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Saturday, July 29, 2023

The *Saratoga*

Special

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Champ Dandy

Forte returns to Spa in key prep for Travers

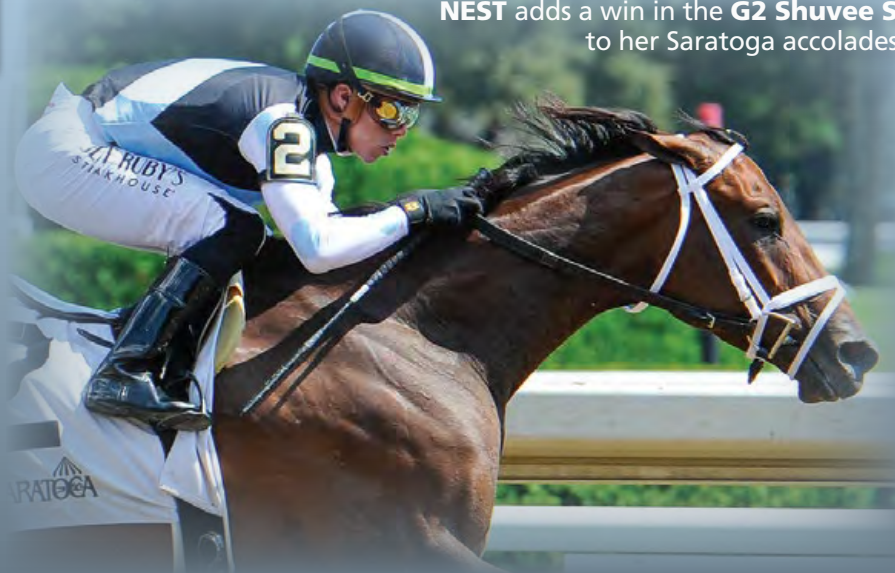
Mark Casse Stable Tour
Elite Power streaks
into Vanderbilt try
Entries & Handicapping

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2x GRADE 2 EDGEWOOD S., *Churchill Downs*
2x GRADE 2 HONEYMOON S., *Santa Anita*
2x GRADE 2 SHUVEE S., *Saratoga*
2x GRADE 3 BOURBONETTE OAKS, *Turfway Park*
2x CALIFORNIA OAKS, *Golden Gate*
2x SUNCOAST S., *Tampa Bay Downs*
2x SWEET LIFE S., *Santa Anita*
2x UNZIP ME S., *Santa Anita*
GRADE 1 ACORN S., *Belmont*
GRADE 1 ALABAMA S., *Saratoga*
GRADE 1 AMERICAN OAKS, *Santa Anita*
GROUP 1 AUSTRALIAN OAKS, *Randwick Racecourse*
GRADE 1 BC JUVENILE FILLIES TURF, *Santa Anita*
GRADE 1 DEL MAR OAKS, *Del Mar*
GRADE 1 GAMELY S., *Santa Anita*
GRADE 1 LA TROIENNE S., *Churchill Downs*
GRADE 1 VANITY S., *Santa Anita*
GRADE 2 BELDAME S., *Belmont*
GRADE 2 DEMOISELLE S., *Aqueduct*
GRADE 2 SAN CLEMENTE S., *Del Mar*
GROUP 2 QUEEN MARY S., *Royal Ascot*
GRADE 3 FRANKEL S., *Santa Anita*
GRADE 3 PEGASUS F&M TURF, *Gulfstream Park*
GRADE 3 SARATOGA OAKS INVITATIONAL, *Saratoga*
GRADE 3 SELENE S., *Woodbine*



NEST adds a win in the **G2 Shuvee S.** to her Saratoga accolades.



ANISETTE (GB) wins Del Mar's **G2 San Clemente S.**

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Tod Marks

Charge. The field gets into stride after breaking from the gate for Wednesday's 10th race. Winner Indian Mischief broke from the rail and didn't make the photo.

Here&There...in Saratoga

Worth Repeating

"Hopefully I see you tomorrow. If I see you it's a good result."

Jockey Florent Geroux to The Special's Tom Law after discussing Saudi Crown's chances in today's Jim Dandy

"If you're not betting, I'm not betting."

Jose Santos Jr. to The Special's Sean Clancy who wasn't sure who was going to win the jump race Wednesday

"Gah — if I had a dollar!"

Keeneland's Dara Allen, realizing she forgot an email attachment to The Special

"Speaking of all that, how's Cloudy?"

Shug McGaughey to Niall Brennan in the middle of a conversation about weather. The three-time winner is doing well.

"I miss this place."

Former jockey/trainer/starter Barry Watson Wednesday morning

"We try to show up on the big days."

Hall of Fame trainer Mark Casse, who ran 17 horses on Woodbine Oaks Day last weekend

"Success is right around the corner."

Fan of The Special, after being told good luck at the races Thursday

"Me too."

Jockey Florent Geroux when a fan told him she was waiting for the Honorable Miss for a while

"I don't know."

Trainer Jack Fisher on whether Beat Le Bon was tiring or settling with a lap to go in the jump race (he finished second)

Names of the Day

Moonlight, first race. Another one for Name of the Day All-Star Peter Blum, the 2-year-old colt is by Audible out of Sundown.

Morning Cup, third race. Four-year-old gelding is out of Cafetiere, better known as a French press.

Corner Kick, fourth race. Who's in the spirit for the World Cup? Set the alarm for 3 a.m. Tuesday when the U.S. women take on Portugal.

Benevolently, sixth race. Three-year-old daughter of Bellamy Road is out of Charitable Link.

Dornoch, seventh race. Mage's half-brother is named for Royal Dornoch golf course in Scotland. Read more about him on Page 25.

Summer At The Spa, 11th race. We all know it's the best place on earth, even when it's hot and/or rainy.



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

Worth repeating

“Every day is an adventure.”
Trainer Arch Kingsley about training three out of the Clark’s Cottage barn

“Horses just do better here, you don’t have to do anything with them, they just do better.”
Kingsley on going from Camden, S.C. to Saratoga

“I’m an easy-going guy. I don’t get too much in my head. I just like to go out there and have fun and do my best.”
Jockey Jose Ortiz after returning for his first ride since a fall Friday

“That’s a nice horse.”
Trainer Jeff Hiles after he saddled Time For Trouble to a runner-up finish behind Next in Thursday’s Birdstone

“In New York, it always seems like the cream rises to the top on these deeper tracks.”
Trainer Brad Cox, who picked up another Grade 1 win last week with Wet Paint in the Coaching Club American Oaks

“It’s going to be a fun weekend.”
Jockey Tyler Gaffalione after winning Friday’s Amsterdam and looking forward to 15 rides, including Gunite in today’s Vanderbilt, over the weekend

By The Numbers

- 11:** Cars in a Nelson Avenue traffic jam at 9:10 Wednesday morning.
- 8:** Golf carts in a Nelson Avenue traffic jam at 9:10 Wednesday morning.
- 3:** Horses in a Nelson Avenue traffic jam at 9:10 Wednesday morning.
- 1:** Bicycle in a Nelson Avenue traffic jam at 9:10 Wednesday morning.
- 1:** Sallee horse van in a Nelson Avenue traffic jam at 9:10 Wednesday morning.
- 44:** Years Gary Sciacca had come to Saratoga (he’ll be shipping in this year).

T-Shirt Slogan of the Day

I Keep My Dad Jokes In A Dad-A-Base (Seen at Fiden’s Brewing Co. in Albany).

License Plates of the Day

- MAGE23, New York.
- CLANCY, Maryland (on a yellow Corvette, not ours).
- FUNYCDE1, New York.
- AFRME77, New York.
- 3CROWN77, New York.
- FILLYFAN, New York.



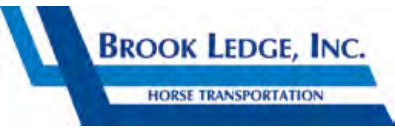
Derby Dude. Kentucky Derby winner Mage (with Gustavo Delgado Jr.) is in the house with eyes on the Travers Stakes next month.

Tod Marks

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Everybody is crazy about this horse. And when he’s cleaned up he’s as gorgeous as there is, I’ll tell you what.”

Mike Foster, owner of Birdstone winner Next, on the gelding’s growing fan base



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With Mark Casse

Mark Casse is back at Saratoga, where he's been coming since childhood, spending time at the barn and the races and bunking up in an RV near Fasig-Tipton.

He's also back to run when his horses are ready and looking to develop the next Classic Empire, War Of Will, Tepin, Got Stormy, World Approval, Catch A Glimpse, Wonder Wheel, Wonder Gadot or any of the other stars who helped land him a spot in the Hall of Fame in 2021.

The barn won its first race of the meet July 20 with Highly Flammable, and he's saddled runners in four stakes so far. He was even the lone conditioner not named Brown with the courage to send out a starter in the Grade 1 Diana on opening weekend and came away with a Grade 1 placing for longtime and loyal client Gary Barber with Fev Rover.

Casse sat down in his office with The Special's Tom Law last Saturday, the day before the trainer headed to Woodbine to oversee 17 runners on the Woodbine Oaks/Plate Trial Day card, to talk about promising members of the Saratoga string and some others.

"The thing about it Tom is right now I have no Wonder Wheels," Casse said of last year's champion 2-year-old filly and Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies winner. "At this time last year we had Wonder Wheel, but also at this time last year we had a little horse that was a maiden that had run one time and got beat 4 or 5 lengths, called Webslinger. He of course went on.

"For me, and I've said this all along, winning first time out is not a priority for us. It's more about developing horses. Sometimes it takes three or four starts. These horses I'm giving you are horses that I think have the potential to get to big races in the fall. You never know which ones are going to step up, but they've already shown me that they're better than average."

Bento: DJ Stable spent \$600,000 for daughter of Tapit at last year's Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October yearling sale. Bred by Newtown Anner Stud, she's out of the multiple graded stakes-winning Forestry mare Carolyn's Cat and breezed 5 furlongs on the main track in 1:01.33 Wednesday. "She cost a lot of money and I like her a lot. She's probably going to run the first part of August."

Golden Ghost: English-bred filly cost D.J. Stable \$500,000 last year. Debuted in the Astoria Stakes the day after the Belmont

Tod Marks

Strong Quality, entered in today's Bowling Green, makes the Casse Stable Tour.



Stakes and finished fourth. She's breezed twice at Saratoga, including a half in :53 last Saturday on the Oklahoma turf. "She's by Medaglia d'Oro out of a Grade 2 European stakes winner (Villa Marina). She's a horse that I think has a bright future."

She made her debut in a stakes and the Schuylerville winner made her first start in a graded stakes, something you know a little about, right? "My Conquestadory, she beat colts first time out. The interesting thing about her is she only ran seven times, but she never ran in anything but graded stakes. She was the favorite for the Breeders' Cup but then she drew the 14 hole."

Entrepreneurship: A \$50,000 purchase by BOCA last October, 2-year-old daughter of Dialed In breezed a half in :49.39 on the main track Wednesday. "She hasn't started yet. I think she has a bright future. She's very fast. She's going to make her first start the early part of August, too."

Souper Quest: Live Oak Plantation's homebred 3-year-old Munings colt won his debut in December at Gulfstream Park then went to the sidelines. He returned with a second in Thursday's finale, a 5 1/2-furlong allowance on the turf. "I really liked his debut, the only time he's run and he did it impressively winning by 5 or 6. He had a setback but now he's ready to run again."

