

Year 23 • No. 1

Thursday, July 13, 2023

The **Saratoga**

Special

Saratoga's Racing Newspaper since 2001

Go Time

Saratoga races to another Opening Day

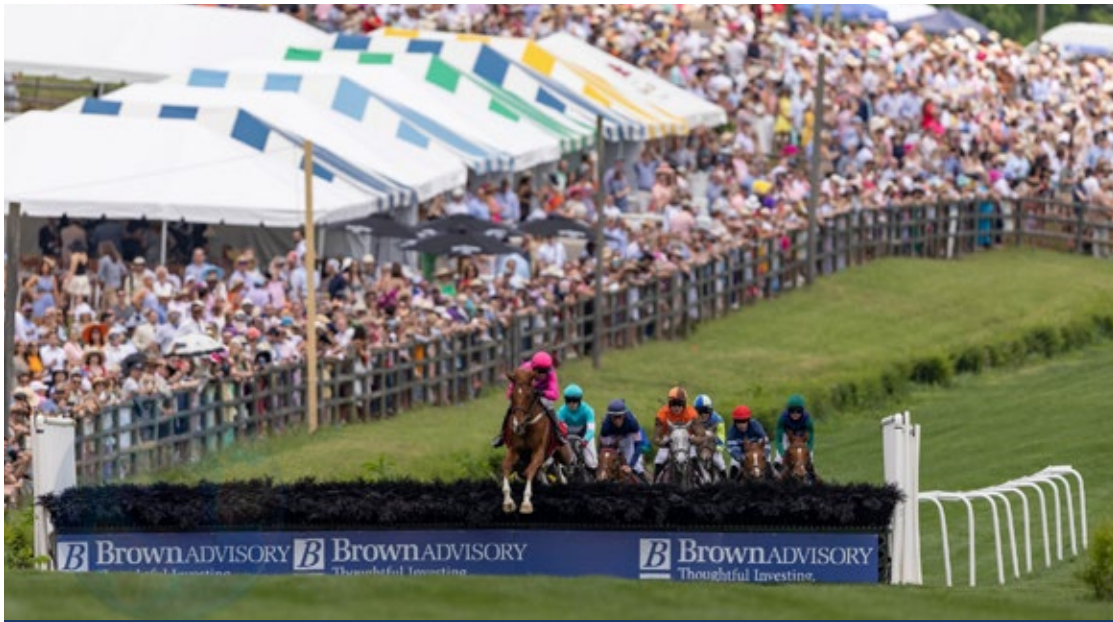


Lawrence eyes Schuylerville

Mirahmadi takes the mic

Todd Pletcher Stable Tour

Entries & Handicapping



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Tod Marks
Back to Life. Saratoga Race Course comes out of hibernation for another Opening Day – on turf and dirt – today.

Here&There...in Saratoga

By The Numbers

26: Riders who competed in last week's Real Rider Cup at New Vocations at Mereworth Farm. Connections and institutions represented included Godolphin, Bonne Chance, 1/ST Racing, Steve Asmussen, Adena Springs, Richard Mandella, Calumet Farm, Margaux Farm, Hidden Brook Farm and LNJ Foxwoods. Multiple graded stakes winner United, ridden by former Saratoga Special intern Madison Scott, represented LNJ Foxwoods. Jesslyn Woodall defended her Real Rider Cup title aboard Storm Threat. Keira Nygaard finished second aboard Judge Johnny and Jocelyn Brooks finished third on Perpetual Optimism.

371: Million dollars in economic impact from the summer meet at Saratoga Race Course, according to a study by the Saratoga County Industrial Development Agency. The study also found that the meet generates more than 2,900 jobs across the greater Capital Region.

1: Guy riding a bicycle while carrying a feed tub on East Avenue Monday afternoon.

23: Southbound horse vans/trailers (four-horse gooseneck or larger) on the Thruway between Saratoga and the Sloatsburg Travel Plaza Sunday afternoon/evening.

0: Real food/coffee options at the Sloatsburg Travel Plaza (northbound) due to construction. Plan accordingly.

8: Weed Eaters in a truck by the Oklahoma gap at 9 a.m. Tuesday.

235: Yearlings cataloged in the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga Sale Aug. 7-8. Get ready, neighborhood.

17: Horses stepping on the main track at the five-sixteenths pole gap at 8:44 Wednesday morning.

Names of the Day

Cut The Cord, fifth race.

The 4-year-old gelding, a winner last time at Finger Lakes, is out of Cable.

Rough Draft, sixth race.

The 4-year-old gelding is by Editorial. Sometimes they all seem like rough drafts.

Obrigada, seventh race. The 3-year-old filly is out of You're Welcome. In Portuguese, obrigada means thanks (specifically, that's how a woman would say thanks; a man would say obrigado).



The Saratoga Special

thisishorseracing.com

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Here&There...in Saratoga

License Plates of the Day

7FURLONG, New York.

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Worth Repeating

"Why is his name Garlic Rob anyway?"

The Special's Sami Loud about our distribution chief Rob Whitlock

"Yes, for sure. I will be done operating around 2:30 or 3."

Orthopedic surgeon Joel Politi, in response to a request from The Special's Paul Halloran to talk about his filly Bosserati, who runs in the Coronation Cup Stakes Friday. (The interview was a success; hopefully, the surgery was, too.)

"It's an honor."

Trainer Chuck Lawrence on Hall of Fame jockey John Velazquez riding Dancing Diana in the Schuylerville Thursday

"Mr. Clancy, are you studying horse form?"

Peter Menuet, 14, to The Special's Sean Clancy while the Loudoun County Babe Ruth All-Stars scrimmaged Monday night

"The most dangerous part of the day."

Blacksmith Scott Brouse while trimming four retirees in a Virginia field Monday morning

"My happy place."

Trainer Gary Contessa on his return to Saratoga

"At 5:20, I'm doing a TV interview. At 11:30, I meet a friend for lunch at Shake Shack, and then I really want to hear, "And they're off" for the first race live. Then I wander around and network with what feels like 10,000 people."

Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce president Todd Shimkus, on his Opening Day schedule (he comes back on Friday with friends for a day off)

"It's the breakfast sandwich I've been waiting to eat my whole life, I just didn't know it yet."

Assistant trainer Tristan Barry, about the food at Neighborhood Kitchen

"This is the gem of racing. It never gets old."

Owner Anthony Bonomo, ready for the start of another meet

Song of the Day

"Day Tripper," by The Beatles, blasting from the backyard speakers Tuesday about 1 p.m.



Tod Marks

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"That's the first text message I ever sent."

The Special's John Shapazian, communicating with Tom Law



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Tod Marks



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Susie Raisher

With Todd Pletcher

Saratoga is all about tradition. From the bell at 17 minutes to post to the red and white awnings, to Clare Court, to the Big Red Spring, to the mad dash for Saturday picnic tables, to autograph seeking children and everything in between.

The tradition of the Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour formed a few years back with Todd Pletcher leading off and the Hall of Fame conditioner obliged to take the first spot again as the 2023 Saratoga meeting opens today. Tradition holds and Pletcher's seventh Stable Tour – he even did a pair in 2020 – features the usual mix of superstars, proven stakes winners and potential prime-time players.

Success at the meet for Pletcher and his team often goes through the 2-year-old races and stakes, and 2023 should fall in line.

“Certainly, having our 2-year-olds perform well is high on the list,” Pletcher said. “And hopefully we can do well in the stakes. That’s kind of it for us, the 2-year-olds and stakes. Then fill in the blanks from there. If we can bat consistently between 20, 25 percent, that’s what we’re hoping for.”

A majority of the Saratoga runners will come from Pletcher's main New York operation – which features a contingent that prepped in Saratoga this spring with Tristan Berry and Ginny DePasquale and at Belmont with the head man and assistant Byron Hughes, along with a Kentucky group led by Amelia Green. Other strings at Monmouth Park and Gulfstream Park compliment the stellar cast. And like always, the juveniles figure to lead the way.

“We’ve got quite a few that are getting close that will be ready at the meet. We should be well-represented,” Pletcher said. “That doesn’t always mean you’re going to win a bunch of them, either. Every maiden race up here potentially has a Breeders’ Cup winner in it.”

Two Breeders’ Cup winners – Forte and Malathaat – and three champions – Forte, Malathaat and Nest – were in Pletcher's contingent a year ago when he led all trainers with a personal best \$30,487,787 in purses. That sum marked the 12th time Pletcher racked up more than \$20 million or more in purses. He banked more than \$5.2 million of it at Saratoga and used another strong showing to land his eighth Eclipse Award as North America's outstanding trainer.



Inducted to the Hall of Fame in 2021, Pletcher owns six classic victories, 14 Breeders’ Cup wins and 10 North American earnings titles. And don’t forget those 14 Saratoga training crowns. Could there be a 15th in 2023?

Pletcher, second in the trainer standings in 2022 for the second consecutive season after winning in 2020, sat down with Tom Law two days before Opening Day to talk about some of the group that could get him there.

Annapolis: Bass Racing's homebred 4-year-old Grade 1-winning son of War Front won the Opening Verse Stakes at Churchill Downs May 4 and is entered in Saturday's Grade 3 Kelso. He's won six of nine, including last year's Grade 2 Saranac at Saratoga and Grade 1 Coolmore Turf Mile at Keeneland before a run in the Breeders' Cup Mile at Keeneland. The bay colt drew post 2 against Big Everest, Casa Creed and five others in the Grade 3 Kelso at Saratoga Saturday. “He’s doing very well, had a good comeback race. We were originally planning to run in the Poker. He had a little frog bruise that kept us from running in there. All that’s good now. Shows up every time, consistently runs well and likes it here. Cool horse.”

Forte: The champ. Last year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner for Repole Stable and St. Elias Stable also won the Hopeful at Saratoga but faces a possible disqualification from the Grade 1 stakes after

testing positive for a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication. He also won the Grade 2 Fountain of Youth and Grade 1 Florida Derby this year before missing the Kentucky Derby with a minor foot injury. He returned from a 10-week layoff to finish second in the Belmont Stakes and worked twice since at Belmont before shipping north. Pletcher toyed with running in the Grade 1 Haskell next weekend at Monmouth but will keep the 3-year-old son of Violence at home. “We’re now zeroed in on the Jim Dandy. It was a tough call because the Haskell is a Grade 1 and a million dollars. He’s doing well, you get an extra week from that to the Travers, so that was kind of attractive if he went in the Haskell. But you have to ship and run, and he shipped up here. Looking at it we decided we’re going to stay here.”

