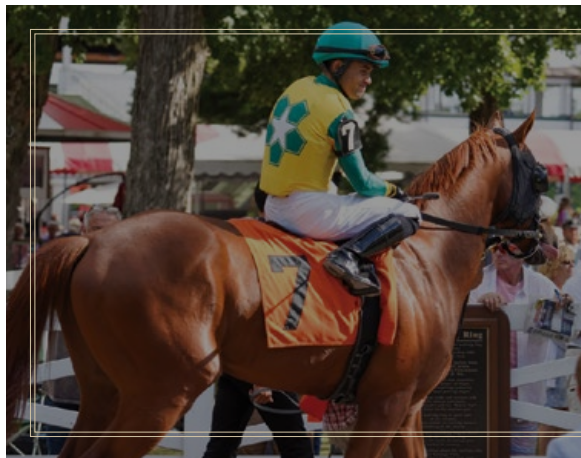
How about free trips to the hyperbaric chamber and the salt-water spa for every runner? You get a reward for running, here's a voucher for a day at the spa, your prize for running. You want full fields? Let's help the horses recover faster from races. Every horse when he runs is a revenue source for the track, right? Bettors want bigger fields. Owners and trainers want to run (the big stables are an issue, I understand), but how do we create a way for horses to recover faster? I'm all for talking about Lasix but while we're talking about it, shouldn't we be talking about ways and creating ways to keep our horses from bleeding?

Travel around the world. We have arguably the most arcane training facilities of any developed country. Go to Ballydoyle, it doesn't look like the Saratoga main track after the break. Horses don't jog up and down Warren Hill while others gallop and breeze up Newmarket's Warren Hill. No, European trainers take horses somewhere else for quiet days, this certainly has to lower the stress level, which in turn should help the bleeding issue and other issues.

Rules and regulations can help but until we invest more in our training facilities, we're simply patching an old tire. Space is tight at Saratoga, but nothing like it is at other tracks around the country. There is room to grow, room to improve.

A trainer said to me the other day, "There's nothing back here that helps the horse."

And Saratoga is one of the better training facilities. Let's change that. Let's make it the best.



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# 2022 *Fall Meet Stakes*


## OCTOBER 7-29

### *Fall Stars Weekend*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

**\$500,000 Darley Alcibiades (G1)** 

2YO Fillies, 1 1/16 miles | \$100,000 KTDf Contribution\*


**\$350,000 JPMorgan Chase Jessamine (G2)**  **T**

2YO Fillies, 1 1/16 miles (turf) | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*


**\$350,000 Stoll Keenon Ogden Phoenix (G2)** 

3YOs & Up, 6 furlongs | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

**\$1 Million Coolmore Turf Mile (G1)**  **T**


3YOs & Up, 1 mile (turf)

**\$600,000 Claiborne Breeders' Futurity (G1)** 

2YOs, 1 1/16 miles | \$100,000 KTDf Contribution\*

**\$600,000 First Lady (G1) Presented By UK HealthCare** **T**

3YOs & Up, F&M, 1 mile (turf) | \$100,000 KTDf Contribution\*


**\$350,000 Thoroughbred Club of America (G2)** 

3YOs & up, F&M, 6 furlongs | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*


**\$350,000 Woodford (G2) Presented by FanDuel** **T**

3YOs & up, 5.5 furlongs (turf) | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*


SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

**\$600,000 Juddmonte Spinster (G1)** 

3YOs & Up, F&M, 1 1/8 miles | \$100,000 KTDf Contribution\*

**\$350,000 Castle & Key Bourbon (G2)**  **T**

2YOs, 1 1/16 Miles (turf) | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

**\$250,000 Indian Summer (L)**  **T**

2YOs, 5 1/2 furlongs (turf) | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

**\$300,000 Sycamore (G3)** **T**

3YOs & up, 1 1/2 miles (turf)

\$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

**\$600,000 Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup (G1)**

**Presented by Dixiana** **T**

3YO fillies, 1 1/8 miles (turf)

\$100,000 KTDf Contribution\*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

**\$300,000 Franklin (G3)** **T**

3YOs & up, F&M, 5.5 furlongs (turf)

\$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22

**\$350,000 Lexus Raven Run (G2)**

3YO fillies, 7 furlongs | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

**\$250,000 Perryville (L)**

3YO, 7 furlongs | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23

**\$300,000 Rood & Riddle Dowager (G3)** **T**

3YOs & up, f&m, 1 1/2 miles (turf)

\$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28

**\$300,000 Rubicon Valley View (G3)** **T**

3YO fillies, 1 1/16 miles (turf)