Our Flash Drive: Casse points to 5-year-old daughter of Ghostzapper as an example of trying to bring horses to Saratoga to develop. It didn't work with her back in 2020 – when she finished seventh and fourth in dirt sprint maiden races – but she's since

developed into a six-time stakes winner. Fifth in the Grade 3 Caress last weekend after missing the break. "She's a perfect one to talk about. She's a filly I brought here as a 2-year-old that I thought had a lot of potential. She just couldn't get her act together, we took her home, gave her some time and over time she's done very well."

Papilio: Irish-bred filly by Starspangledbanner was imported to the U.S. after starting her career in her native country. Second in the Grade 2 Herecomesthebride at Gulfstream in her American debut, she won the Grade 2 Appalachian Stakes at Keeneland in April. Fourth in the Grade 2 Edgewood and second in the Grade 3 Regret – both at Churchill Downs – she finished third last time in the Grade 1 Fasig-Tipton Belmont Oaks Invitational. Owned by D.J. Stable, Medallion Racing, Barry Fowler and Parkland Thoroughbreds, she's won three of 10 and earned \$381,800. "Her race down at Belmont, she stumbled at the start. He got it back so quick that I don't think anyone realized, but Javier (Castellano) actually lost his iron at the break. Then there was no pace, kind of got held up and she ran a very good third. I think she's as good as any 3-year-old filly in North America on the turf. She's coming back in the Saratoga Oaks."

Rapid Grey: Gary Barber's 2-year-old Constitution colt cost \$160,000 in April and finished third in an Ellis Park maiden race July 15. "He's another maiden that I thought ran very well at Ellis first time out. I brought him here."

Continued On Page 8

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*Among major North American yearling sales, per *The BloodHorse*
May 2023 (Horses offered, sales years 2018-2020)

CATALOGUE
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Stable Tour —

Continued from page 6

Webslinger: D.J. Stable's multiple stakes-winning 3-year-old Constitution gelding finished fourth in the Grade 1 Belmont Derby Invitational July 8 at Belmont Park. A \$25,000 yearling at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October sale who sold last year for \$50,000, he's won four of 10 and earned \$905,320. He won back-to-back starts at Churchill before the Belmont Derby — the Grade 2 American Turf on Kentucky Oaks Day and the Audubon Stakes June 3. "He's going in the Saratoga Derby. He had the best Rag and ThoroGraph number of the horses in the Belmont Derby. He got kind of shuffled back and made a big move, but he was wide. Again, I think he's one of the best 3-year-old turf horses in North America. I feel very fortunate, I think I have one of the best filly turf 3-year-olds in Papilio, one of the best 3-year-old turf colts and one of the best older turf fillies in North America in Fev Rover."

Fev Rover: Tracy Farmer's 5-year-old Irish-bred daughter of Gutaifan finished third in the Grade 1 Diana after winning the Grade 2 Nassau 14 days prior at Woodbine in her 2023 debut. "Javier kind of felt like he got stymied down inside. Flavien was doing his job (Prat on Whitebeam). When she got out, she came running. She's going to the Beverly D. down at Colonial Downs."

Strong Quality: Gary Barber's and Kinsman Stable's 4-year-old Quality Road colt was purchased by Casse's brother Justin for \$500,000 at the 2019 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky November mixed sale. He's out of the stakes-placed Tiznow mare Tiz So Sweet. A winner of three of 11 starts, he finished fifth in the Grade 1 Resorts World Casino Manhattan going 10 furlongs on Belmont Stakes Day, beaten 5 ¼ lengths after setting the pace for a mile. "He was an expensive weanling owned by Gary and the Steinbrenners. He ran, didn't get beat by much in the Manhattan. That was his first stakes try. That was with missing two or three weeks of training. I thought he was going to need that race and that he ran really well. I'm going to run him in either the Bowling Green — I'm going to enter here for that (he's one of 10 in Sunday's race) — but I may choose to run in the Arlington Million."

Get Smokin: Multiple graded stakes winner for Ironhorse Racing Stable and partners, 6-year-old son of Get Stormy has won five of 25 and earned \$665,227. "He's coming up from Kentucky. The owners want to try and run him farther. He could opt to go in the Arlington Million."

Ice Chocolat: Owned by Barber, Wachtel Stable and Peter Deutsch, 5-year-old Brazilian-bred gelding by Goldikovic finished fourth in the Grade 3 Kelso Stakes the second day of the meet. He's 5-5-1 in 17 starts, but winless in five starts this season, with \$176,718 in earnings. "He ran really well in the Kelso. I have no idea why we run the Kelso going a mile on the grass. Oh well. The plan is to come back with him in the Fourstardave."

Solo Album: Owned by Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners, Barber and Steven Rocco, 3-year-old daughter of Curlin exited maiden win May 12 at Woodbine with a win in the Grade 3 Selene Stakes there July 1. She breezed 5 furlongs on the main track in 1:01.33 Wednesday, her second work on the dirt in Saratoga. "She just won the Grade 3 Selene and ran like a 90 Beyer. One of the best ThoroGraph numbers and Rag numbers of any 3-year-old filly in North America this year. She's here. We're going to see how she trains over the dirt and we're going to maybe aim for the Alabama. She's only run once on the dirt, her first start and she got beat 20 lengths. That was at Ellis Park. I don't really worry about that, with it being her first start."

Khozy Colby: Florida-bred filly by Khozan finished second in auction maiden here July 19 in first start for Casse and Barber. She finished second in a Gulfstream Park maiden June 23 in her debut. "That's a unique deal. Laz and Marie Vives who work for us. Marie has worked for us 25 years or so, Laz has worked for us forever. They also are the sire and dam of Sophia Vives, the apprentice who is doing very well. They worked for me before she was born. Our training center is in the Ocala Horse Complex. It's made up of a bunch of farms and they have a central racetrack. We don't use that racetrack, we have our own. Anyway, people that work for us will sometimes buy a horse or two. They did the work with the horse ... and a lot of times those guys ask if they can bring their horse to our track. I watched Khozy Colby work a couple times and she was pretty impressive. He told me he was running her. I don't bet but I bet \$50 on her and she was 30-1 and ran second. Then they called and said all these people are wanting to buy her. I told them to field all the offers and 'once you do that call me.' A couple days go by and they called back, told me what they've been offered. I said, 'I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'll give you \$5,000 more than your highest offer.' I called Gary and told him I wanted to buy the horse and that's how we got her. I don't call Gary often so when I do he usually responds."

Elsewhere...

Paramount Prince: Gave Casse fourth Plate Trial win Sunday at Woodbine. Owned by Michael Langlois and Barber, 3-year-old son of Society's Chairman heads to Aug. 20 King's Plate off 5-length win at nearly 12-1. "That was impressive, and it was his first start around two turns."

Elysian Field: Daughter of Hard Spun gave Barber a double in the Sunday features at Woodbine, winning the Woodbine Oaks at nearly 6-1. Co-owned by Team Valor International and a \$50,000 purchase at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky October yearling sale, she improved off a second in the Fury Stakes. Casse said after the Oaks that she could head to the King's Plate to take on the boys. "Gary owns a part and he's game. I want to talk to Barry Irwin from Team Valor. She's a big, strong filly and I'm extremely happy we get a month between the Oaks and the King's Plate, so that's important. Three weeks is tough, so now we get four weeks and I don't see why she wouldn't."



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Jim Dandy favorite Forte returns from his breze at Saratoga last week.

Tod Marks

Five Pack

Two-year-old champion Forte, Cox trio set for key Travers prep

BY TOM LAW

JIM DANDY STAKES PREVIEW

Brad Cox knows there's strength in numbers. He also knows there needs to be depth behind those numbers, otherwise they're just that: words on a sheet of paper.

Cox plays the numbers game in today's co-featured Grade 2 Jim Dandy Stakes, sending out three of the five entrants in Saratoga Race Course's marquee prep for next month's Travers Stakes. Saudi Crown, runner-up in the Grade 3 Dwyer four weeks ago and a bit of an 11th-hour entrant, joins Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes runners Hit Show and Angel Of Empire.

They take on last year's champion 2-year-old male Forte for trainer Todd Pletcher and fellow spring clas-

sics competitor Disarm for trainer Steve Asmussen.

Cox, back at Saratoga early Friday morning after a quick down-and-back to Kentucky to check on his main string at Churchill Downs, knows the water is deep against the likes of Hall of Famers Pletcher and Asmussen, who have won a combined nine editions of the Jim Dandy.

"It's a good group," Cox said of the Jim Dandy field. "You normally need three horses to beat those guys. They're Hall of Famers and as good as anybody that's ever done it. We'll see how it plays out."

Continued On Page 12



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Jim Dandy —

■ Continued from page 10

Saudi Crown and Angel Of Empire, winner of the Grade 1 Arkansas Derby at the Jim Dandy's 9-furlong trip in April at Oaklawn Park, are the co 5-2 second choices behind 7-5 favorite Forte. Hit Show, winner of the Grade 3 Withers Stakes at 9 furlongs this winter at Aqueduct, is 6-1 on the line along with Disarm.

The entry of FMQ Stable's Saudi Crown caught some by surprise, but not Cox. He started to think about the \$500,000 Jim Dandy for the Always Dreaming colt after watching him train over the Oklahoma Training Track and considering other factors.

"Maybe a week and a half ago, we started hearing about the probables, hearing it was going to be short and kind of questioned how much speed would be in the race," Cox said. "Look, he's never been around two turns so this is going to be a big step up. He did have a big run last time going a mile. A little quick early in that race but he did perform well, was coming back at the wire and galloped out fine. It is a little bit quicker than I would have liked, coming back off a big effort in four weeks but we're hoping from a pace standpoint it will benefit him. We'll see."

Cox brought Saudi Crown, a \$250,000 purchase at last year's OBS April 2-year-old sale, to Saratoga



Tod Marks

Hit Show, who may or may not have something stuck in his teeth, tackles the Jim Dandy for trainer Brad Cox.

last summer with plans to debut in the middle of the meet. Saudi Crown breezed four times and was just about ready the weekends of the Fourstardave or Alabama Stakes but suffered a setback.

Speed was also Saudi Crown's strength. Cox alluded as much in his Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour last summer, saying "he's making progress, quick from the gate and acts like he's got some speed." He stayed on that theme Friday.

"He is a good colt," said Cox, who won the 2021 Jim Dandy and Travers with eventual champion Essential Quality. "We've liked him for a long

time. We had him up here last year with intent on running him here as a 2-year-old. He had a setback, but we think he has some quality."

Saudi Crown impressed once he made it to the races, winning back-to-back starts under Florent Geroux going 6 furlongs at Keeneland April 16 and 6 1/2 furlongs at Churchill Downs May 21. Those runs earned him a spot in stakes company and Saudi Crown finished second by a nose going 1 mile in the Grade 3 Dwyer July 1 at Belmont Park.

Geroux returns aboard Saudi Crown today from post 4.

"I like him. He's one of our best," Geroux said. "The only thing is he has less experience than the others, that's the only negative point. Plus, he's never been two turns. But breeding wise and the way he runs he should be fine."

"He's not a very keen horse. He's quick, but he's not a strong horse. He's doing good. Pace wise he should be on the lead, that's no secret to anyone. We'll see what we can do from there."

Saudi Crown led through strong fractions — :22.47, :44.63 and 1:08.84 — before finishing a game second behind Southern California shipper Fort Bragg in the Dwyer.