So what about the 3-year-old championship? “With three different winners of the Triple Crown races and he’s got a Florida Derby win, a Fountain of Youth win and a pretty good second in the Belmont considering the way he got there, he is in the mix. Most of these divisional championships, everybody gets excited about and then they change a lot in the summer and fall. Someone has to take charge and the way they do is win a couple races. That’s what he needs to do, step up and win a couple of them.”

Tapit Trice: Owned by Whisper Hill Farm and Gainesway Stable, the 3-year-old son of Tapit will likely avoid Forte next, after finishing third in the Belmont Stakes and seventh in the Kentucky Derby.

Continued On Page 8

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Stable Tour —

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He won this year's Grade 1 Toyota Blue Grass at Keeneland and Grade 3 Lambholm South Tampa Bay Derby at Tampa Bay Downs before the spring classics. "We're thinking maybe Haskell, then the Travers, also on the radar. We'll keep them apart. The owners were in favor of not running with Forte so that made it easy for me to consider him for the Haskell."

Charge It: Whisper Hill's homebred 4-year-old by Tapit returned to Saratoga after a big win in the Grade 2 Suburban on closing weekend at Belmont Park. He won last year's Grade 3 Dwyer at Belmont and looked like a serious player for the Travers before a foot abscess derailed the rest of his sophomore campaign. He's won two of five this season with a second in the Grade 2 WinStar Gulfstream Park Mile and a fourth in the Grade 1 Hill 'n' Dale Metropolitan Handicap at Belmont. "Maybe that was the breakthrough performance we've been expecting. It was a professional race, 106 Beyer figure. We're looking at the Whitney, which sounds like Cody's Wish is too. So that makes it a difficult race, but he's a horse that we've always felt had top-level talent and hopefully he's finally putting it all together."

Up To The Mark: Another major player in the turf male division in the barn, 4-year-old son of Not This Time won back-to-back Grade 1s in the Old Forester Bourbon Turf Classic on Kentucky Derby Day and the Resorts World Casino Manhattan on Belmont Day. The Turf Classic win came the race before the Kentucky Derby, which Pletcher, Repole and St. Elias were forced to miss with Forte. "Right now I think we'll go to the Arlington Million (Aug. 12 at Colonial Downs). That's the plan. We wanted to freshen him up a little bit. There wasn't an ideal race here for him. He could go back to a mile in the Fourstardave, but we're thinking his Breeders' Cup race might be the Turf so coming off a mile and a quarter win, we felt like that could lead us to the (Joe Hirsch) Turf Classic and Breeders' Cup after that. It was interesting because he was a horse we always liked. He broke his maiden first time here (on the dirt) and then he kind of plateaued on us. He doesn't have a big turf pedigree, but we had an idea he might take to it. I thought his first trip (on the grass) was a wow. It was only an a-other-than allowance but it was a wow performance. We thought, 'This looks like a serious horse' and he's followed up from that. I don't know if I'd call it a consolation prize winning at Churchill but it did help take a little of the sting out."

Nest: Another champ. Last year's 3-year-old filly Eclipse Award winner hasn't been out since finishing fourth behind Malathaat, Blue Stripe and Clairiere in the Breeders' Cup Distaff at Keeneland. Owned by Repole, Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and Michael House, 4-year-old daughter of Curlin won last year's Grade 1 Coaching Club American Oaks and Alabama en route to the title. She breezed 5 furlongs in 1:02 on the



Susie Raisher

Todd Pletcher keeps an eye on some charges Wednesday morning.

Belmont training track July 7 before returning to Saratoga. "She'll run in the Shuvee (July 23). She got really sick when she first came into us at Palm Beach Downs this winter. We missed like a month of training and it put us completely off the schedule we had hoped for, which was either the Doubledogdare at Keeneland or La Troienne at Churchill and then on to the Ogden Phipps at Belmont. Then we were thinking we could make the Phipps but we ran out of time. So, we landed here. Same thing as what we were talking about with Forte; maybe we could make a case to run in the Molly Pitcher, it's a mile and a sixteenth instead of a mile and an eighth, but she's done so well here. It looks like she's now back to herself. We wanted to give her a meaningful break, we just didn't mean for it to stretch out that long. Thankfully she's healthy again and has trained really well."

Gambling Girl: Repole Stable's New York-bred daughter of Dialed In finished a game second to Pretty Mischievous in the Longines Kentucky Oaks. A maiden winner here last summer, she added the Joseph A. Gimma against state-breds in late September and finished third in the Grade 2 Demoiselle at Aqueduct. The Coaching Club American Oaks and Alabama are key targets. "We took her to Churchill to run in the Kentucky Oaks. She's a filly that's always trained OK but sort of overachieved in the afternoon. Then when we got to Churchill, we were like, 'Wow, she's really training well here, seems to like the track.' She ran a great race in the Oaks. Almost got there. My view from where I was standing I thought she might get there, but she just couldn't quite get there. The fact that she liked the surface there we figured she could do most of her preparation there. So we left her there. The distances (of the CCA Oaks and Alabama) suit her. She liked

the mile and an eighth. She'll like the mile and a quarter. Freshened her up, passed on the Acorn because we knew we'd run the two races here, or at least hope to."

Americanrevolution: WinStar Farm's and China Horse Club's 2021 New York-bred Horse of the Year and 2022 champion older dirt male continues on the comeback trail. He finished second twice in three starts last season, including the Grade 1 Jockey Club Gold Cup at Saratoga. Five-year-old son of Constitution shows five breezes at Belmont this year, including 1:02.01 for 5 furlongs June 22. "It's been a little bit of a process getting back but hopefully we'll make a race at the meet. He's getting close."

Far Bridge: LSU Stable's 3-year-old son of English Channel won last weekend's Grade 1 Belmont Derby after back-to-back seconds in the Grade 2 American Turf at Churchill and Grade 2 Pennine Ridge at Belmont. Purchased privately from breeder Calumet Farm after a March 11 victory at Gulfstream. "That was a big effort in the Belmont Derby. I give those guys credit, they stepped up, identified the horse, Steve Young and them. They took a pretty good run at them. (Calumet) kept saying no and they kept upping the ante. So, hats off to them. He had a couple tough beats the first few times we ran him, then we got the trip we were hoping for. He'll go in the Saratoga Derby (Aug. 5)."

Kingsbarns: Spendthrift Farm's Louisiana Derby winner finished 14th in the Kentucky Derby then second in the June 17 Pegasus Stakes at Monmouth Park. "He's going to get a little vacation. He ran OK in the Pegasus, just got a little

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Stable Tour —

Continued from page 8

bit light. He had a pretty solid campaign leading up to that. He's going to be a horse that really improves as a 4-year-old so we'll freshen him up a little bit."

Major Dude: Spendthrift's 3-year-old son of Bolt d'Oro, a \$550,000 purchase out of the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale of selected yearlings, won the Grade 2 Penn Mile and Grade 3 Kitten's Joy this season. Finished fourth in the July 7 Manila Stakes at Belmont Park. "I was a little disappointed in his race the other day in the Manila, it was very unlike him. He's been super consistent. Irad (Ortiz Jr.) commented that he thought the turf was beat up at the end of the meet and he was not getting ahold of it. That was the only excuse we've been able to come up with so far. We might look at the Secretariat (Aug. 12 at Colonial) and send him there. We'll see how the month goes."

Emmanuel: Siena Farm's and WinStar's 4-year-old More Than Ready colt bounced back from a third in the Grade 3 Dinner Party to take the Grade 3 Poker on Belmont Day. He's won six of 11 and earned \$587,950. "We're going to go right to the Fourstardave (Aug. 12) with him. Big race in the Poker. He's had several races somewhat close together so we thought bringing him into that fresh was the right move."

Munnys Gold: A \$300,000 purchase by Robert and Lawana Low at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July sale of selected yearlings, daughter of Munnings burst on the scene with three straight wins, including the Stonehedge Farm South Sophomore at Tampa Bay Downs, before a second in the Grade 2 Eight Belles on Kentucky Oaks Day. She finished fourth last time out in the Grade 1 Acorn on Belmont Day. Part of the 30-member string at Churchill with Pletcher's assistant Amelia Green. "She's pointing for the Test (Aug. 5). She's training at Churchill also. She can be a bit keen and we have some options training back in the chute and doing different things with her there. As you know there aren't too many quiet spots around here this time of year."

Julia Shining: Stonestreet Stable's 3-year-old daughter of Curlin — and full-sister to the Pletcher-trained two-time champion Malathaat — returned to the work tab June 30 at Saratoga. Off since a third in the Grade 1 Central Bank Ashland April 7 at Keeneland, she was entered in the Kentucky Oaks but didn't draw in off the also-eligible list like eventual Black-Eyed Susan winner Taxed. "A little too early to have a race pinpointed. We freshened her up a little bit. She's doing good now and hopefully we'll make something at the meet. She didn't get to run in the Oaks, was on the AE. All the scratches were in the Derby and none in the Oaks."

Miracle: A four-time runner-up in stakes for owners Siena Farm and WinStar Farm, New York-bred daughter of Mendelssohn finished third in



Tod Marks

Champion Nest looks to get her 2023 started in the Shuvee July 23.

the Grade 3 Delaware Oaks July 1. A \$250,000 pinhooking prospect at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale, she broke her maiden here in her first start July 27. "Thought it was a solid effort in the Delaware Oaks. She's pretty consistent. We've got to get her a stakes win."

Falconet: Winner of the Top Flight Stakes in April at Aqueduct, 4-year-old daughter of Uncle Mo finished fourth last time out in the Allaire DuPont Distaff at Pimlico Race Course. Owned by China Horse Club and WinStar, she finished first or second in eight of 10 starts and earned \$398,340. "I might send her to the Molly Pitcher. She's another one, pretty consistent. Ran OK at Pimlico. Seems to be training pretty well right now so we'll keep an eye on the Molly Pitcher."

Fearless: The marathoner. Purchased for \$205,000 from the Fasig-Tipton July Horses of Racing Age sale in 2021, Repole's 7-year-old Ghostzapper gelding won last year's Birdstone Stakes at 1 3/4 miles and the Grade 2 Brooklyn Stakes at 1 1/2 miles. He finished fifth in the Grade 2 True North at 7 furlongs in his lone start of 2023 before heading to a second career with a record of 8-6-1 in 19 starts and \$1,251,450 in earnings. "He's just been retired. He's going to go to Old Friends at Cabin Creek. He's been a great horse for us, done a little bit of everything. The miles have kind of caught up with him. Mike's doing the right thing, giving him a good home."