\$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

**\$200,000 Myrtlewood**

2YO fillies, 6 furlongs | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

**\$350,000 Hagyard Fayette (G2)**

3YOs & Up, 1 1/8 miles

\$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*


**\$300,000 Bryan Station (G3)** **T**

3YOs, 1 mile (turf) | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

**\$200,000 Bowman Mill**

2YOs, 6 furlongs | \$50,000 KTDf Contribution\*

**T** Turf Races

 Breeders' Cup Challenge Races

*\*Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund. All KTDf purse allotments are subject to approval of the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission.*

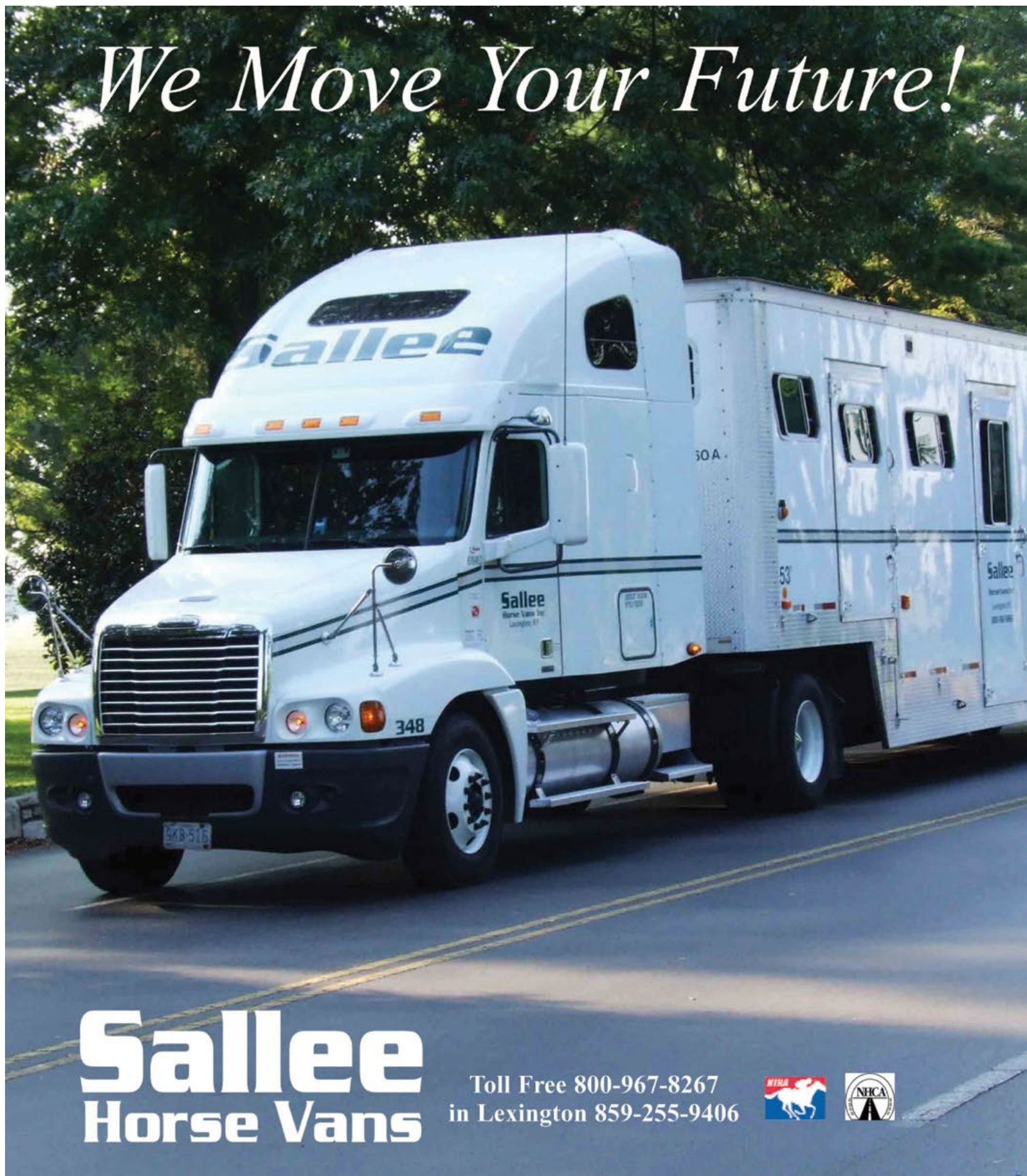


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