"That was a tough one to watch," Cox said of the close loss. "I don't have to rewatch it, I already replay it in my mind all the time."

Hit Show and Angel Of Empire, training partners on the Oklahoma since Cox's stable bedded

Continued On Page 14

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Maryland-bred, Maryland-sired **ROYAL HAVEN** won the **G1 Vanderbilt Stakes** when it was called the A Phenomenon S. It was one of 19 wins in 41 lifetime starts that earned him \$891,501, a career that spanned 4 seasons and included NINE graded stakes wins and placings.

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2023 September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 14 – OCTOBER 1

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\$300,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Two-Year-Olds
1 Mile

LOCUST GROVE (GIII)

Runs Saturday, September 16
Closes August 30
\$400,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
1 1/16 Miles

POCAHONTAS (GIII)

"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 16
Closes August 30
\$300,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Two-Year-Olds
1 Mile

LOUISVILLE THOROUGHBRED SOCIETY

Runs Saturday, September 16
Closes August 30
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
6 Furlongs

OPEN MIND (Listed)

Runs Saturday, September 16
Closes August 30
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
6 Furlongs

SENECA OVERNIGHT STAKES

Runs Saturday, September 23
Closes September 6
\$175,000
Includes \$65,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds
1 1/16 Miles

BOURBON TRAIL

Runs Saturday, September 23
Closes September 6
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
1 3/16 Miles

HARRODS CREEK

Runs Saturday, September 23
Closes September 6
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
7 Furlongs

DOGWOOD (GIII)

Runs Saturday, September 23
Closes September 6
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds
7 Furlongs

ACK ACK (GIII)

"Win and You're In Dirt Mile Division"

Runs Saturday, September 30
Closes September 13
\$400,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
1 Mile

LUKAS CLASSIC (GII)

Runs Saturday, September 30
Closes September 13
\$500,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
1 1/8 Mile

JEFFERSON CUP

Runs Saturday, September 30
Closes September 13
\$200,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
1 Mile (Turf)



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Ben Huffman, Vice President of Racing, Racing Secretary:

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SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE KHRC

Jim Dandy —

■ Continued from page 12

down in his usual spot inside Horse Haven, take a similar path to the Jim Dandy since putting in respectable runs in their Triple Crown appearances.

Angel Of Empire, who also won the Grade 2 Risen Star at Fair Grounds, finished third and only 1 1/2 lengths behind Mage in the Kentucky Derby. Hit Show, second by a nose in the Grade 2 Wood Memorial at Aqueduct, finished fifth in the Derby. Cox skipped the Preakness with the two colts and aimed at the Belmont Stakes, where they dead-heated for fourth and just 2 1/4 lengths behind Arcangelo and less than a length behind Forte.

Hit Show, owned and bred by Gary and Mary West; and Angel Of Empire, who races for Albaugh Family Stable, breezed in company on the Oklahoma July 14 (5 furlongs in 1:00.90) and last Saturday (5 furlongs in 1:01.58).

"We love what we see from both of them," Cox said. "They're both set up for big efforts."

Luis Saez, who teamed with Cox on Essential Quality during his championship run, takes the mount on Hit Show from post 3. Flavien Prat returns on Angel Of Empire from post 5.

Pletcher adds blinkers to Forte for the first time, hoping they'll help the Violence colt shrug off bouts of "lost concentration" from the Florida Derby and Belmont Stakes.

Forte won the Florida Derby by a length over Mage, but didn't make the Kentucky Derby after being scratched from the Triple Crown's opening jewel with a minor foot issue. Mage went on to win the Derby while Forte's name popped up in the news between the Derby and Preakness for an alleged positive drug test dating back to last year's victory in the Grade 1 Hopeful at Saratoga on closing day.

Forte's connections continue to fight any sanctions or possible disqualification from the Hopeful, which

started a three-race win streak that included the Grade 1 Claiborne Breeders' Futurity and Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Keeneland. He was voted champion 2-year-old male, then started the 2023 season with victories in the Grade 2 Fountain of Youth and Florida Derby. Forte made his return from a 10-week layoff in the Belmont and finished second, just 1 1/2 lengths behind Arcangelo.

Pletcher set course for the Jim Dandy, a race he's won six times and most recently with Palace Malice in 2013, with the Travers the ultimate goal for Forte. Regular rider Irad Ortiz Jr. rides Forte from post 2.

Asmussen hopes for the same with Disarm, who comes off a win in the Grade 3 Matt Winn at Ellis Park June 11. The Matt Winn was the Gun Runner colt's first stakes victory after solid efforts in the Grade 2 Louisiana Derby (second), Grade 3 Lexington (third) and Kentucky Derby (fourth).

Asmussen completed the Jim Dandy-Travers double last year with eventual champion 3-year-old male Epicenter. He won two other editions of the Jim Dandy – 2018 with Tenfold and 2009 with Kensei. Joel Rosario rides Disarm from post 1.

"It's a Grade 1. Really," Cox said. "I know people complain that it's only a five-horse field and all, because they want to find something to complain about. But the race was four horses last year, too. We got five horses this year. We ran third last year with Tawny Port, a decent horse, and these three colts are better. You've got a champion in there, and Disarm is a very good, accomplished horse. It's a damn good race."



Tod Marks

A winner at Saratoga last year, Disarm breaks from the rail in the Jim Dandy.

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Elite Power rides an eight-race winning streak into today's Vanderbilt.

Tod Marks

Energizer

Champion sprinter Elite Power seeks eighth consecutive score

BY SEAN CLANCY

Elite Power galloped past Bill Mott near the three-quarter pole gap on the Oklahoma Friday morning.

Suzie Alexander, riding long with a long hold, tempered the heavy-breathing coiled sprinter near the inside rail and cajoled him to a stop after an easy trip around the training track and strolled home.

"He's quite a racehorse," Mott said. "Doesn't make a noise when he works or when he runs, smooth, he's got a huge airway. He doesn't wow you in the mornings...unless you put him in company."

There was no company Friday morning. Saturday afternoon, there will be plenty when Juddmonte's

VANDERBILT STAKES PREVIEW

5-year-old clashes with \$1.7 million earner Gunite and five others in the Grade 1 Alfred G. Vanderbilt Handicap. The \$350,000 sprint stakes runs as the eighth race on the 12-race card. Post time is 4:26 p.m.

Asked when Elite Power wowed him, Mott thought back to last spring.

"His first win at Churchill. Or maybe his second," Mott said. "When Jimmy Graham rode him."

Graham guided Elite Power to a 9-length score going 7 furlongs against maidens at Churchill Downs June 5. He came right back to toy

Continued On Page 18






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Vanderbilt —

■ Continued from page 16

with winners, taking a first-level allowance at a mile. Those two wins quickly justified a long, slow, patient approach by Mott and Juddmonte and promised bigger things down the road.

Elite Power made his belated career debut in September, 2021, finishing sixth, beaten 14 ¾ lengths at Churchill Downs. He came back to lead early before folding to fourth going a mile against maidens at Churchill in November.

Mott had seen enough. Just enough.

Catalogued as Hip 3730 of the 2021 Keeneland November Sale, Elite Power scratched from the 10th session of the sale and prepared for his 4-year-old season.

“We gave him all winter. I had seen enough that I liked him,” Mott said. “He was third the first time back and I knew how much his shins had bothered him as a 3-year-old. Did I know he was going to win a Breeders’ Cup? I don’t think so.”



Elite Power cruises home in the True North in June.

Elite Power leapt out of that third in his 4-year-old debut to wow Mott in those two wins with Graham. The \$900,000 yearling arrived here last summer for a two-other-than allowance going 6 furlongs. Three days be-

fore the race, Mott talked about the assignment.

“He won his last two at Churchill. He was pretty impressive, he ran like a monster at Churchill,” Mott said. “It’s not the distance I wanted,

I wanted seven-eighths or a mile. It’s 6. He won going 7 from here to the icehouse over there, came back at a mile and won again. I don’t know, maybe he’ll be all right at 6.”

Dinner at 6 is all right. Elite Power at 6. Awesome.

Elite Power drew off to win by 3 ½ lengths in that 6-furlong allowance. He came back and dominated the Grade 2 Vosburgh going 7 furlongs at Aqueduct and topped the year with a powerful win in the Grade 1 Breeders’ Cup Sprint at 6 furlongs at Keeneland in November.

In February, Mott sent Elite Power to the Grade 3 Riyadh Dirt Sprint at 6 furlongs where he drew off to win by 3 ¼ lengths. Freshened after that, he returned with another facile score, taking the Grade 2 True North at 6 ½ furlongs at Belmont Park June 10. He’s posted four breezes over the Oklahoma track

Tod Marks

Continued On Page 20

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CHAMPION ECHO ZULU ROMPS
IN THE HONORABLE MISS (G2)

AT THE SPA, WINNING BY
7 1/4 IN A HAND RIDE

2nd dam

QUIET DANCE, by Quiet

(PIM, \$19,170), 2

SAINT LIAM (c. by

year, champion d

600), Stephen F

000)-ntr, 1 1/8 m

FUNTASTIC (c.

N.A./U.S., Un

QUIET GIANT (c.

CONGRESSIO

DANCE QUIET

S. (AQU, \$3

Miss Besilu (f.

ger Brew S.

American Dan

S. [G2] (AQU

LULU (f. by

\$224,240, Gala Lil S.-R

12 winners, including--

\$4,456,933, 1st S. S. Clas

Music [G1] (SAR, \$500,000)

onn H. (SAR, \$500,000)

BEL, \$300,000, 1st S. S. Clas

and 4, 2d S. S. Clas, \$200,000

0), etc. (Total: \$410,711).

type winner, above.

Forest, 2 wins at 3, \$112,413, Bay

[G3] (B, \$5,000). S

and 3, \$123,570, Busanda

(BEL, \$2,000), etc. Prod per

Medaglia d'oro). Winner at 2 and 3, \$187,820, 2nd Gin-

[G1] (SAR, \$500,000)

in N.A./U.S., 3d Bomsen

1 start, \$5 in Trinidad

2 wins

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Vanderbilt —

■ Continued from page 18

to prepare for the Vanderbilt.

“Pretty horse,” Mott said as Elite Power walked back to the barn Friday morning.

Irad Ortiz Jr. rides Elite Power from post four.

Main rival Gunite breaks from post five.

Owned by Winchell Thoroughbreds, trained by Steve Asmussen and ridden by Tyler Gaffalione, Gunite brings an 8-for-17 career record, including two wins and two seconds at Saratoga. The son of Gun Runner won the Grade 2 Amsterdam and finished second in the Grade 1 Allen Jerkens last summer. In 2021, he finished second in the Grade 2 Saratoga Special and won the Grade 1 Hopeful.

Tyler Gaffalione joined Gunite in the Maxfield at Churchill Downs last summer, winning the 7-furlong stakes. Since that introduction, they’ve combined to win the Amsterdam, Harrods Creek, Perryville and Aristides.

They finished second in the Jerkens and the Riyadh Dirt Sprint, third in the Golden Shaheen and fourth in the Breeders’ Cup Dirt Mile.

Gunite and Elite Power have met once in

the Riyadh Dirt Sprint in Saudia Arabia. Gaffalione carved a stalking inside trip in fourth with Gunite while Elite Power stayed as close as he could in sixth for Frankie Dettori. Gunite went around one horse. Elite Power went around five. It was over in strides as Elite Power won under a hand ride.