Who will fill the void in the long-distance dirt races? "I don't have anything and I hate that. I like those races. Looking back I think (the Birdstone) was pretty hard on him last year. He ran hard and never quite recovered from that. We ran him at Parx and he didn't run well (in the Greenwood Cup). Gave him the winter off and he came back and was never able to regain that form."

Wine On Tap: MKW Racing's entrant in today's Grade 3 Schuylerville won her debut by 3 lengths

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CLASSIC *Success* STARTS AT SARATOGA



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AUGUST 7-8, 2023

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 9

June 18 going 5 furlongs at Belmont. A \$600,000 yearling, daughter of Tapit is the 5-2 morning-line favorite for the Opening Day feature. “That was a very good debut for a filly that I think is a two-turn filly. So, for her to win going 5 first time out was a straightforward debut. She did everything right and came back with a good work. She’s obviously moving forward. MWK Racing is Pete Williams and his daughter Martha is involved as well. They’ve stepped up, bought some nice horses. He and his daughter came down to Palm Beach Downs and we visited a little bit. They sent us this filly and there are a few more in the pipeline.”

Lady Blitz: One of two juvenile fillies entered in today’s second race for the stable, daughter of Audible finished fifth in her debut June 16 at Monmouth Park. MyRacehorse bought the filly for \$320,000 at last year’s Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale. “She was a little disappointing at Monmouth first time. It was a weird track. An early race and they were expecting rain. They sealed the track even though it hadn’t rained so they ran on a fast, sealed track. Never felt like she got a hold of it very well. There was a lot going on in the gate with some other horses. She ended up standing in there a long time, behaved really well but ended up breaking a little flat because of that. She came back with some good works so I would expect some improvement from her.”

Soca: The other half of the uncoupled entry in today’s second, Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners’ 2-year-old Speightstown filly is out of the Grade 3-placed Tapit mare Rattataptap. She cost \$100,000 last year and makes her debut under Flavien Prat. “She acts like she’s got some natural speed. She’s been up here and trained pretty forwardly.”

Dreamlike: Repole’s and St. Elias’ 3-year-old Gun Runner colt returns to the races and the maiden ranks after a third in the Grade 2 Wood Memorial in early April. He only lost that by a head, following back-to-back runner-up finishes in Gulfstream maiden events. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides from post 3 in Friday’s second race, a 9-furlong maiden special weight. “He’s a horse that’s always shown potential. Got a little break after the Wood, hopefully we’ve got him ready to go a mile and an eighth off the layoff.”

Haul: A debut winner for Eclipse and St. Elias Sunday at Belmont, 2-year-old son of Army Mule cost \$260,000 this year. He won by 3 lengths and heads to stakes company next. “We’re pointing for the Saratoga Special (Aug. 12). He trained professionally. Kind of a laid-back colt that does everything right. We were optimistic going in and felt like he gave a good performance.”

Classy Edition: A \$550,000 purchase by Robert and Lawana Low at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic May 2-year-olds in training sale, New

York-bred daughter of Classic Empire is a six-time winner and earner of \$590,290. She won the Critical Eye Stakes over fellow state-breds May 29 then finished a game second in the Grade 2 Delaware Handicap July 8. Also won this year’s Grade 3 Royal Delta at Gulfstream. “Man that was a tough beat (at Delaware). When you have one try as hard as she did in that race you feel sorry when they don’t win. That was a big effort. They were 10 lengths clear of the third horse. She’s been a really nice horse for us. There’s a New York-bred race back but I’ve kind of got to gauge how she does off that. That was a pretty demanding effort. I don’t know if she’ll be ready to bounce back in a month.”

Whatlovelooklike: Barry Schwartz’s homebred 4-year-old daughter of English Channel picked up her first stakes win in her first attempt in the July 4 Port Washington at Belmont. She improved to 4-for-10, with three seconds, and \$285,550 in earnings. “Straightforward. Always trained well and like a lot of the English Channels we expected her to get better. Might try to stretch her out in an allowance race, like a mile and three-eighths.”

Medaglia d’Oro-Dreaming Of Julia filly: Stonestreet’s half-sister to Malathaat and Julia Shining. “Nice filly. Kind of like her two older sisters we’ve had: nice moving, good attitude. She could be ready sometime in August I would think.”

Pirate: Smartly named Peter Blum-bred colt by Omaha Beach out of the Medaglia d’Oro mare Treasure is a half-brother to Preakness winner National Treasure. A \$350,000 purchase last year by Starlight Racing and Harrell Ventures, he’s breezed seven times on the Oklahoma including a half in :48.65 from the gate July 7. The dark bay colt drew the inside post in Saturday’s opener. “Been training forwardly. We’re excited to run him.”

Protective: Two-year-old son of Medaglia d’Oro out of Grade 1 winner Grace Hall cost Repole \$250,000 last year. He breezed 5 furlongs Tuesday in 1:01.16 on the main track, after going the same distance on the Oklahoma in 1:02.21 July 4.

Annotated: WinStar homebred 2-year-old by Justify is out of the Frankel mare Ambrosia, who cost \$1,736,690 in 2018. Owned by WinStar and Siena, he breezed in company with Protective Tuesday.

Curlin-Jacaranda colt: Fifth foal out of the Grade 3-winning Congrats mare that cost breeder Alpha Delta Stables \$2 million at the 2016 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky November mixed sale. “He could also be ready soon; been training pretty forwardly.”

Camera: One of 14 seven-figure yearlings at last year’s Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale at \$1.05 million, daughter of Curlin is the first foal out of the Grade 1-placed Flatter mare Cassies Dreamer. “She might have a race on the 23rd. She’s also trained well.”

Maryland-Bred, Maryland-Sired A long history at Saratoga



Did you know in the early 2000s, today's Schuylerville was a Grade 2?

TOUCH LOVE won it by $4\frac{3}{4}$ lengths. It was her third victory in as many starts, immediately following her \$100,000 Astoria Stakes win. Bred in Maryland by Mr & Mrs Charles McGinnes, she was by the venerable Northview stallion **NOT FOR LOVE**.



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Again

Saratoga steams into another Opening Day

BY JOE CLANCY

An 18-wheeler driver sets some kind of record for a reverse obstacle course. Air brakes hiss upon a perfect arrival at a loading chute. A traffic cutter on an electric scooter avoids a bumper, and disaster, by inches. Somewhere deep inside that 18-wheeler, a filly stomps her feet.

Empty stalls – soon to be full stalls – await.

It never fails. Opening Day at Saratoga Race Course somehow unfolds all at once and over the course of days, weeks, months, maybe even years if you go back as far as the foaling date of that filly in that horse van Wednesday morning on the backside.

Like it has since 1863, Saratoga Race Course

Continued On Page 14



Dave Harmon

The 2023 meet gets off and running today.



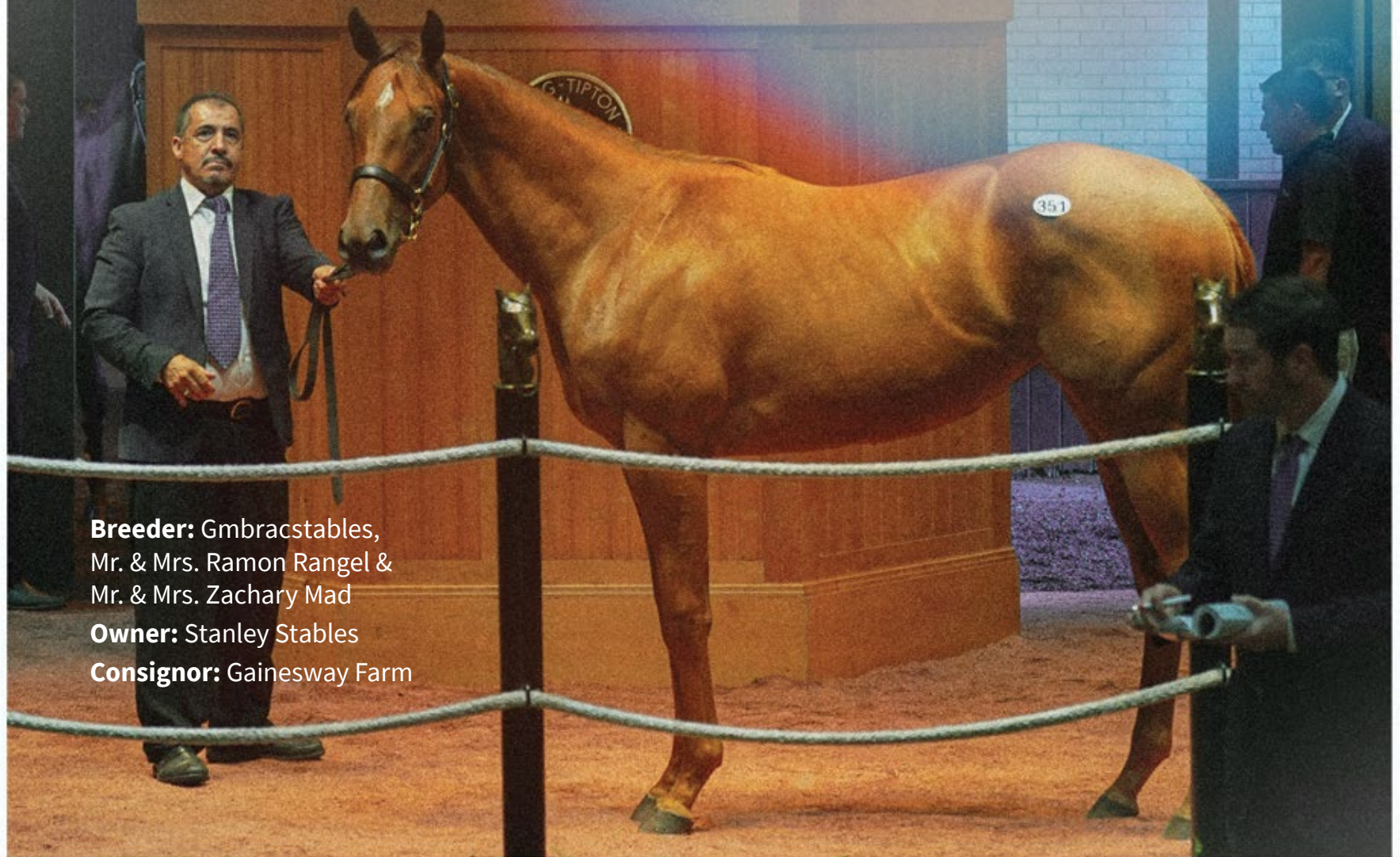
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 SPENDTHRIFT

Opening —

■ Continued from page 12

opens its summer racing season today for the first of 40 cards spread over eight weeks. The meet features 71 stakes worth \$20.8 million, major races in every division, deep colonies of horses, trainers and jockeys, and worldwide attention from within and beyond the Thoroughbred industry. Post time is 1:10 p.m. except for earlier starts on blockbuster cards centered around the Whitney Aug. 5 and Travers Aug. 26 and on closing weekend. The meet starts on a Thursday, but otherwise races Wednesday through Sunday (enjoy your dark days Monday and Tuesday).

Like always, everybody anticipates the start of Saratoga – from just about every angle and with just about every tactic. Saratoga brings pressure and opportunity, rewards patience and prudence, produces moments and magic.

All centers on the horses.

“These animals are so incredible,” said Dave O’Rourke, NYRA CEO and president. “They’re the most amazing athletes, at least to me, in the world. To see them perform is a phenomenal experience. It’s infectious. It’s a sport that crosses every generation – from little kids standing on the fence because they want to see the horses in



Belmont winner Arcangelo (and Javier Castellano) aim for the Travers.

the paddock to the old-timers that have been coming here since the great horses of the late '60s. They saw them. It's a cool place. There's no other way to say it.”

Top to bottom.

Tod Marks

“We all like it, we all look forward to it,” said jockey Javier Castellano while watching Belmont Stakes winner Arcangelo train Wednesday morning. “Hopefully you get started, get the momentum, get the jump. We all want to do that. I’ve been riding for more than 20 years here and when I was young, the pressure was on. Now I approach it a different way. In the beginning I put pressure on myself. Now, not so much. Experience helps a lot.”

Castellano rode his first Saratoga race in 2001 (a sixth aboard Justification for Allen Jerkens) and won 11 that season, early steps to a Hall of Fame career that includes 5,674 wins, four Eclipse Awards, two Saratoga meet championships and (as of this spring with Mage and Arcangelo) victories in the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes.

Last year, Castellano won 25 races to finish seventh in the standings dominated by Irad Ortiz Jr.’s 55 wins. Ortiz (four) and his brother Jose (three) have won seven of the last eight Saratoga titles, with Luis Saez breaking up the list in 2021. All three return among a group that gets deeper than Lake Champlain. John Velazquez and Castellano are the veterans. They get company from Joel Rosario, the 2021 Eclipse winner who won a dozen graded stakes here last year, plus Flavien Prat, Ty-

Continued On Page 15

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Opening —

■ Continued from page 14

ler Gaffalione, Manny Franco, Florent Geroux and on and on. The top eight leading earning jockeys and 12 of the top 15 in 2023 will be based at Saratoga this summer.

Saez spent all spring in Kentucky, piling up wins at Keeneland and Churchill Downs before relocating from Ellis Park to Saratoga for the meet. Tied for second with Prat behind Ortiz Jr. last year at Saratoga, the Panama native and agent Kiaran McLaughlin come out swinging with 24 rides over the first three cards.

“We don’t have any repeat business from New York,” McLaughlin said about hustling mounts, “but we’ll get there. Luis rides the courses here very well, turf and dirt. He likes it here. We just work hard and hope we do well. There are enough wins to go around and we just hope we win our share. It’s a great jockey colony, a great trainer colony, a great place and great racing.”

Win or lose, jockeys appreciate the chance to ride on Saratoga’s stage.

“Every day,” Castellano responded when asked about the fan engagement. “We really like it. The atmosphere, the people, you see 20 to 30,000 people almost every day here. It’s competitive, it keeps you on your toes. I want to win, you want to be in the winner’s circle in front of all those people. Saratoga is the best, that’s why.”

Like the jockey roster, the trainer board reads like an all-star lineup. Chad Brown seeks his sixth Saratoga crown after winning 42 races last summer. He and 14-time champion Todd Pletcher have won the last 13 meets and occupy space on any favorite’s list based on quantity and quality. Pletcher entered eight horses in seven races over the first three cards while Brown entered 17 horses in nine races and flexes his stable’s muscles with four runners in Saturday’s five-horse, Grade 1 Diana topped by last year’s winner In Italian.

Linda Rice (2009) is the most recent different name on the trainers’ title list along with Bill Mott (2007), and both will – of course – play big roles at Saratoga 2023. Rice has won the last four NYRA meet titles – three at Aqueduct and the Belmont spring meet.

Brown (42 wins) and Pletcher (38) ran away from the field last year at

Continued On Page 16



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Opening —

■ Continued from page 15

Saratoga, but six trainers topped 10 wins at the meet and the depth shows when you factor in the stables of Rice, Mott, Christophe Clement, Mike Maker, Steve Asmussen (27 percent here last year), Brad Cox and on down the line as horses arrive from all points.

Trainer Jim Bond won four (from 29 starts) here last summer and — like always — looks forward to getting started.

“I’ve been doing this quite a few years, OK, and it’s just exciting,” he said Wednesday morning. “We’ve got a bunch of young horses. The best of the best are here. This is where they all clash. We’ve got a bunch of horses and we’re just hoping to get lucky. The inflow of horses from all over the United States, internationally, everywhere. Everyone comes here because the purses, No. 1, are great, but the quality of racing, the quality of riders, owners, trainers, it’s everything.”

Bond and his wife Tina breed and raise horses in New York, and — like all breeders — see Saratoga as something of a measuring stick.



NYRA CEO Dave O'Rourke.

“You see 2-year-olds by new sires and you’re excited as breeders,” he said. “We’ve got some Vino Rossos, Bolt d’Oros, Omaha Beaches ourselves so you get to kind of see where you are. Then you get to go over to the sale and dream. Saratoga is all of it. It’s the best. If anyone loves Thoroughbred horse racing, this is the place to be.”

Arcangelo was out among the gallopers on the

main track Wednesday and is on the list of most-anticipated 2023 Saratoga runners. Jena Antonucci’s stable star could turn up in the Jim Dandy July 29 and/or the Travers Aug. 26. Castellano won his first Belmont aboard the gray son of 2016 Travers winner Arrogate five weeks after winning his first Kentucky Derby aboard Mage. The latter is training in Kentucky, and the Travers remains on his itinerary. California-based Preakness winner National Treasure could also make the trip.

Among the older horses, the \$1 million Whitney is the first major target. Cody’s Wish, unbeaten in his last six starts and nine for his last 10, targets the Whitney for Mott and owner/breeder Godolphin. The 5-year-old dominated the Met Mile around one turn at Belmont June 10. He’ll try to stretch his success another furlong in the Whitney.

Nest, who won two Grade 1 stakes at Saratoga on the way to the 3-year-old filly championship of 2022, could meet Clairiere in the Shuvee July 23. She won last year’s edition and has won her last two (both Grade 1 stakes) for Asmussen.

And, this being Saratoga, anybody’s pre-season list surely comes up short when it comes to whatever the real thing looks like come September.

“I’m looking forward to the one that happens this year and there will be more than one,” said O’Rourke of the meet’s Thoroughbred stars. “There’s always more than one. There will be an incredible event that stands above them all. It happens every year.”

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New Voice

Veteran race-caller Mirahmadi takes spot as Saratoga announcer

BY TOM LAW

Frank Mirahmadi gets Saratoga. He's made the pilgrimage to the upstate New York racing oasis enough times to count on his fingers and toes – give or take – and knows what it means to fans and the game.

“Saratoga is a place you can actually come to the races, sit near the paddock, never go out to watch a race and have a great day. You can watch the races on the TVs and still have an awesome time,” Mirahmadi said. “Saratoga is that great. It's also a place where one gets to see people that you might get to see once a year. It's an event. Every day is an event.”

Mirahmadi takes his place in the event today on his first day on the mic as Saratoga Race Course's full-time

announcer. The 55-year-old Californian who grew up near Santa Anita Park and that track's current announcer, takes his spot in the booth after John Imbriale handled the announcer's role the last three seasons, following Larry Collmus and one of Mirahmadi's idols, Tom Durkin.

Mirahmadi won't be a first-time visitor to the booth, however, having called races at Saratoga on five other occasions, including two last season. He's excited for the role, and fully understands its challenges and responsibilities.

“I look at the track announcer's job is to celebrate winners. Period,” Mirahmadi said. “No matter what level of racing you're calling, it's important to keep in mind, especially at the end of the race because it's a



NYRA Photo

Frank Mirahmadi becomes Saratoga's full-time announcer this summer.

celebration. I take pride in celebrating appropriately. I've done that my whole career.

“Obviously this is a very high level. I feel a great responsibility to deliver for the fans, for the owners, for the connections, for the breeders. My job every day is to celebrate. Of course, accuracy first, then celebration and

I think it's important also to not try and overdo it. What can be done has been done in race calling.”

Mirahmadi's past stints as a fill-in announcer at Saratoga came during weekday cards, and he's also enthused to delve into the big Saturday programs that feature such marquee

Continued On Page 19

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Mirahmadi —

■ Continued from page 18

events as the Whitney, Alabama and Travers.

Durkin presided over all of those events as NYRA's lead announcer from 1990 until his retirement on the penultimate day of the 2014 Saratoga meet. Mirahmadi has called races at Hollywood Park, Monmouth Park, Oaklawn Park and several other tracks dating back toward the start of his career at places like Hialeah, Great Barrington and Turf Paradise.

"I'm never going to be the best announcer in Saratoga history. It's not happening," Mirahmadi said. "That list is a big list, and I'm fine with that, you know what I mean? I'm not putting myself down, I'm very proud of what I do. But you've had Tom Durkin in the house. He's an absolute icon. ... I've actually been listening to old races from Tom for cadence, for things to learn from. I like to see what the fans like. I'm not going to mimic anybody but I'm here to understand and to learn."

Mirahmadi's first trip to Saratoga came in 1997. He also attended the 1998 Travers Stakes, which featured the blanket finish by Coronado's Quest, Victory Gallop and Behrens. He made the trip that year from Great Barrington, borrowing veteran racing official Sam Abbey's truck for the 90-minute journey from western Massachusetts to Saratoga.

Mirahmadi didn't make the trip back until 2017 and that sojourn provided Mirahmadi with his own bit of Saratoga magic.

"I met my girlfriend Jennifer (Latz) that year and we've been together ever since," Mirahmadi said. "She had followed me on Twitter and had made a couple nice comments. She's a Monmouth person, a Jersey girl. And she had this distinct purple stripe in her hair. I was like 'I'm going to find this girl. She's kind of cute.'"

Working as the announcer at Monmouth at the time, Mirahmadi admits he never saw Latzo at the Jersey Shore. But she saw him.

"She said she saw me but said I always looked too serious to come up and say hello to," Mirahmadi said. "I'm the furthest thing from serious."