“That was early in the year, he was just starting his season. He ran a big race for me, Elite Power was just much the best that day,” Gaffalione said. “He’s come back and run some big races, he came back and ran a great race, ran a huge number, one of his fastest ever. He just seems to get better every time we run him. Steve does a great job, and he says he’s ready to fire. I’m going in there with a lot of confidence.”

Gunite stayed on his road trip, venturing to Dubai to finish third behind Sibelius and Switzerland in the Grade 1 Golden Shaheen. Freshened after that, Gunite roared back to work with a win in the Aristides at Churchill Downs June 3.

“From last year, he’s definitely more mature. He’s just such a dude, he comes out there and does what he has to do. He’s unproblematic, he just shows up every time,” Gaffalione said. “He’s definitely my favorite horse I’ve been on, he’s such a dude, push-button. He’s good everywhere, I’ve rid-



Tod Marks

Continued On Page 21

Gunite is the second choice in the Vanderbilt.

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Vanderbilt —

■ Continued from page 20

den him over five different tracks and he's shown up every time."

Veteran Gun It breaks from the rail for Winning Move Stable, Linda Rice and Jose Ortiz. The 7-year-old gelding makes his 35th career start and fourth since being claimed from the Asmussen barn. The gelded son of Tapit is 10-1.

Synthesis, a veteran of five claims in his 47-start career, breaks from post two for owner/trainer David Jacobson and jockey Manny Franco. The 7-year-old finished second in the Grade 2 John Nerud in his most recent start and chased Elite Power in the True North before that. The gelded son of First Samurai is 20-1.

Awesome Aaron ventures north from his Highpointe Training Center base for owner/trainer Troy Green. Dylan Davis picks up the call on the three-time winner who was claimed from Chad Brown's barn for \$40,000 last summer. The son of Practical Joke is 30-1.

Dean Delivers earned third choice on the morning line at 8-1. Bred and owned by Stonehedge in Florida, the 4-year-old son of Cajun Breeze vaults in off two big wins in the Big Drama and Grade 3 Smile Sprint at Gulfstream Park. Emisael Jaramillo rides the five-time winner for trainer Michael Yates.

Little Vic completes the field from the outside post. Owned by Victorias Ranch and trained by Juan Avila, the 4-year-old son of Practical Joke won the Grade 3 Tom Fool in March before finishing off the board in the Grade 1 Carter and the Grade 2 Nerud. Monmouth-based Carlos Olivero rides the 15-1 shot.



Tod Marks

Tyler Gaffalione rides Gunite in the Vanderbilt.



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SARATOGA ENTRIES

Saturday, July 29.

1ST (12:40PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double					
1	.....1	.....Corruption	.....L. Saez	.....T. Pletcher	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....Shamrock Shake	.....J. Castellano	.....T. Morley	.....12-1
3	.....3	.....Carson's Run	.....D. Davis	.....C. Clement	.....5-1
4	.....4	.....Yaqui Valley	.....T. Gaffalione	.....M. Maker	.....8-1
5	.....5	.....Frontline Warrior	.....J. Ortiz	.....C. McGaughey III	.....3-1
6	.....6	.....Modica	.....M. Franco	.....G. Weaver	.....4-1
7	.....7	.....Moonlight	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....T. Pletcher	.....2-1
8	.....AE-MTO	.....Trade Imbalance	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....9-5

2ND (1:11PM). \$156,000, AOC \$62,500, 3 YO'S & UP, 6F

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double					
1	.....5	.....My Harbors Dream.....	M. Franco	D. Jacobson	8-1
1a	.....6	.....Saffa's Day	F. Geroux	D. Jacobson	8-1
2	.....1	.....High Oak	K. Davis	W. Mott	15-1
3	.....2	.....Joey Freshwater	J. Ortiz	L. Rice	6-1
4	.....3	.....Bold Journey	J. Castellano	W. Mott	5-2
5	.....4	.....Osbourne	I. Ortiz, Jr	R. Moquett	2-1
6	.....7	.....Scocciatore.....	L. Saez	R. Rodriguez	8-1
7	.....8	.....Floki's Flight	R. Santana, Jr.	D. Romans	7-2

3RD (1:44PM). \$50,000, CLM \$35,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double					
1	.....1	Kbcya Later	T. Gaffalione	J. Sharp	12-1
2	.....2	Luna Warrior	J. Castellano	J. D'Angelo	3-1
3	.....3	Hatch	J. Alvarado	C. Martin	8-1
4	.....4	Starrystarryknight	J. Velazquez	M. Hemingway	12-1
5	.....5	Basis Risk	S. Bridgmohan	M. Coffey	30-1
6	.....6	Carpe's Dream	J. Lezcano	G. DiPrima	8-1
7	.....7	Devils Only Friend	M. Franco	G. Weaver	6-1
8	.....8	Isocline	R. Santana, Jr.	J. Barkley	10-1
9	.....9	Volkert	D. Davis	M. Hennig	8-1
10	.....10	Excess Demand	J. Leparoux	A. Chichakly	20-1
11	.....11	War Terminator	I. Ortiz, Jr.	G. Contessa	9-2
12	.....12	Dads Good Runner	K. Davis	C. Goberdhan	30-1
13	.....AE	El Conejito	D. Davis	J. Stephens	12-1
14	.....AE-MTO	Modern Midas	J. Ortiz	R. Rodriguez	12-1
15	.....AE-MTO	Morning Cup	J. Ortiz	L. Rice	2-1

4TH (2:16PM). \$52,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 6F

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double					
1	.....4	Souper Slews Cash.....	I. Ortiz, Jr.....	M. Trombetta.....	9-2
1a	.....10	Souper Tropical.....	J. Velazquez.....	M. Trombetta.....	9-2
2	.....1	Best Coast.....	F. Geroux.....	B. Cox.....	5-1
3	.....2	Mooney Mooney.....	J. Lezcano.....	L. Rice.....	6-1
4	.....3	Keep It Sexy.....	J. Torres.....	P. Walder.....	12-1
5	.....5	Ratified.....	J. Rosario.....	R. Moquett.....	10-1
6	.....6	Party At Grants.....	J. Ortiz.....	L. Rice.....	7-2
7	.....7	Take Time to Dream.....	J. Alvarado.....	R. Falcone, Jr.....	15-1
8	.....8	Dramatic Effect.....	D. Brown.....	N. Henry.....	30-1
9	.....9	Graceful.....	D. Davis.....	M. Friedman.....	20-1
10	.....11	Cherokee Cottage.....	L. Saez.....	W. Mott.....	8-1
11	.....12	Corner Kick.....	T. Gaffalione.....	T. Amoss.....	6-1

5TH (2:46PM). \$156,000, AOC \$62,500, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double					
1	.....1	.....Born Dapper	.....J. Velazquez	.....J. Thomas	.....30-1
2	.....2	.....Tizzy in the Sky	.....L. Saez	.....T. Pletcher	.....5-2
3	.....3	.....Bustin Bay	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....10-1
4	.....4	.....Ontheonesandtwos	.....T. Gaffalione	.....N. Casse	.....3-1
5	.....5	.....You Look Cold	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....7-2
6	.....6	.....Sterling Silver	.....J. Castellano	.....T. Albertrani	.....4-1
7	.....7	.....Good Sam	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....C. Brown	.....4-1

6TH (3:18PM). \$88,000, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 1 1/16M (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double					
1	.....AE-MTO	.....Dream On Cara	.....Rider TBA	.....M. Friedman	.....8-5
1a	.....AE-MTO	.....Foxy Cara	.....J. Castellano	.....M. Friedman	.....8-5
2	.....1	.....Shine My Tiara	.....D. Davis	.....C. Baker	.....15-1
3	.....2	.....The Splendid One	.....J. Velazquez	.....M. Hennig	.....10-1
4	.....3	.....Sail With the Wind	.....M. Franco	.....L. Gyarmati	.....20-1
5	.....4	.....Benevolently	.....K. Davis	.....M. Hennig	.....50-1
6	.....5	.....Starts Now	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....M. Kantarmaci	.....7-2
7	.....6	.....Lady Laoban	.....J. Ortiz	.....J. Abreu	.....8-1
8	.....7	.....Bomb Squad	.....J. Rosario	.....C. Clement	.....9-2
9	.....8	.....Splashy	.....F. Prat	.....C. Clement	.....5-1
10	.....9	.....She's a Natural	.....J. Leparoux	.....G. Sciacca	.....20-1
11	.....10	.....Autumn	.....T. Gaffalione	.....C. McGaughey III	.....8-1
12	.....11	.....North End Lady	.....J. Alvarado	.....B. Tagg	.....12-1
13	.....12	.....Overacting	.....J. Castellano	.....C. Brown	.....6-1
14	.....AE	.....Roagna	.....L. Saez	.....H. Bond	.....15-1

7TH (3:52PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, 6 1/2F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double, Pic 6					
1	.....1	Divine Empire	J. Alvarado	W. Mott	20-1
2	.....2	Seize the Grey	J. Torres	D. Lukas	20-1
3	.....3	Houlton	M. Franco	M. Maker	10-1
4	.....4	Dornoch	L. Saez	D. Gargan	2-1
5	.....5	Private Desire	J. Castellano	T. Pletcher	12-1
6	.....6	Drum Roll Please	F. Geroux	B. Cox	6-1
7	.....7	Devil's Playground	D. Davis	M. Casse	8-1
8	.....8	Lambo	T. Gaffalione	S. Asmussen	4-1
9	.....9	Global Perspective	F. Prat	C. Brown	6-1
10	.....10	Act of Mutiny	J. Ortiz	C. McGaughey III	12-1
11	.....AE	Skip the Line	I. Ortiz, Jr.	T. Pletcher	8-1
12	.....AE	Hurricane Nelson	J. Lezcano	G. Delgado	15-1

8TH (4:26PM). \$350,000, STK - THE ALFRED G. VANDERBILT, 3 YO'S & UP, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double					
1	.....1	.....Gun It.....	J. Ortiz.....	L. Rice.....	10-1
2	.....2	.....Synthesis.....	M. Franco.....	D. Jacobson.....	20-1
3	.....3	.....Awesome Aaron.....	D. Davis.....	T. Green.....	30-1
4	.....4	.....Elite Power.....	I. Ortiz, Jr.....	W. Mott.....	4-5
5	.....5	.....Gunite.....	T. Gaffalione.....	S. Asmussen.....	8-5
6	.....6	.....Dean Delivers.....	E. Jaramillo.....	M. Yates.....	8-1
7	.....7	.....Little Vic.....	C. Olivero.....	J. Avila.....	15-1

9TH (5:02PM). \$149,500, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 1M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double					
1	.....AE-MTO	.....Suspended Campaign	.....Rider TBA	.....R. Rodriguez	.....2-1
1a	.....AE-MTO	.....Tough Street	.....D. Davis	.....C. Brown	.....2-1
2	.....1	.....You Gotta Have Fun (IRE)	.....L. Saez	.....M. Maker	.....15-1
3	.....2	.....Bolivie (IRE)	.....T. Gaffalione	.....B. Walsh	.....12-1
4	.....3	.....No Show Sammy Jo (GB)	.....M. Franco	.....H. Motion	.....4-1
5	.....4	.....Expand the Map (IRE)	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....C. Brown	.....7-2
6	.....5	.....Diamond Hands	.....J. Ortiz	.....T. Pletcher	.....5-1
7	.....6	.....Miss Kristy	.....J. Rosario	.....G. Rodriguez	.....30-1
8	.....7	.....Candle	.....J. Velazquez	.....C. McGaughey III	.....10-1
9	.....8	.....New Ginya	.....D. Davis	.....C. Clement	.....8-1
10	.....9	.....Get Your Kicks	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....6-1
11	.....10	.....Spungie	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....9-2
12	.....AE	.....Fine Whining	.....J. Torres	.....E. Coletti, Jr.	.....30-1
13	.....AE-MTO	.....Mariah's Appeal	.....J. Alvarado	.....P. Bauer	.....7-2
14	.....AE-MTO	.....Absinthe	.....T. Gaffalione	.....S. Asmussen	.....3-1
15	.....AE-MTO	.....She Caught My Eye	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....4-1