"So how about this, I pull up in the parking lot to work on the Saratoga Live show. I look at Twitter and she had just tweeted how great Saratoga is with a picture of the trees. I said to myself, 'I'm going to find this girl today.' Of course, I'd forgotten how big that area was, took a little look and said, 'forget it.'"

Standing in the area by the jockeys' room and communications offices, Mirahmadi eventually didn't need to look anymore. Latzo, who later became NYRA's senior manager of sponsorship, walked right up and stuck out her hand.

"I know you," she said.

"We shook hands, started talking about baseball. She's a big baseball fan. And we talked about Saratoga. And we've been together ever since."

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Road Trip

Juvenile Delaware shipper aims at Gr. 3 feature on Opening Day

BY SEAN CLANCY

Chuck Lawrence knows what it's like to win at Saratoga. He also knows what it's like to lose at Saratoga. The lessons began when he was riding jumpers. The hungry apprentice from Virginia went 0-for-7 at the Spa in 1986. The wily veteran went 3-for-6, including both stakes aboard champion Warm Spell, in 1993.

The lessons continued since becoming a trainer. The Mid-Atlantic-based trainer upset a three-turn maiden turf with Da Dean in 1996 and swept the Grade 2 Bowling Green and Grade 1 Sword Dancer (in a dead heat) with Glorious Empire in 2018. Along the way, there have been plenty of losses, disappointments, frustrating drives back home including a 0-for-21 skid

SCHUYLerville STAKES PREVIEW

and seeing Coax Liberty finish third, fourth and fifth in salty Saratoga stakes and wind up in Kiaran McLaughlin's barn.

"I know how deep the waters are when you come north," Lawrence said from Saratoga Tuesday afternoon. "Here and Keeneland are the biggest thrills for me because the crowd is so into it. When we would come back after winning a race riding, the crowd's clapping and standing up. I don't know many places to do that."

Lawrence ventures into another Saratoga classroom, aiming Delaware

Continued On Page 21



Susie Raisher

Dancing Diana gets a feel for the Saratoga track Wednesday morning.

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Schuylerville —

■ Continued from page 20

Park debut winner Dancing Diana to the Grade 3 Schuylerville, the feature on the Opening Day card. Owned by Manor Stable, the 2-year-old daughter of Bolt d'Oro breaks from post 8 with Hall of Famer jockey John Velazquez. The dark bay filly is 6-1, co-fourth choice with Gulfstream Park debut winner Sugar Treat and behind debut winners Wine On Tap (Belmont Park), Saratoga Secret (Ellis Park) and Carmelina (Parx Racing).

"We are going against powerful outfits, but I usually show up well at Saratoga," Lawrence said. "I wouldn't come up here if I didn't think we'd be competitive. I didn't have any qualms when the owners talked about it."

Jim and Diana Perella have been talking about Dancing Diana since they purchased for \$100,000 at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Eastern fall yearling sale in October. Lawrence liked her that day and the glint has only grown since.

"They asked me to go down and look at some horses that Patti Miller and EQB had put on the list," Lawrence said. "This filly, I absolutely loved. She was a little small, but I loved her balance, her pedigree and we were lucky enough to get her."

Lawrence broke her at his Fair Hill base, moved her to Lynn Ashby at her Delaware training center



NYRA Photo/Susie Raisher

Texas-bred Closing Act eyes her third win in as many starts.

this winter and sent her to Delaware Park when the stable area opened this spring. She posted her first breeze May 3 and was ready to roll in her debut, ripping to a 7 1/2-length score going 5 furlongs at Delaware Park June 17.

"I thought we'd be very competitive first time out, everything she had done for me, she had done very easily. I hadn't put a lot of crazy speed works

into her but everything she did she did within herself," Lawrence said. "We did two works from the gate, I don't like working a horse a quarter, or three eighths or a half and pull up so I have the riders go out of the gate like a quarter, then back off to a two-minute lick and then finish the last quarter. She would go in 17 or 18 and gallop out better than she did the whole work. Then she comes back and she's like a young kid who just went out and played in the yard all day and isn't even huffing and puffing."

Breaking adequately from the inside post in the field of four, Dancing Diana moved easily from second to the lead, shook off second-choice Ursuline around the turn and drew off after two unnecessary right-handed smacks. The Pennsylvania-bred filly finished 5 furlongs in :59.72.

Dancing Diana arrived in Saratoga Monday afternoon, settled sweetly into the big stalls and quiet atmosphere at the receiving barn on Nelson Avenue and galloped an easy circuit of the main track with apprentice Taylor Kingsley Tuesday morning. They visited the gate Wednesday morning.

"She stands out to me because she gets over the ground so effortlessly. I've never asked this filly to run so I don't know," Lawrence said. "The jockey said he didn't ask her to run when she won. Her

Continued On Page 22

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Schuylerville —

■ Continued from page 21

times were very fast compared to the other 2-year-old races run at Delaware and he said he still had more in the tank, so, yeah, I'm excited."

Of course, like with all trainers, the Saratoga glee is always shadowed by the Saratoga gloom.

"You don't want to come up here unless you have a runner, not only the stakes but you'll think you're dropping a horse and these guys are dropping from 100 to 50, to 25, to 16, everyone wants to win at Saratoga," Lawrence said. "I've been lucky to win some nice races over the years here but there have been some disappointments. I know how tough it is."

For Gary Contessa, the tough Saratoga lessons began when Allemande finished seventh in the Seneca Handicap Aug. 24, 1989. From there, the odyssey has ebbed and flowed through his heyday when he sent out over 1,000 runners a season to this year when he's saddled five. The sixth will be in today's second race when Classy Mischief makes her debut and the seventh will be in the Schuylerville when Becky's Joker makes her debut. Both runners are owned by longtime client Lee Pokoik.

"To run a first-time starter who has some quality in a stake is not the most ridiculous thing I've ever done," Contessa said from Saratoga Tuesday afternoon. "You can't achieve greatness unless you



NYRA Photo/Chelsea Durand

Wine On Tap is favored in today's Schuylerville.

take some risk. With Lee Pokoik, it's not even risk. I've been with Lee since 1984, this is something we both wanted to try. If it doesn't succeed, we lick our wounds and come back and run in maiden races later on. It's a can't-lose situation and yet I do think she's good enough to run with these fillies but she's going to need a little help. She's got to get out from the inside. She's going to need to come running. She's going to need to not hit a wall."

Hall of Fame jockey Javier Castellano will try to get out, come running and avoid the wall from post 2 on the daughter of Practical Joke. Purchased for \$130,000 as a weanling, Becky's Joker failed to recoup that as a yearling and again as a 2-year-old. That's fine, she joined Contessa's newly refined rac-

ing division in Saratoga this spring. Contessa left a private position with Nick and Delora Beaver's Bell Gable Stable, leading owner at Delaware Park in 2021-22, at the end of last season and quickly went back into business as a public conditioner in Saratoga, albeit, with a catch. He's got a tidy group of 12 horses.

"I had a two-year run with Bell Gable Stable but at the end of the year, I looked at the horses and said, 'Nick, you can get a public trainer for a lot less than you're paying me.' That stable just didn't morph into what we thought it would," Contessa said. "I came back to New York and a bunch of my old owners asked me to come back to training, so I did. I took a dozen horses to Saratoga in late April and I've been there ever since. A lot of 2-year-olds but they all came to hand pretty well. It's not all 2-year-olds but pretty much everybody is ready to run."

Including Becky's Joker. She posted her first breeze at Saratoga May 13 and takes aim at her stakes debut in her racing debut.

"Our game is, the last 10 to 15 years, we've bought three or four weanlings and we try to resell them as yearlings for a profit. We're not greedy, we just set what we think is a fair price. If we don't get our price and we like them, we'll try to resell as a 2-year-old. She didn't hit the mark," Contessa said. "She's very athletic. She's big. She probably wants to go two turns, but she is incredibly precocious.

Continued On Page 23

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Schuylerville —

■ Continued from page 22

Nobody in my barn can keep up with her. Lee and I talked about it, there's nothing in this race that would have scared me out of a maiden race. They have me on experience but I'm not certain they have me on talent."

At the top of the talent pyramid stands Wine On Tap. Owned by MKW Racing, trained by Todd Pletcher and ridden by Irad Ortiz Jr., the \$600,000 yearling purchase walked four rivals in her debut at Belmont Park June 18. The daughter of Tapit breaks from post 7.

The 1-2 finishers from the June 11 Astoria Stakes return. Closing Act won that day, defeating Union Suit by 3 1/4 lengths. Trained by Steve Asmussen, Closing Act won her debut at Churchill Downs in May and followed it up in the Astoria. Tyler Gafalione rides the Texas-bred daughter of Munnings for owner and breeder Douglas Scharbauer.

Union Suit won her debut at Indiana Downs for trainer Rey Hernandez before transferring to Graham

Motion. Manny Franco takes the call on the daughter of Union Rags.

Trainer Butch Reid ships a pair from his Parx base. Carmelina won her debut by 5 3/4 lengths. The Pennsylvania-bred daughter of Maximus Mischief drew the inside post for Jose Ortiz. Kiss For Luck accompanies Carmelina. Swilcan's homebred daughter of Accelerate won her debut at Parx. Kendrick Carmouche picks up the ride from post 8.

Status Seeker earned a half-length win in her debut for trainer Rudy Rodriguez. Joel Rosario keeps the call on the \$45,000 2-year-old purchase.

Hall of Fame trainer Wayne Lukas sends out Saratoga Secret. Luis Saez returns on the daughter of Arrogate, winner of her debut at Ellis Park June 23.

Monmouth-based Kent Swezey heads north with Mila Jones, a half-length winner of her debut on the Jersey shore June 16. Jose Gomez rides for the first time from post 10.

Breaking from the outside, Sugar Treat makes her second start after winning a Gulfstream Park maiden June 10. Trained by Mark Casse, the daughter of Enticed attracts Flavien Prat.

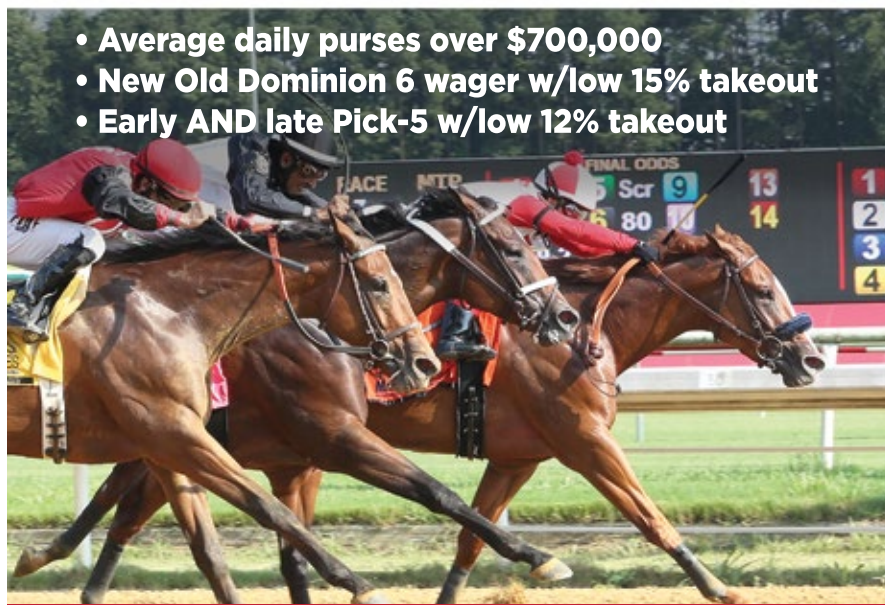


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SARATOGA ENTRIES

Thursday, July 13.

1ST (1:10PM). \$149,500, AOC \$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1 1/8M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double

1	.....1	Virtual Reality	.....M. Franco	.....C. Brown	.....3-1
2	.....2	Mia Bea Star	.....J. Torres	.....R. Persaud	.....10-1
3	.....3	Toned Up	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....R. Atras	.....5-1
4	.....4	Honey Money	.....G. Huayas	.....W. Potts	.....10-1
5	.....5	Bustin Bay	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....5-2
6	.....6	Sabra Tuff	.....R. Gutierrez	.....D. Stewart	.....3-1
7	.....7	Ocean Gateway	.....J. Castellano	.....C. Clement	.....6-1

2ND (1:44PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, F, 5 1/2F

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double

1	.....1	Classy Mischief	.....J. Castellano	.....G. Contessa	.....20-1
2	.....2	Empire Island	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....N. Casse	.....5-2
3	.....3	Clearly a Test	.....J. Ortiz	.....J. Camejo	.....10-1
4	.....4	Soca	.....F. Prat	.....T. Pletcher	.....6-1
5	.....5	Lady Blitz	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....T. Pletcher	.....4-1
6	.....6	Lady Moscato	.....L. Saez	.....D. Lukas	.....3-1
7	.....7	Sugar Hi	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....8-1
8	.....8	Tap the Keg	.....K. Davis	.....R. Handal	.....20-1
9	.....9	Honey Dijon	.....T. Gaffalione	.....J. Sharp	.....10-1

3RD (2:20PM). \$50,000, CLM \$35,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	.....1	Fabulous Fanny	.....C. Torres	.....R. Diodoro	.....6-1
2	.....2	Rosemary Potatoes	.....G. Huayas	.....M. Arenas	.....30-1
3	.....3	Diva Ready	.....J. Castellano	.....R. Klesaris	.....10-1
4	.....4	Smokin' Hot Kitty	.....M. Franco	.....H. De Paz	.....7-2
5	.....5	Mostly Harmless	.....J. Alvarado	.....C. Martin	.....12-1
6	.....6	Saratoga Gaze	.....F. Prat	.....M. Hennig	.....9-2
7	.....7	Devilly	.....K. Carmouche	.....J. Ferraro	.....20-1
8	.....8	Liana B	.....L. Saez	.....J. Kimmel	.....5-1
9	.....9	Linarite	.....J. Ortiz	.....D. Donk	.....5-1
10	.....10	La Aguillilla	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....D. Jacobson	.....6-1

4TH (2:52PM). \$162,500, AOC \$80,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double, Pic 4

1	.....3	Canisy	.....T. Gaffalione	.....C. Clement	.....5-2
1a	.....4	Messidor (IRE)	.....J. Castellano	.....C. Clement	.....5-2
2	.....1	Sister Otoole	.....L. Saez	.....H. Motion	.....6-1
3	.....2	Poca Mucha	.....J. Rosario	.....W. Mott	.....8-1
4	.....5	Star Devine (IRE)	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....M. Maker	.....6-1
5	.....6	Salimah (IRE)	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....8-5
6	.....7	Kalifornia Queen (GER)	.....M. Franco	.....C. Brown	.....4-1
7	.....AE-MTO	Sixtythreecaliber	.....T. Gaffalione	.....T. Amoss	.....2-5

5TH (3:26PM). \$52,000, CLM \$20,000, 4 YO'S & UP, 1 1/8M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 6, Daily Double

1	.....1	Bold Victory	.....D. Davis	.....J. Englehart	.....10-1
1a	.....3	Styner	.....R. Gutierrez	.....J. Englehart	.....10-1
2	.....2	Dust Devil	.....F. Prat	.....P. Reynolds	.....4-1
3	.....4	Pit Boss	.....J. Castellano	.....J. Bernardino	.....15-1
4	.....5	Olliemyboy	.....T. Gaffalione	.....P. Bauer	.....3-1
5	.....6	Mount Travers	.....J. Velazquez	.....A. Chichakly	.....30-1
6	.....7	Portos	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....T. Morley	.....5-2
7	.....8	Silver Dust	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....J. Barkley	.....8-1
8	.....9	Cut the Cord	.....K. Carmouche	.....J. Englehart	.....20-1
9	.....10	Two Thirty Five	.....J. Rosario	.....O. Barrera, III	.....8-1
10	.....11	Hammerin Amer	.....L. Saez	.....R. Falcone, Jr.	.....12-1

6TH (4:00PM). \$100,000, AOC \$45,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double

1	.....1	Foolish Ghost	.....J. Castellano	.....O. Barrera, III	.....10-1
2	.....2	Runningwscissors	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....D. Jacobson	.....8-5
3	.....3	Bar Fourteen	.....K. Carmouche	.....R. Sells	.....15-1
4	.....4	Rough Draft	.....J. Ortiz	.....D. Duggan	.....3-1
5	.....5	Winners Laugh	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....H. De Paz	.....12-1

6	.....6	Yarrow	.....M. Franco	.....C. Clement	.....4-1
7	.....7	Phantom Smoke	.....F. Prat	.....M. Miceli	.....6-1
8	.....8	Nueva York	.....J. Baez	.....S. Torelli	.....30-1
9	.....9	Me 'n Sap	.....J. Gomez	.....D. Donk	.....30-1
10	.....AE-MTO	Radio Red	.....J. Rosario	.....D. Gargan	.....2-1
11	.....AE-MTO	Bronx Bomber	.....M. Franco	.....M. Kantarmaci	.....12-1
12	.....AE-MTO	Amundson	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....9-5

7TH (4:34PM). \$70,000, STR \$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double

1	.....1	Into Happiness	.....J. Velazquez	.....M. Hennig	.....8-1
2	.....2	Carbon	.....J. Alvarado	.....M. Kantarmaci	.....12-1
3	.....3	Miscreant	.....J. Lezcano	.....P. Serpe	.....20-1
4	.....4	My Girl Jal	.....E. Greenidge	.....C. Summers	.....30-1
5	.....5	Sa Foradada	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....R. Dutrow, Jr.	.....4-1
6	.....6	Icy Reply	.....J. Castellano	.....J. Ferraro	.....12-1
7	.....7	Graceful Rose	.....K. Carmouche	.....M. Gorham	.....30-1
8	.....8	Mursal	.....M. Franco	.....R. Dutrow, Jr.	.....8-1
9	.....9	Condiment Girl	.....C. Torres	.....R. Diodoro	.....7-2
10	.....10	Obrigada	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....3-1
11	.....11	Need Some Money	.....T. Gaffalione	.....T. Amoss	.....8-1

8TH (5:10PM). \$70,000, STR \$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	.....1	Thunderian	.....F. Geroux	.....D. Jacobson	.....15-1
2	.....2	Born a Gambler	.....M. Franco	.....M. Maker	.....6-1
3	.....3	Front Man	.....J. Alvarado	.....M. Kantarmaci	.....10-1
4	.....4	My Sea Cottage (IRE)	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....M. Casse	.....7-2
5	.....5	Kingfish Stevens	.....J. Castellano	.....C. Martin	.....5-1
6	.....6	Unleash the Power	.....L. Saez	.....A. Stall, Jr.	.....4-1
7	.....7	Dreampoint	.....F. Prat	.....R. Sells	.....15-1
8	.....8	American Grant	.....K. Carmouche	.....B. Brown	.....20-1
9	.....9	Foliage	.....T. Gaffalione	.....J. Sharp	.....20-1
10	.....10	Consultant	.....J. Lezcano	.....R. Klesaris	.....12-1
11	.....11	Bricco	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....H. Bond	.....20-1
12	.....12	Chileno	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....8-1
13	.....AE	Sonic Speed	.....J. Castellano	.....T. Morley	.....10-1
14	.....AE	Dreaming of Toga	.....F. Geroux	.....G. Sacco	.....20-1

9TH (5:44PM). \$175,000, STK - THE SCHUYLERVILLE, 2 YO, F, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

1	.....1	Carmelina	.....J. Ortiz	.....R. Reid, Jr.	.....5-1
2	.....2	Becky's Joker	.....J. Castellano	.....G. Contessa	.....15-1
3	.....3	Union Suit	.....M. Franco	.....H. Motion	.....20-1
4	.....4	Status Seeker	.....J. Rosario	.....R. Rodriguez	.....12-1
5	.....5	Saratoga Secret	.....L. Saez	.....D. Lukas	.....4-1
6	.....6	Closing Act	.....T. Gaffalione	.....S. Asmussen	.....10-1
7	.....7	Wine On Tap	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....T. Pletcher	.....5-2
8	.....8	Kiss for Luck	.....K. Carmouche	.....R. Reid, Jr.	.....30-1
9	.....9	Dancing Diana	.....J. Velazquez	.....J. Lawrence, II	.....6-1
10	.....10	Mila Junes	.....J. Gomez	.....J. Sweezy	.....30-1
11	.....11	Sugar Treat	.....F. Prat	.....M. Casse	.....6-1

10TH (6:18PM). \$50,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1 1/16M (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