10TH (5:45PM). \$500,000, STK - THE JIM DANDY PRESENTED BY DK HORSE, 3 YO, 1 1/8M

Exacta, Trifecta, Pic 3, Daily Double					
1	.....1	.....Disarm	.....J. Rosario	.....S. Asmussen	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....Forte	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....T. Pletcher	.....7-5
3	.....3	.....Hit Show	.....L. Saez	.....B. Cox	.....6-1
4	.....4	.....Saudi Crown	.....F. Geroux	.....B. Cox	.....5-2
5	.....5	.....Angel of Empire	.....F. Prat	.....B. Cox	.....5-2

SARATOGA ENTRIES

11TH (6:19PM). \$95,000, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

1	.....1	Queens Dancer	J. Davis	L. Dixon	30-1
2	.....2	Summer At the Spa	M. Franco	S. Lake	15-1
3	.....3	Snowy Evening	J. Velazquez	D. Donk	4-1
4	.....4	In Good Trouble	D. Davis	B. Dunham	30-1
5	.....5	Fancypants Juliana	I. Ortiz, Jr.	D. Donk	5-1
6	.....6	Saratoga Chrome	R. Santana, Jr.	J. Hiles	12-1
7	.....7	Kerry	L. Saez	J. Sharp	6-1
8	.....8	Busy Morning	F. Prat	J. Abreu	4-1
9	.....9	Act of Congress	J. Ortiz	B. Levine	7-2
10	.....10	Sikum	J. Torres	J. Camejo	10-1
11	.....11	Buntly Windermere	J. Castellano	D. Ryan	20-1
12	.....AE-MTO	Sandy's Garden	J. Davis	J. Tebbutt	2-1
13	.....AE-MTO	I'm Nervous Now	J. Ortiz	M. Dini	7-2
14	.....AE-MTO	Liberty Flame	O. Hernandez Moreno	J. Begg	6-1

12TH (6:52PM). \$136,500, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M , 1 3/8M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

1	.....1	Southampton Dock	J. Ortiz	I. Wilkes	12-1
2	.....2	Laserjet	J. Lezcano	M. Shirer	15-1
3	.....3	Tawaret	J. Rosario	C. Clement	7-2
4	.....4	Machiavellique	J. Alvarado	T. Albertrani	15-1
5	.....5	Callie's Grit	L. Saez	J. Sharp	8-1
6	.....6	Libretto (IRE)	D. Davis	M. Maker	6-1
7	.....7	She's Mo Bubbly	I. Ortiz, Jr.	T. Pletcher	3-1
8	.....8	Bel Rosso	R. Santana, Jr.	J. Hiles	30-1
9	.....9	Fizzy	F. Prat	T. Pletcher	5-1
10	.....10	Sri Lanka	T. Gaffalione	B. Walsh	6-1
11	.....AE	Lady Claypoole (IRE)	M. Franco	M. Maker	15-1
12AE	Heavenly Appointed	J. Velazquez	H. Motion	10-1
13AE-MTO	Duke Girls	M. Franco	C. Brown	6-1

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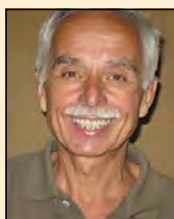
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John Shapazian



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Rob Whitlock



Charles Bedard



Jessica Paquette

Race	John Shapazian	Tom Law	Rob Whitlock	Charles Bedard	Jessica Paquette
1	Trade Imbalance Corruption Moonlight	Trade Imbalance Moonlight Frontline Warrior	Frontline Warrior Moonlight Modica	Trade Imbalance Frontline Warrior Modica	Moonlight Frontline Corruption
2	Bold Journey Osbourne Joey Freshwater	Osbourne Bold Journey Joey Freshwater	Floki's Flight Osbourne Joey Freshwater	Floki's Flight Bold Journey Osbourne	Joey Freshwater High Oak Bold Journey
3	Morning Cup Luna Warrior War Terminator	Morning Cup Luna Warrior War Terminator	Devils Only Friend Hatch Volkert	Morning Cup War Terminator Carpe's Dream	Devils Only Friend Hatch Luna Warrior
4	Best Coast Party At Grants Live Oak entry	Trombetta entry Mooney Mooney Party At Grants	Corner Kick Party At Grants Best Coast	Trombetta entry Mooney Mooney Party At Grants	Mooney Mooney Best Coast Cherokee Cottage
5	Tizzy In The Sky Ontheonesandtws You Look Cold	Sterling Silver You Look Cold Tizzy In The Sky	Tizzy In The Sky Ontheonesandtws You Look Cold	You Look Cold Sterling Silver Good Sam	Born Dapper Bustin Bay Good Sam
6	Friedman entry Starts Now Overacting	Friedman entry North End Lady Bomb Squad	Overacting Autumn Bomb Squad	Friedman entry Starts Now Bomb Squad	Starts Now Splashy Bomb Squad
7	Lambo Dornoch Drum Roll Please	Drum Roll Please Dornoch Global Perspective	Dornoch Lambo Act Of Mutiny	Lambo Private Desire Dornoch	Dornoch Lambo Drum Roll Please
8	Elite Power Gunite Dean Delivers	Elite Power Gunite Gun It	Gunite Elite Power Gun It	Elite Power Gunite Dean Delivers	Gunite Gun It Elite Power
9	Dubb entry Expand The Map Get Your Kicks	Absinthe Brown entry Candle	Candle Diamond Hands Expand The Map	Dubb entry Expand The Map New Ginya	No Show Sammy Jo Candle Expand The Map
10	Forte Saudi Crown Disarm	Forte Saudi Crown Disarm	Hit Show Disarm Forte	Forte Angel Of Empire Hit Show	Disarm Forte Saudi Crown
11	Sandy's Garden Act Of Congress Fancypants Juliana	Sandy's Garden Snowy Evening Kerry	Kerry Saratoga Chrome Snowy Evening	Sandy's Garden Act Of Congress Busy Morning	Snowy Evening Kerry Summer At The Spa
12	She's Mo Bubbly Tawaret Duke Girls	She's Mo Bubbly Sri Lanka Tawaret	She's Mo Bubbly Tawaret Fizzy	She's Mo Bubbly Tawaret Lady Claypoole	She's Mo Bubbly Lady Claypoole Fizzy
2023 Records	42/122	31/122	35/122	42/122	26/122

Full-brother to Mage makes debut in 7th

BY MARY RUFO

Racing is a family sport. Many say it starts in the bloodlines. Those bloodlines might have something to say in today's seventh race, which features a full-brother to Kentucky Derby winner Mage.

Dornoch, named for Royal Dornoch golf course in Scotland, resides in Danny Gargan's barn on the backside of Saratoga's main track. The brothers, born only a year and four days apart, don't look anything alike. Dornoch, a 2-year-old bay son of Good Magic, boasts a load of energy and spent Thursday morning in his stall throwing his head while attempting to yank on his gold and blue chain.

"He's going to be a big two-turn horse," said Gargan, who trains Dornoch for West Paces Racing and R. A. Hill Stable. "You know, we'd just like to get him started. He's huge. But he's not a heavy build."

Promise is what Gargan saw in Dornoch at last year's Keeneland September yearling sale. Working with Conor Foley of Oracle Bloodstock, Gargan landed the colt for \$325,000.

"I bought him – I actually owned him at one point," Gargan said. "When we bought him, I owned part of him. I owned 34 percent."

"When I buy a majority of a 325K horse at a sale, he's my favorite horse. That's like my life savings. So, when I spend my life savings on a horse, I loved him. I thought he was the best horse we bought. It's a lot of money for me. We thought he was going to go for more. I got lucky and we think he's a nice horse."

Dornoch wasn't the only family member to catch Gargan's eye.

"We actually liked the brother at the sale," he said of Mage. "We bid on the brother at (last year's Fasig-Tipton Midlantic May 2-year-old sale). If he'd had been at Ocala, we would've bought him. We were just out of money. You start out the year with money and the longer the year goes on, once you start spending, I couldn't afford to buy much more



Mary Rufo

A full-brother to Kentucky Derby winner Mage, Dornoch starts his racing career today.

horse. We liked him at the sale. Conor actually bought his mother, Puca."

Puca made 17 starts from 2014 to 2017, including an appearance in the 2015 Kentucky Oaks for trainer Bill Mott. Owned by Donegal Racing, Puca earned nearly \$300,000 before retiring to become a broodmare. In addition to Mage and Dornoch, Puca's first foal was a Gun Runner filly named Gunning who is entered in the today's Alma North Stakes at Laurel Park for trainer Kenny McPeck.

Dornoch drew post 4 in the 6 1/2-furlong maiden and is 2-1 on the morning line for Luis Saez. The distance remains a question to Gargan, but his sights are set on stretching the colt out in the future.

"Well, you know you're coming into the big-time races," he said. "He's not super fast out the gate. ... He's going to be a two-turn horse. I don't know if he'll win going 6 1/2."

As for Dornoch's demeanor in and around the barn, Gargan encouraged a pet or two but realized he can still be a bit rough at times.

"He's sweet. You can go up and pet him," Gargan said. "When you put the tack on him, he gets a little feisty. He's still a colt, so he'll strike at people and play around."



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Sean Clancy

Rebel's Romance gallops at Oklahoma Friday morning.

Big Horse

BC Turf winner Rebel's Romance headlines Sunday Grade 2 stakes

BY JOE CLANCY

Follow along with a Breeders' Cup winner on a tour of the Saratoga Race Course backside Friday morning . . .

- 9:43: The gate at Greentree Stable opens and he steps into the racetrack grounds by the Clare Court turn. The walk starts with the shade of a proper forest to the right. Ancient bunkhouses propped up by more ancient cinder blocks form the left boundary. The road is a road, but feels like half-dirt.

- 9:48: The alley. John Terranova's barn on the right, Cherie Devaux on the left, then Phil Serpe. A guy on a bike carries a bucket of water (carefully), a woman walks a scooter, golf carts whirl this way and that.

- 9:49: Right turn to parallel the main track and more walking on another road. Wise Dan grazed over there.

- 9:50: Millionaire Row on the turn. Woody Stephens was here. Some barns date to 1905.

- 9:53: Cross Union Avenue. The

BOWLING GREEN STAKES PREVIEW

guards stop the traffic. Look both ways just in case.

- 9:54: Follow the horse path, make a right on the old Horse Haven track, then a left to skirt Chad Brown's barn, zig, zag, turn the corner toward George Weaver's. What kind of car is that? Cross another road, turn right at Bruce Levine corner and follow the path around the Oklahoma track to the far gap by the Mott-Clement-McGaughey camp.

You'll have to stop here. The horse crosses the track at 10 a.m. – sharp – when given a cue and steps on to the turf.