1	.....1	Power and Glory	.....N. Juarez	.....G. Thompson	.....20-1
2	.....2	Charisse	.....J. Lezcano	.....M. Hennig	.....8-1
3	.....3	Bella Sonadora	.....M. Luzzi	.....C. Figueroa, Jr.	.....30-1
4	.....4	Stone of Destiny	.....J. Velazquez	.....D. Donk	.....9-2
5	.....5	April First	.....M. Franco	.....D. Donk	.....12-1
6	.....6	So Are You	.....S. Uske	.....G. Goodwin	.....30-1
7	.....7	Arisaema	.....F. Prat	.....J. Abreu	.....5-2
8	.....8	Mary Katherine	.....J. Gomez	.....N. Lynch	.....20-1
9	.....9	Follow the Fed	.....R. Gutierrez	.....R. Rodriguez	.....20-1
10	.....10	Here We Go Again	.....L. Saez	.....R. Falcone, Jr.	.....4-1
11	.....11	Pimenova	.....K. Carmouche	.....D. Gargan	.....8-1
12	.....12	Jannie Mae	.....J. Castellano	.....M. Nevin	.....10-1
13	.....AE	Alterina	.....K. Davis	.....M. Hennig	.....15-1
14	.....AE	Thundara	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....P. Antonacci	.....6-1
15AE	SperssJ. TorresH. Bond10-1
16AE	Berning HonorM. FrancoD. Schettino4-1

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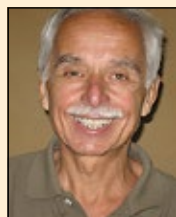
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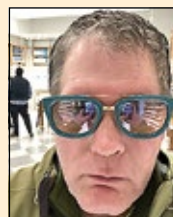
The **POWER** Grid



John Shapazian



Tom Law



Rob Whitlock



Charles Bedard



Jessica Paquette

Race	John Shapazian	Tom Law	Rob Whitlock	Charles Bedard	Jessica Paquette
1	Bustin Bay Sabra Tuff Virtual Reality	Bustin Bay Sabra Tuff Virtual Reality	Bustin Bay Virtual Reality Sabra Tuff	Honey Money Toned Up Sabra Tuff	Bustin Bay Ocean Gateway Toned Up
2	Lady Moscato Sugar Hi Empire Island	Sugar Hi Soca Empire Island	Empire Island Lady Moscato Honey Dijon	Empire Island Lady Moscato Lady Blitz	Soca Sugar Hi Honey Dijon
3	Smokin' Hot Kitty Fabulous Fanny Saratoga Gaze	Smokin' Hot Kitty Liana B Linarite	Smokin' Hot Kitty Saratoga Gaze Liana B	Saratoga Gaze Fabulous Fanny Liana B	Linarite Liana B Fabulous Fanny
4	Sixtythreecaliber Salimah Sister Otoole	Sixtythreecaliber Salimah Sister Otoole	Salimah Clement entry Sister Otoole	Sixtythreecaliber Salimah Kalifornia Queen	Sister Otoole Canisy Salimah
5	Dust Devil Olliemyboy Portos	Portos Dust Devil Olliemyboy	Olliemyboy Portos Dust Devil	Olliemyboy Two Thirty Five Portos	Portos Styner Dust Devil
6	Runningwscissors Radio Red Yarrow	Amundson Radio Red Runningwscissors	Radio Red Rough Draft Runningwscissors	Amundson Runningwscissors Foolish Ghost	Rough Draft Runningwscissors Foolish Ghost
7	Sa Foradada Obrigada Condiment Girl	Sa Foradada Obrigada Condiment Girl	Sa Foradada Obrigada Need Some Money	Condiment Girl Into Happiness Need Some Money	Into Happiness Sa Foradada Graceful Rose
8	My Sea Cottage Thunderian Unleash The Power	Unleash The Power My Sea Cottage Kingfish Stevens	Unleash The Power My Sea Cottage Foliage	Chileno Kingfish Stevens My Sea Cottage	My Sea Cottage Born A Gambler Foliage
9	Wine On Tap Saratoga Secret Closing Act	Wine On Tap Sugar Treat Closing Act	Wine On Tap Saratoga Secret Closing Act	Saratoga Secret Wine On Tap Closing Act	Carmelina Union Suit Closing Act
10	Arisaema Berning Honor Here We Go Again	Arisaema Here We Go Again Stone Of Destiny	Follow The Fed Arisaema Here We Go Again	Sperss Arisaema Here We Go Again	April First Arisaema Follow The Fed
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Boss Woman

Bosserati puts winning streak on line in Coronation Cup turf

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Joel Politi knows what it feels like to win a stakes race at Saratoga. Now, he'd like to see it – live.

Politi's Serengeti Empress, the 2019 Kentucky Oaks champion, won the Grade 1 Ballerina here during the pandemic-plagued 2020 meeting, and he planned on watching it. He was about three-quarters of the way through a 10-hour drive from his home in Columbus, Ohio, when he got word that even owners would not be allowed inside that weekend due to yet another surge in COVID rates. So, he turned around, went home and watched on TV as his super filly beat back challenges from the likes of Letruska, Belafina and Come Dancing.

Politi plans to be on Union Avenue for Friday's Coronation Cup Stakes, a 5 1/2-furlong turf sprint for 3-year-old fillies in which his Maryland homebred Bosserati will attempt to remain perfect since being switched to the grass in May. The daughter of Holy Boss out of Politi's broodmare Candy Striper had lost six straight on dirt after winning her debut last September at Timonium, prompting a layoff and surface switch.

"We always liked her a lot," said Politi, an orthopedic surgeon in Columbus. "She ran third in a Maryland stakes (Maryland Million Lassie) and she looked like a winner at the fur-

FRIDAY STAKES PREVIEW

long pole. In January we turned her out for 45 days at Chanceland Farm in Maryland. We brought her back on the grass and she's a new horse."

The return race was a \$25,000 conditioned claimer at Pimlico Race Course May 12, but the connections weren't overly concerned about someone dropping a claim.

"It was Joel's idea to run her on the grass in the spring," said trainer Brittany Russell. "We dangled her for a tag, but there was no reason not to. We figured we might as well give her an easy group as we tried a new surface."

Bosserati – whose name is derived from sire Holy Boss and what his daughter calls her Mazda, "Mazderatti" – won easily and came back with another front-running score in an allowance race at Pimlico June 2. That earned her a start in the \$100,000 Stormy Blues Stakes at Laurel Park June 18, and she again played catch-me-if-you-can – and they couldn't. Even-money favorite My Sweet Affair, who also runs in the \$150,000 Coronation Cup, encountered significant trouble at the break and closed from fifth, coming up a half-length short.

"It got a little messy at the start for the (George) Weaver filly, but our filly ran hard throughout," Russell said. "She's forward and they couldn't get



Maryland Jockey Club

Bosserati rides a three-race winning streak into Friday's Coronation Cup Stakes.

to her. It was nice to see her take a step forward."

Bosserati, who will be ridden by Sheldon Russell, the trainer's husband, was expected to ship from Maryland overnight and arrive in Saratoga Springs early Friday morning. Brittany Russell, who won the 2021 Tale Of The Cat Stakes with Wonderwhereraigis, said she did not expect to be here and that Chad Summers would saddle the filly.

Winning Friday's stakes will require

another improvement. In addition to My Sweet Affair, who will break from the rail, Bosserati will have to deal with Stonestreet Stables' 7-5 morning-line favorite Love Reigns, whom Wesley Ward planned to send to Royal Ascot before he changed course after not being pleased with her works coming out of a win in the April 14 Limestone Stakes at Keeneland. Love Reigns ran fourth in the Queen Mary

Continued On Page 27

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Friday —

Continued from page 26

at Ascot in 2022 before finishing eighth as the favorite in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint.

Moyglare Stud Farm homebred Love Appeals has won two of three starts and figures to be formidable for trainer Christophe Clement and jockey Manny Franco.

Bossarati drew the outside post in the field of eight.

"She had no more conditions, so the options were to run in a Maryland stakes against older horses, or run against 3-year-old fillies in this spot," Politi said of Bossarati. "She won an open stakes at Laurel and earned her shot here. This is a step up to be sure, but you don't know unless you try. An open stakes win at Saratoga is better than an open stakes at Laurel. She's Maryland-bred and Virginia-certified, so if this doesn't work out, there are a lot of options."

Politi, who started breeding about five years ago, owns 19 mares on his own and in partnership. Most are at Taylor Made Farm in Kentucky, but he keeps a few, including Candy Striper, at Grace and Louis Merryman's Anchor and Hope Farm in Port Deposit, Md. Bossarati is his first homebred stakes winner and he understandably has those first-child feelings for the filly.

"I have pictures and videos of her at every step of the way. At Anchor and Hope where she was born, Ocala where she was broken (Woodford Thoroughbreds), when she was in Virginia," said Politi, who was scheduled to fly in for the race with one of his four daughters. "We were very high on this one all along. We were super-excited when she placed in a Maryland stakes, and since she's gotten on the grass she's really taken off."

The Coronation Cup goes as the ninth race at 5:44 p.m. Friday. Three hours earlier, in the fourth, a compact field of five will contest the second running of the Wilton Stakes, a mile run out of the Wilson Chute that was reinstalled last year. Chad Brown is holding a pair of mononymous aces in Randomized, the 7-5 favorite for Klaravich Stables, and Accede, 8-5 for Juddmonte Farms.

Irad Ortiz Jr., last year's leading rider who is looking for his fifth Saratoga

title, is on Randomized, who is coming off a sixth in the Grade 1 Acorn Stakes at Belmont. The daughter of Nyquist, a \$420,000 Keeneland yearling, finished third in her debut at Saratoga last July 24 before romping in an Aqueduct maiden race March 31.

Accede, a Juddmonte homebred by Into Mischief who will be ridden by Flavien Prat, finished just ahead of Randomized in the Acorn, after running a respectable third to Red Carpet Ready and Munnys Gold in the Eight Belles Stakes on Kentucky Oaks Day. She won at first asking at Gulfstream Park March 16.

The main threat to the Brown duo appears to be Sacred Wish, owned by a partnership led by Jake Ballis' Black Type Thoroughbreds, trained by George Weaver and ridden by John Velazquez. By Not This Time, Sacred Wish broke her maiden at Oaklawn in March, finished second in the Grade 2 Gulfstream Park Oaks and was out of the money in the loaded Grade 2 Black-Eyed Susan at Pimlico. She came back to run second in an optional claimer at Belmont June 16.

Kentucky invader Unsung Melody and maiden winner Just Katherine complete the field.

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TIEA nominations close Sunday

Nominations to the 2023 Thoroughbred Industry Employee Awards close Sunday.

Held in the United States for the first time in 2016, the awards are sponsored by Godolphin in association with the National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protection Association, Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association, The Jockey Club and Breeders' Cup Ltd. Godolphin also sponsors equivalent Stud and Stable Staff Awards in Ireland, Australia, Great Britain and France.

Cash prizes totaling \$122,000 will be awarded to winners and two finalists in seven categories. In addition, runners-up will receive monetary awards for the first time in 2023.

The awards are the Dr. J. David "Doc" Richardson Community Award, Katherine McKee Administration Award, Dedication to Breeding Award, Dedication to Racing Award, Newcomer Award, Support Services Award and Leadership Award.

TIEA also announced the return of category sponsors Churchill Downs, Hallway Feeds, New York Racing Association, Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, National Thoroughbred Racing Association and Keeneland.

Keeneland again will host the awards ceremony Tuesday, Oct. 17, at the entertainment center.

To nominate an individual, visit tiea.org/nominations.

2022 Winners

Newcomer Award, sponsored by NYRA: Johnathan Estrada, Groom, David Donk.

Support Services Award, sponsored by I Am Horse Racing: Laura Scheer, Crossing Guard, NYRA.

Katherine McKee Administration Award, sponsored by Keeneland: Darla Shoemaker Gaige, Office Administration, Charles Town HBPA.

Dedication to Breeding Award, sponsored by Hallway Feeds: Don Jenkins, Groom, Darby Dan Farm.

Dedication to Racing Award, sponsored by the NTRA: Felipe Pulido Mendoza, Groom, Richard Mandella Racing.

Leadership Award, sponsored by Hagyard Equine Medical Institute: Leanna Willaford, assistant trainer, Bill Mott.

Dr. J. David "Doc" Richardson Community Award, sponsored by Churchill Downs: Jessica Hammond, Benevolence and Counseling Director and Program Administrator for Beyond the Wire, Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association.



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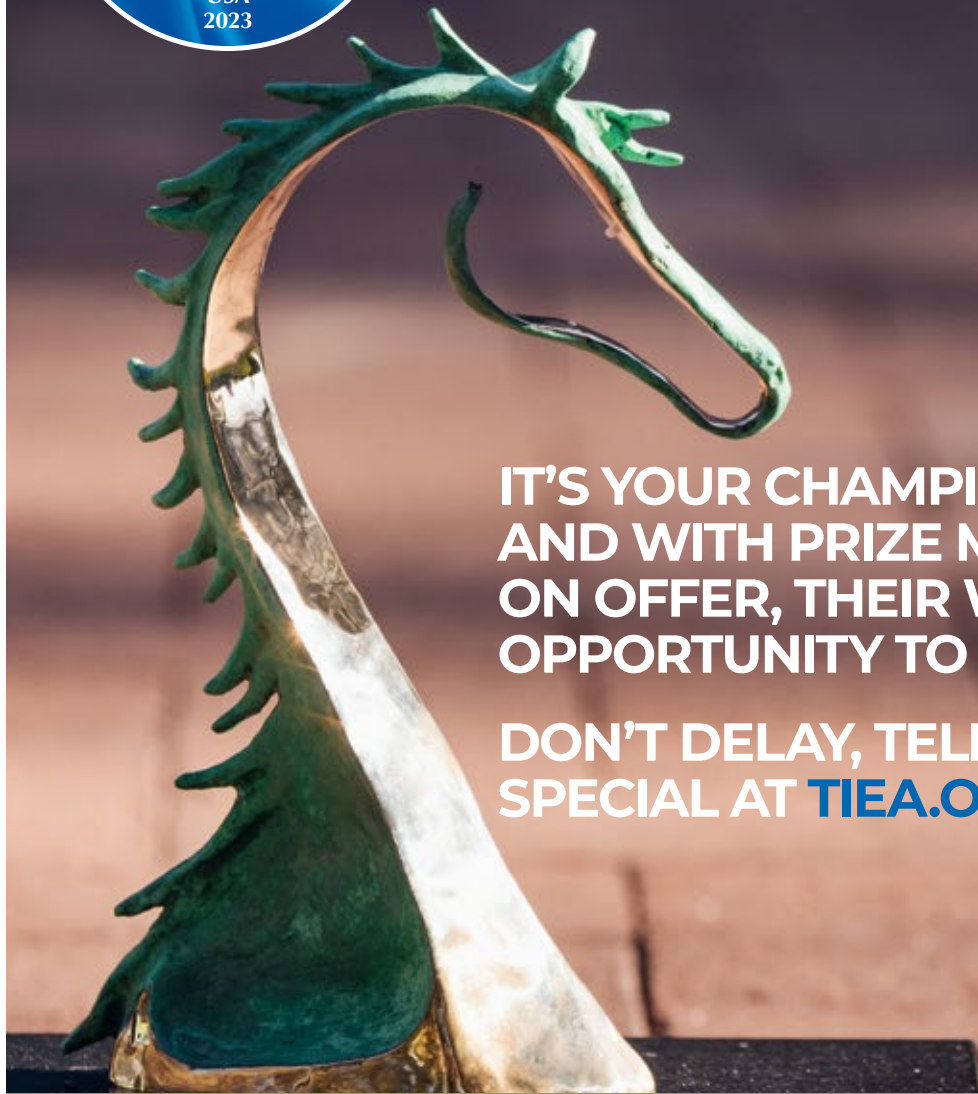
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NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, SUNDAY JULY 16.

TIEA

Winners will be celebrated at our 2023 awards ceremony on Tuesday October 17 at Keeneland Race Course.

Summer Ball

Jake's going to William & Mary. Playing football. Peter's dad eats a salad, checks his phone, a Hallmark Christmas bag full of day-trip supplies sits at his feet. Five girls weave bicycles in and out of imaginary traffic patterns. Coach Ted wears his new Springsteen 2023 Tour shirt, talks about his eight kids. Yeah, eight kids. A Jake Brake rumbles from somewhere on the Berlin Turnpike. Metal cleats clack across the macadam that divides four baseball fields, a spider web of hopes and dreams. Aluminum bats crack rawhide balls into the summer night. Miles runs a lap, the circumference of Field 1, before the final practice before the first game.

Lovettsville. A long way from Saratoga.

I won't make Opening Day this year. No frantic deadline. No frenetic delivery. No 311-day denouement. Miles made the Loudoun County Babe Ruth all-star team.

Last year, he made an all-star team, they went to a tournament in Winchester (like going from Saratoga to Schuylerville) in June, got blown out in two games in two days and I was in Saratoga before the baseball bag hit the mudroom floor. I thought it was the same plan this year.

Then an email. An announcement. And a realization. No district tournament, straight to the state tournament. Opening Day of the state tournament in Williamsburg, Va., is, you guessed it, July 13. They obviously didn't check with David O'Rourke. We've got a room at the Clarion, off I-64 for three

nights. Maybe a day trip in between games to Colonial Downs – not Colonial Williamsburg. If they win, then it's Greenville, N.C., in two weeks (don't tell Joe and Tom) and Jamestown, N.Y., in August. And, yeah, I looked at a map, Jamestown is closer to Buffalo than it is to Saratoga.

As one of my great friends said about travel baseball, "You know you've played too much baseball when you're rooting for your kid's team to lose so you can go home."

I won't be rooting for them to lose but could be doing The Special from Greenville and Jamestown.

And I know what you're thinking. What are their chances? Good question.

And, yes, I'm handicapping the 12-player summer team like the 12-race Saturday card.

David plays aggressively behind the plate and could coach a big-league team, speed from the rail. James has reach and respect, a two-turn mainstay. Stanley can crack it to the fence, a closer in the Whitney. Ethan pitches, hits, runs, steals, reminds me of De La Cruz and is the favorite short or long, on the turf or off.

Spencer can pitch, well, until he blew out his elbow, now he's playing first (is there a designated hitter in this league?), he's shedrowing and in the ice tub. Nolan has power and panache, he'll be bet hard, no value there. Luke dislocated his knee, broke his nose and never missed a game last season, a must use in all exotics. Gavin looks and moves like Altuve in the infield, a lightly made turf horse, better on the inner.

Peter G. plays like the calm before the storm, watch the board, pick your spots. Peter M. uses his right arm like a surgeon's scalpel, a power pitcher who doesn't miss, he's favorite in any race. Breandan "The Seagull" plays hard and cheers hard, rooting in a voice that sounds like a cross between Louis Armstrong and Lou Ferrigno. Players from the op-

posing team were imitating him last game. That's good, if the other team is thinking about a chant and not about the count. He's 99-1. A wildcard.

Miles plays first and center but is here because he's a left-handed reliever; every team needs a left-handed reliever. As he said when I asked him if he thought he made the team, "Dad, I'm a left-handed pitcher, I'm already halfway there." It's good to understand the condition book and the track bias. He was on the mound to get the final out, the 2 in the 1-2 punch with Peter M. and at home plate for the final run of the championship game last season. In nine years of spring and fall ball, it was the first time his team won it all. It was up there with winning the 1998 Turf Writers on Hakan. As for a betting angle, he's always on my ticket. Of course, subjectivity instead of objectivity will have you stooping for bus fare.

So, yeah, that's where I'll be on Opening Day, watching the dirty dozen who have spent their summer trying to come together as a team, trying to hone their skills, trying to measure their mettle in baseball, the greatest individual team sport ever designed. There will be mistakes and miscues, hits and heat, errors and effort, fouls and falls. One team will win, another will lose. Just like in Saratoga, when 10 horses will win, and the rest will lose. The cut of sport.

Two days before the Thursday of sport, I wind down a column from a folding chair along the left-field line. The sun has dropped behind the Blue Ridge Mountains to the northwest. Cars descend into the parking lot, driven by parents who live around the corner. Coach Ted huddles his team for one last pep talk before the first game of the state tournament. He points to his Springsteen shirt and describes his favorite song, Glory Days.

"These are your Glory Days..."

Enjoy Opening Day. See you soon.



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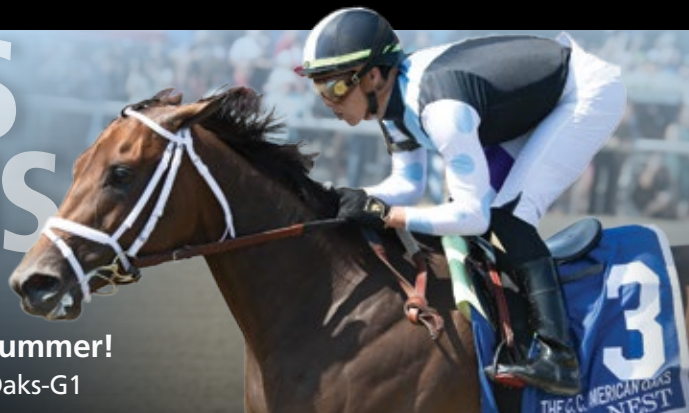
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