Godolphin's Breeders' Cup Turf winner Rebel's Romance went to the Oklahoma Friday and turned at least a few heads with his dark bay coat, black-hooded ears, lead-pony escort from outrider Juan "Bam Bam"

Continued On Page 27

Bowling Green —

■ Continued from page 26

Galvez and stakes-bound stablemates Silver Knott and Mysterious Night. “You could make a pretty good living with just those three,” said one trainer as the group walked past.

Yes you could. They have combined to earn \$3.6 million, but there’s no doubting the star power of Rebel’s Romance. The 5-year-old Dubawi gelding has won nine of 13 starts and \$2,994,610. Last year, the Irish-bred won five of seven including two Group 1 stakes in Germany and the Breeders’ Cup Turf at Keeneland. Sunday, he’s the 8-5 morning-line favorite in the Grade 2 Bowling Green at 1 3/8 miles on the inner turf. The homebred meets nine rivals while looking to bounce back from a seventh in the Dubai Sheema Classic in March. Richie Mullen rides from post nine in the \$250,000 race, the ninth of 10 on the card with a post time of 5:49 p.m.

English-based trainer Charlie Appleby’s traveling assistant Chris Connett said Rebel’s Romance was happy with the Saratoga life so far.

“He’s taken the trip really well,” Connett said. “He’s a seasoned campaigner, going all around Europe, the Breeders’ Cup and off to Dubai. He’s been



around the world. He shipped in really well and everything points to a nice big run on Sunday. He did 42 hours in the quarantine facility here (at the Oklahoma Annex across Fifth Avenue) and then came over to Greentree.”

The 106-acre private farm, which borders Saratoga Race Course and the Yaddo Gardens, includes 100 stalls, a 1-mile synthetic track, a history dating to 1920 and ownership by Edward Simms, Jock

Tod Marks

Channel Maker joins the Bowling Green field for the fifth time.

Whitney’s Greentree Stable, Stonerside Stable and now Godolphin.

“It’s a beautiful facility, we’re very fortunate to be able to use it,” said Connett. “We’re in there because Silver Knott didn’t travel back to the U.K. so we’ve been in there since the end of the Belmont meet. It’s a great place to train horses.”

Rebel’s Romance galloped a bit more than a lap of the turf course Friday, and was clocked for a half-mile breeze in :48.11 with Mullen aboard.

“He had a nice canter and just quickened up the down the lane, a little blowout before his run on Sunday,” Connett said. “He drew stall nine which I don’t think is a worry for him. He’s a horse who likes to kind of make a late run anyway. Richie will jump him out and float him into a position and then hopefully come with a nice,

strong run toward the end. His normal [morning] rider is Robbie Fitzpatrick but with Richie getting the mount on Sunday Charlie thought it best that Richie have a bit of a feel of him because he can be a bit of a character.”

Rebel’s Romance had no problems with the long walk to or from Oklahoma and strolled a shaded

Continued On Page 28



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Tod Marks

Highest Honors seeks his fifth career win in Sunday's Bowling Green.

Bowling Green —

■ Continued from page 27

Greentree walking ring afterward without much care. Long, tall and nearly black, he makes his presence known and keeps Connett and the team in form.

"He had a frame to fill into and he's certainly getting there . . . He's just his own man," Connett said. "He doesn't really like to be tied up. When Robbie goes into tack him up, he's loose. He walks around, he does his own thing and you just work with him. You go with the flow. You don't want to pick a fight with a big guy like him, so we do our best to just flow with him – he's not a bad horse, but he's got his own way about things and it's better to go with the tide than against it."

Sunday's tide of opponents includes two foes from trainer Chad Brown's barn in Highest Honors, a four-time winner who was sixth in the Grade 1 Manhattan last time, and Rockemperor, last year's Bowling Green winner who carries five wins and \$1.1 million into the race. Trainer Shug McGaughey sends out Never Explain, who won Pimlico's Grade 3 Dinner Party in May. Brendan Walsh saddles Ver-stappen, who won Keeneland's Grade 2 Elkhorn in April. Christophe Clement runs two – Soldier Rising off back-to-back seconds in Grade 1 company and Grade 3 winner Tawny Port in his turf debut. Mark Casse's Strong Quality was fifth last time in the Manhattan, his stakes debut. Graham Motion ships The Grey Wizard up from Maryland off a second in the Belmont Gold Cup going 2 miles.

Bill Mott's veteran Channel Maker makes his 54th lifetime start. The record includes four prior tries in the Bowling Green – a dead-heat win in 2018, a fourth in 2019, a third in 2020 and a seventh in 2021. Marc Keller homebred Daunt, second in three starts this year, is on the also-eligible list for trainer Bob Ribaud.



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Dave Harmon

New York Thunder gears down while winning Friday's Amsterdam.

Thunder Clap

Unbeaten 3-year-old streaks to Grade 2 stakes win

BY SEAN CLANCY

Jorge Delgado wasn't about to look ahead. Minutes after the 33-year-old trainer won his biggest race, the Grade 2 Amsterdam at Saratoga Friday, Delgado wanted to slow it all down.

"I'm going to enjoy this. I'll watch the replay a thousand times," Delgado said. "Saratoga is a big thing everywhere. I would dream about this since I was a kid in Venezuela. I would dream about this since I started training. I would dream to come here. I would dream to race a horse here. But to win, like this, I'm just thrilled that it happened."

New York Thunder and jockey Tyler Gaffalione put on a thrilling display of speed, ripping through torrid fractions, turning back favorite Drew's Gold with ease and rolling to a 7 1/2-length triumph over Deer District who nailed Drew's Gold in the final stride. New York Thunder, a 3-year-old colt by Nyquist finished 6 1/2 furlongs in 1:14.65.

Owned by Amo Racing USA, the \$130,000 yearling purchase improved to 4-for-4. Bred by Gatewood Bell and Forgotten Land, the bay colt won his debut on the syn-

thetic track at Gulfstream Park in November. A month later, he tacked on an easy allowance race going 5 furlongs on the turf. In April, he added the Woodstock, a 6-furlong stakes on Woodbine's synthetic track.

Delgado aimed at the Grade 1 Woody Stephens at Belmont Park for New York Thunder's dirt debut, but he missed that with a bruised foot. Delgado contemplated a trip to Ellis Park but scrapped that and aimed at Saratoga.

New York Thunder broke sharply from the outside as third choice and potential pace competitor Ryvit stumbled. Tyler Gaffalione looked once to his left, shook his whip twice from his right hand and cleared four rivals in a matter of strides. New York Thunder opened up 2 easy lengths on favorite Drew's Gold through the first quarter mile in :21.48. Gaffalione, aboard for the first time, had one task.

"A fast horse like that, just let him go out and do his thing," the 28-year-old jockey said. "Just be a passenger."

AMSTERDAM STAKES RECAP

Continued On Page 31

Amsterdam —

■ Continued from page 30

New York Thunder carried his passenger first-class through a half in :44.56 as Jose Ortiz swung the once-beaten Drew's Gold into the passing lane midway on the turn. Like turning on a turn signal and not turning, Drew's Gold was dispatched in a matter of strides.

"Oh man, he was doing it so easy," Gaffalione said. "He gave me a ton of confidence, especially approaching the quarter pole. Jose ran up outside him and I just kind of squeezed on him and he reengaged. He just jumped right back into it, that was a good feeling."

New York Thunder opened up with ease and finished geared down.

"I was just talking to Joel (Rosario), I don't think I've ever been that quick," Gaffalione said. "Especially on a track like this, you don't really see that here."

Delgado, the nephew of Kentucky Derby-winning trainer Gustavo, came to the U.S. in 2013, got a hot walking job with Juan Rodriguez and other small trainers at Calder Race Course. The dream was to follow his dad's footsteps and become a trainer. It's been a long, slow process.

"My father was my superhero. I want to be like my dad. That's all I want to be. He's the best horseman I ever met but you need more than that in this

Hey Tyler Gaffalione, how long have you known Jorge Delgado?

"I'm pretty sure I won his first race for him at Calder Race Course, might have been in 2017. He's been great to me. We've had a lot of success down in Florida and I'm thrilled for his owners and him to get their first win here. That's a big win for them."

business. You need luck," Delgado said. "I started hotwalking horses. Then I groomed horses for a little bit. Then I was foreman, then assistant trainer. Just small people, anybody who gave me a chance. I just wanted to stay. I just wanted to stay. I started with two horses and now here I am."

A friend of his purchased the starter kit. One for \$1,500 and the other for \$500.

"He gave me the encouragement, the push," Delgado said. "It was a lot of frustration and disappointment at the very beginning but after eight months, everything started going my way. I had owners who supported me, very good friends to this day, I've been really lucky, actually."

Delgado won five races in 2017 and has improved every year since, winning 84 in 2022. This year, he's won 40 races from 183 starts. With 62 horses at Monmouth Park and owners like Amo Racing, a strong force in European racing and a burgeoning force here, that number will certainly



Dave Harmon
Jorge Delgado (second from right) accepts the Amsterdam trophy after New York Thunder's win.

grow.

As for his Derby-winning uncle, they have history.

"I worked for him twice. In Venezuela. In America. He fired me twice," Delgado said. "He's a tough guy to work for. I love him. It's a really good school to learn from, not only do you learn about horses but about life. Strength. Character. Grit."

New York Thunder showed all that.

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Check Mark

Hometown favorite Davis scores first Saratoga victory

Countless fans lined the jockey's path after Friday's third race at Saratoga Race Course, all eager to take a picture and get an autograph from jockey Katie Davis.

With a beaming smile, Davis, who won aboard River Tay, exited the winner's circle and greeted these fans knowing a dream had come true.

"This is my hometown," she said. "I graduated here in 2010. It's something I've always dreamed of, especially with my father riding here. It's been exciting. Just to get that one win, I was like 'How dramatic; how cool.'"

Davis earned that first win. Riding the 9-1 River Tay in the \$75,000 maiden claimer for trainer Bruce Brown, Davis settled into a stalking position early in the 1-mile turf event.

FRIDAY RACING RECAP

She asked the daughter of U S Navy Flag on the far turn and took over in the stretch. River Tay held off multiple challenges in the stretch to win by a neck in a five-way photo with Catskill Humor, Lookinforbargains, Volatility and St. Benedicts Prep.

River Tay, who won in her third start, was claimed for \$40,000 in her June 2 debut by The Luchncup Syndicate and Brown. Davis said the filly's time with Brown and her switch to two turns helped River Tay land her trainer's first win of the meet.

"Being under Bruce Brown's training and that two turns, she actually settled nicely rather than a one-turn mile at Belmont," she said. "She set-



Dave Harmon

Katie Davis soaks in the Saratoga winner's circle aboard River Tay.

tled nicely for me. She was just ready today."

— Alec DiConza

• Trainer Tom Morley collected his second win of the day in the fifth when the 4-year-old New York-bred gelding Colloquy opened up on a field

to win the \$95,000 allowance by 6 3/4 lengths over Jackson Heights.

As understandably excited as Morley was to get the second win, he seemed genuinely more excited for apprentice jockey Jaime Torres' first

Continued On Page 33

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Friday —

■ Continued from page 32

win at Saratoga. Morley went so far as to put his own trademark Panama hat on Torres for the winner's circle photo.

"The distance was a big concern for me today. Big, big concern," Morley said. "But Jaime had ridden the horse before, and he's very, very good. He put the race to bed at the quarter pole and I was absolutely thrilled. It's a big day for the barn and a very big day for Jaime Torres. It was a super ride."

Torres started as an apprentice last year in Florida and in his rookie year picked up 14 wins and invaluable experience. He moved north at the end of January and was riding at Parx Racing and Aqueduct with increasing success. He shuffled between Belmont Park and Parx th is spring and summer.

He rode his very first winner at Belmont May 13, aboard Colloquy.

Torres, who rode one race on Opening Day, was asked why he would move from his successful Parx gig to come and compete at Saratoga.

"I want to ride against the very best," he said. "Look around, this is where they are."

After being a Saratoga bridesmaid five times, including two seconds on Thursday and one earlier yesterday, Torres has broken his Spa maiden. He also finished second in Friday's finale aboard the Morley-trained Sixwillberich.

— Terry Hill and Alec DiConza

- Bustin Away, a first-time starter by Bustin Stones, shipped in from Finger Lakes for a front-running win in the opener for New York-bred 2-year-olds.

"It's fantastic," said M. Anthony Ferraro, who trains the gelding for Michael Di Tomasso. "Any time you win here, it's fantastic."

Keiber Coa rode Bustin Away, who broke sharply from post 3 and repelled a challenge from Aggelos The Great and then held off Mischief Joke to win by a head.

"We knew he was tight enough, we just didn't know if he was good enough against the competition here," Ferraro said. "He showed he was fit enough and he was good enough."

Bustin Away prepared for his debut



Dave Harmon
Colloquy and Jaime Torres win
the fifth.

at Finger Lakes and Ferraro opted to send the gelding to Saratoga after he showed signs of potential in his training.

"He's just been training so well and outworking every competition I put him up against," he said. "I've had a few that won here first start. He looked like one that could."

Ferraro said Bustin Away could return for the Funny Cide Stakes on

Saratoga Showcase Day Aug. 27.

"That's probably where we'll have to go," Ferraro said. "There are not many spots to run 2-year-olds right now, so probably. I'll talk it over with the owner and we'll look for a stake at some point for New York-breds."

— Alec DiConza

Continued On Page 34

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Dave Harmon

Urgent Fury coasts to a win in the 11th.

Friday —

■ Continued from page 33

• WSS Racing's Urgent Fury gave trainer John Ortiz his first Saratoga victory in the nightcap, taking the maiden claiming event on the grass in his third start under Joel Rosario. Ortiz, who brought a string to Saratoga for the first time this season, saddled Urgent Fury in his first start since a fifth in an Ellis Park maiden special weight late last August.

"Fantastic," Ortiz said of his first

Saratoga win. "I mean, it's a bucket list. ... I'm very grateful and I'm proud to be here. Thanks to NYRA for taking us in. Again, I'm proud of my team – my assistants from Kentucky, my brother is an assistant here, Lindsey Reynolds from Kentucky. They work so hard with the horses and this is because of them."

Urgent Fury raced as a gelding for the first time, a decision that Ortiz said made the difference.

"It was the right thing to do," he said. "He was a bit fresh when he was a 2-year-old. He'd act out a little bit. He actually gave me a concussion. We

figured it out, he just needed some maturity and needed some more focus. Coming back, dropping in class, this horse showed a lot of ability."

Urgent Fury was one of two wins on the day for Rosario, who also rode Disarmed to victory in the seventh. Urgent Fury had raced around two turns, having only run 5 1/2- and 6-furlong races last year.

"I knew he was going to be sharp but I told Joel to get a good break and just don't take anything away," Ortiz said. "Cover him up if we could, but the horse was just much the best."

— Alec DiConza

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Saratoga Leaders

JOCKEYS.....	1ST
Irada Ortiz Jr.....	22
Luis Saez.....	14
Jose Ortiz.....	12
Joel Rosario.....	10
Javier Castellano.....	8
Tyler Gaffalione.....	8
Flavien Prat.....	8
Jose Lezcano.....	6
Kendrick Carmouche.....	5
Dylan Davis.....	4
Manny Franco.....	4

TRAINERS..... 1ST

Linda Rice.....	14
Chad Brown.....	11
Todd Pletcher.....	9
Rudy Rodriguez.....	5
Christophe Clement.....	4
Brad Cox.....	4
Bill Mott.....	4
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Brendan Walsh.....	3
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Through Friday	

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Long Wind

Former claimer Next dominates another marathon dirt stakes

BY TOM LAW

Doug Cowans and Luan Machado know the score with Next and keep it simple with America's latest stamina-loving star.

"For me, it's just, get out of his way," said Cowans, who trains the gray 5-year-old gelding for longtime client Mike Foster. "He knows what to do. Just get out of the horse's way and let him do his thing. The rider knows that, too. He breezes him in the morning, has gotten to know him and knows him really well now."

Cowans and Machado, who rides primarily in the Midwest and making his first appearance at Saratoga, put that knowledge to use Thursday and Next stayed away from his rivals in a dominating victory in the \$150,000 Birdstone Stakes going 1 3/4 miles. Next won the Birdstone by 11 3/4 lengths as the odds-on favorite, collecting his fourth victory in a race 1 1/2 miles or longer from five tries.

"The horse, he just never gets tired," said the Kentucky-based Cowans, who won his first Saratoga race in just his second appearance. "That's what we noticed about him in the morning and I thought we had to give him a shot in some of these races to see what happens. He's got a lot of stamina and runs them off their feet."

The decision to try marathon events came last year, not long after Foster and Cowans claimed Next for \$62,500 off Silverton Hill and trainer Wesley Ward. Next ran twice on the grass going 9 furlongs – winning once – off the claim, before



Dave Harmon

Next rolls home with a win in Thursday's Birdstone Stakes.

stretched even farther to win the off-the-turf Cape Henlopen going 12 furlongs at Delaware Park.

Next then walloped nine foes in the Grade 2 Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance Stakes on the Breeders' Cup Friday undercard, running off by 6 1/4 lengths.

"At Keeneland at the undercard at the Breeders' Cup he just missed the track record by two hundredths of a second and coasted in," Foster said. "It wasn't even a race. From there it was like, 'What do we have here?' He just gets strong and better every month."

The last three months have been productive for Next, who finished third in the Isaac Murphy Marathon at Churchill Downs May 3, won the Grade 2 Brooklyn Stakes at Belmont Park June 10 and now the Birdstone. He earned \$82,500 for the Birdstone and increased his earnings to \$567,283 since the claim.

"This is a dream come true," Foster said just after he stepped into the Carmen Barrera Room on

the way to the winner's champagne toast. "Doug and I have been doing this a long time together. I'm a small barn, 10 to 12 horses on average, and we run Ohio-breds. We got lucky. We've had some other stakes horses but not at the Grade 2 level. Doug figured this horse out early and it was amazing. He said, 'Mike, this horse can go longer, and longer.'"

"Now he's twice as strong this year as he was last year. Just amazing. He's just a lean, mean machine. He's got a great stride on him."

Machado let Next settle into his stride behind New York-bred stakes winner Sea Foam around the far turn and into the stretch the first time, about a length back through the opening half-mile in :50.18.

Dash Attack slid through an opening on the inside to race alongside Next around the clubhouse turn with Lone Rock, winner of the 2021 Birdstone and third last year, just behind in fourth. Sea Foam

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Birdstone —

■ Continued from page 35

continued to lead through 6 furlongs in 1:14.75 and a mile in 1:40.54, as Next inched a bit closer heading toward the half-mile pole leaving the backstretch. Next put pressure on Sea Foam heading into the turn and quickly made up the deficit to draw on even terms.

Machado, who first rode Next in the Cape Henlopen and aboard for three subsequent starts, loved the response around the far turn.

“When we were passing by the half-mile pole, it was the first time I checked on him to see how he was doing and he grabbed the bridle and gave me all that confidence,” Machado said. “It was done by the half-mile. He was looking good and the other horses were asking already. He still had much to give and I felt super comfortable at that point.”

Next widened from there, opened up a few lengths on the plummeting Sea Foam, Dash Attack and Lone Rock as last year’s Claiming Crown Iron Horse winner Time For Trouble made progress from the back of the field.

Machado shook his reins and gave Next one tap of the whip right handed, then showed him the stick the rest of the way as he drew off to a comfortable margin. He won



Dave Harmon


Hall of Fame trainer Nick Zito (dark suit, center) presents the trophy for the Birdstone.

in 2:57.59 – not the 2:45.32 put up on the infield monitor but later corrected in the official chart.

“His best [asset] is his consistency,” Machado said. “I don’t think he’s that super special going (in) a mile race, but he’s so consistent. He keeps going forever. That’s the difference.”

Cowans said he’d point Next to the Grade 3 Greenwood Cup at 1 1/2 miles Sept. 23 at Parx Racing, with a defense of his Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance on the Nov. 4 Breeders’ Cup Saturday card at Santa Anita Park down the road.

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SCAN TO GIVE



Shiny Debut

NY-bred Caldwell Luvs Gold wins 2YO maiden for Dicke Racing

BY ALEC DICONZA

Thursday's sixth race at Saratoga Race Course may not have gone according to plan for winning owner Dicke Racing, but it generated a satisfactory result.

Caldwell Luvs Gold, a 2-year-old New York-bred first-time starter by Goldencents, broke near the back of the pack and at one point raced in last in the 6-furlong event. The filly made up ground around the turn and in the stretch to win by 2 3/4 lengths.

Dicke Racing's Kevin Dicke was surprised at the way Caldwell Luvs Gold won, but was ecstatic with the victory.

"Just from the breeding, we thought that she would go to the lead, and she went to last," he said. "It definitely wasn't the way we drew it up, but we'll obviously take the result."

Ridden by Florent Geroux and trained by Brad Cox, Caldwell Luvs Gold won in 1:12.44.

Dicke told the story of the filly's name after the victory.

"Caldwell is our son," he said. "It was named after a guy who owns a winery out in Napa Valley. I hope he's sitting in his cave right now drinking the gold, which is the name of his wine – Caldwell Luvs Gold. There you go, and then Goldencents is the dad."

The Seeking the Ante Stakes on the Aug. 28 Saratoga Showcase Day could be next for Caldwell Luvs Gold, but Dicke will wait on that decision.

"You have to ask Brad about that. I leave that stuff up to him," he said.

- David Donk walked through the grandstand Thursday, less than an hour before post for the seventh and summed up his start to the meet.

"I'm getting killed here man," Donk said, lamenting an 0-for-18 start that came with a second and a third to that point.

Donk's fortune changed in the seventh when Landbiscuit was put

THURSDAY RACING RECAP

up after the disqualification of Eyes On Target in the 1 1/16-mile claiming event on the turf. Eyes On Target was taken down after Dylan Davis, aboard eventual eighth-place finisher Tartini, claimed foul against Irad Ortiz Jr.

Landbiscuit and jockey Joel Rosario crossed the finish second, just a neck back, and after a 12-minute inquiry were awarded the victory.

"Any way I can get it," he said. "I don't have a lot of ammunition, so I'd be concerned for the meet [if he hadn't won already]. I mean, I'd be pleased he ran so well, but a win is a win, so I'll take it."

Donk didn't sweat the inquiry too much.

"I've been around long enough," he said. "It is what it is. Whatever decision they made, I'm just pleased that the horse ran so well. Sometimes you get put up, sometimes you get taken down."

Owned by Funky Munky Stable, Landbiscuit was claimed by Donk for \$25,000 out of his runner-up finish in his last race June 17 at Belmont Park. He ran for the same price Thursday and was not claimed.

"We claimed him at Belmont as a horse to run here," Donk said. "There aren't many levels that you have to choose from, so we kind of needed to run him back in the spot where we claimed him from. I thought it was a pretty competitive race. A \$25,000 at Saratoga is better than a \$25,000 at Belmont. We're just pleased that he showed up and ran so well."

– Additional reporting by Tom Law

- Miss San Gabriel enjoyed an easy stroll around the inner turf course en route to victory in the second as the 8-5 favorite. The 3-year-old daughter of Temple City won the \$50,000

Continued On Page 38



Tod Marks

Caldwell Luvs Gold wins Thursday's sixth for Dicke Racing and trainer Brad Cox.

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Thursday —

■ Continued from page 37

claimer by 2 1/4 lengths for trainer Graham Motion and jockey Manuel Franco. She went straight to the lead from the start and had no problem maintaining her advantage.

"They told me to ride her with confidence," Franco said. "Didn't have to be on the lead, but if something happened and I'm there, don't take anything away and go easily. That's what I did, she broke on top. I just set the pace, and that was it."

Owned by Robert Lapenta, Madaket Stables and ERJ Racing, Miss San Gabriel improved to 2-for-4 with the victory in 1:36.30 over the firm turf.

"She goes the distance with no problem and I think she's proven that in the last two races," said Franco, winning his third race of the meet aboard Motion's first. "I keep trying to push. It's not easy here, but we're going to keep trying to do well."

- Peter Walder equated winning at Saratoga to "the best feeling in the world" after sending out Reigning Chick to win the fourth by three-quarters of a length. After racing third early, the 4-year-old daughter of Sky Kingdom took the lead off the turn and held off the closing Meravigiloso for co-owner and trainer Walder's first win at the meet.

"Awesome," Walder said. "Toughest place in the country to win a race."

After a couple subpar efforts at 7 furlongs and 1 mile, Reigning Chick bounced back cutting



Landbiscuit (right) won Thursday's seventh by disqualification.

Dave Harmon

back to 6 1/2 furlongs. Walder credited one of the part-owners with making the rewarding decision.

"That was Eric's choice," he said of Eric Bachinsky of EKB Stables, which owns the filly with Walder and Surging Sky Ventures. "He kept on saying go long and then cut her back to short, so I can't take credit for that. That's all him, the handicapper."

- Thursday was all about jockey Tyler Gaffalione, who collected three wins aboard Jimmythe-tooth in the first, Reigning Chick in the fourth and Mise En Scene in the fifth. The triple nearly doubled

Gaffalione's number of wins at the meet and he heads into Saturday's card with eight wins.

"It's amazing," he said after the fifth. "I feel so blessed to be here, competing with these guys. It's the best riders, best trainers, best horsemen, best horses in the country. Just a privilege being here."

Mise En Scene, owned by Qatar Racing and Leora Judah and trained by Brendan Walsh, won her allowance-optional going 1 1/16 miles on the grass in 1:41.61. She and Gaffalione spent most of their time at the back of the pack before angling out in the stretch. Launching a furious late rally, the filly ran down Beaute Cachee to win by a neck.

"We discussed it with trainer Brendan Walsh beforehand," Gaffalione said. "We thought her best race is if we could just wait on her until the last second and make the last run. She traveled great."

Mise En Scene, the 9-2 third choice, came to the U.S. for last year's Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf at Keeneland. She finished sixth there before a 10th in the Grade 1 American Oaks in late December at Santa Anita Park in her first start for Walsh.

Gaffalione said the daughter of Siyouni would fit in a return to stakes company off her latest victory.

"When she puts it all together, she can compete anywhere," he said. "She's been her own worst enemy, but it seems like we're starting to figure her out now."

Saratoga Bulletin Board

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Over Easy

Echo Zulu blazes to Grade 2 sprint win in Wednesday feature



Echo Zulu cruises to victory in the Honorable Miss.

Tod Marks

BY JOE CLANCY

A self-help guru, official or otherwise, will advise you to say, “Why not?” more often. And if any of you would-be sages out there need an example of such a life skill, point to Echo Zulu.

An undefeated champion as a 2-year-old in 2021, she blazed to victory in Wednesday’s Grade 2 Honorable Miss Handicap to run her career record to 8-for-10 (with a second) with \$2,365,375 in the bank. She outran Frank’s Rockette to the lead, hung up fractions of :22.02 and :44.45 and coasted to a 7 1/4-length win at 2-5 for L and N Racing, Winchell Thoroughbreds and trainer Steve Asmussen. Long-shot Dr. B rallied for second with Frank’s Rockette settling for third in a four-horse field.

HONORABLE MISS STAKES RECAP

Jockey Florent Geroux did more than hang on, but could have gotten away with it.

“I’ve ridden some good ones, but I can count on my hand the real special ones,” he said. “Freak. Freak. There are good ones and there are champions. She is a champion horse. You can feel it. Fast horses, you can get in their way. Steve didn’t give me much instruction, just pretty much stay out of her way, and move when you want. That’s it. She’s great. She’s amazing.”

And it all started simply enough.

In 2020, Asmussen and L and N Racing won the Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens Stakes at Saratoga with

Echo Town. The next month, his half-sister by the Winchell-owned Gun Runner was in the catalog at Keeneland September. L and N was interested and approached the Winchell team about partnering on the filly.

“Somewhere along way Steve suggested they might partner up with us,” said Winchell’s David Fiske. “We were putting together some horses at the September sale and Mike Levinson (partners with his father Lee, brother Andy and family friend Don Nelson) came by and said we ought to look at this filly. We said we were primarily buying colts, but we’d think about it. Mike said she was pretty nice, and Steve said she was nice enough.”

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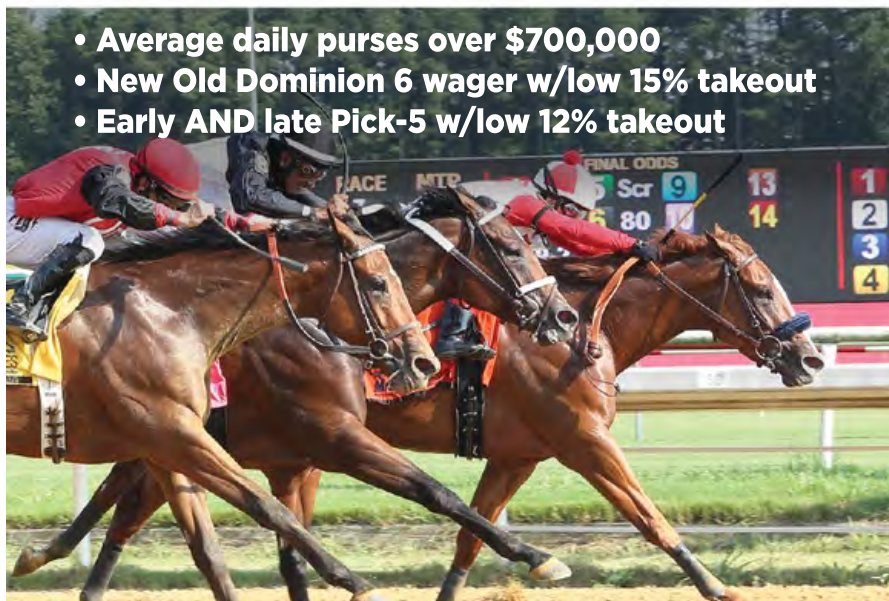


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Honorable Miss —

■ Continued from page 39

Fiske and company did more homework, got measurements from Dr. David Lambert's Equine Analysis Systems and eventually green-lighted the idea.

"We just felt like it was a good way to team up with the Levinsons, she was part of Gun Runner's first crop and we thought we ought to support him," said Fiske. "We got all of our Dr. Lambert measurements done. She was fine, not some super standout star, but well within our target area . . . Eventually, we just said, 'Why not?'"

Consigned by Betz Thoroughbreds, she cost \$300,000. How it happened still makes Fiske laugh.

"Why not. That turned out well," he said. "I wish why not always turned out that well."

That's probably a lesson for another day, but Echo Zulu will make you believe.

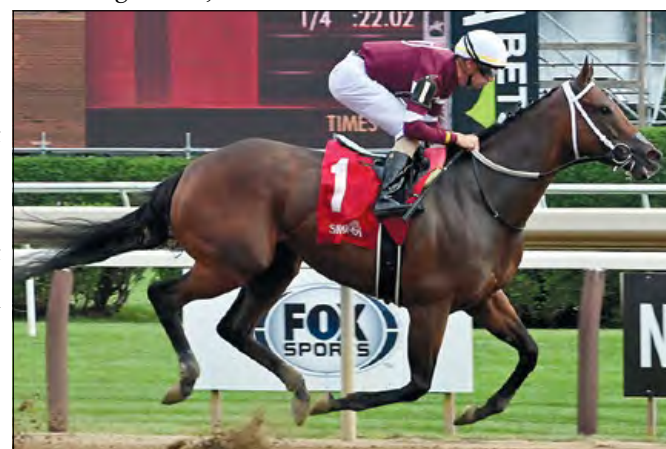
"You can't ever see that or predict that," Asmussen said of trying to interpret championship form to a yearling. "We dream that, we dream that. She makes you realize how lucky we are and how hard it is. She's just different. How many of them are champions, when it gets down to it? She's a champion."

Echo Zulu won the 2-year-old filly title in 2021 with four wins – Saratoga maiden, Grade 1 Spinaway, Grade 1 Frizette, Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies. Last year, she won the Fair Grounds Oaks in March, finished fourth in the Kentucky Oaks in May, added the Grade 3 Dogwood after missing the summer and finished second to champion Goodnight Olive in the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint. She started 2023 with a run-away in the Winning Colors at Churchill Downs May 29. Then came the Honorable Miss, a Wednesday feature with a small field but also a solid test.

Frank's Rockette came in with a dozen wins (five in graded stakes) and

\$1.4 million in the bank for trainer Bill Mott. She opened her 6-year-old campaign with stakes wins at Gulfstream Park and Churchill. Maryquitecontrary finished a length behind Goodnight Olive in the Grade 1 Madison at Keeneland and won five of six last year. Dr. B won a Grade 3 at Aqueduct in December.

They never had a chance. From the rail, Echo Zulu seized a quick lead as Frank's Rockette pressured to the outside. They stayed that way, Geroux hardly moving and Junior Alvarado encouraging his mare to keep pace. Off the turn, Geroux shook the reins twice and Echo Zulu widened the gap. She passed 5 furlongs in :56.19, coasted through the final sixteenth



Dave Harmon

Echo Zulu eases across the finish line with a comfortable win.

and won with her ears pricked.

The performance set up a potential showdown with 2022 winner Goodnight Olive (2-for-3 this year and also 8-for-10 lifetime) in the Grade 1 Ballerina at 7 furlongs Aug. 26. Asmussen called the \$500,000 race "the target for the summer" with an "absolutely" tossed in for good measure.

Geroux will be there.

"Honestly, I just can't wait to ride her again next month," he said. "This sets her up perfectly for the Ballerina because there was a big gap between the Winning Colors and this one. She loves the track here, she's 3-for-3 now. It's a big relief when you bring horses like her in from Kentucky and they can adapt to the track. It's a big plus. It won't be an easy task, to run against Goodnight Olive, the reigning champion, but I think our filly is ready for the fight."

*Additional reporting
by Sean Clancy.*

Local Win

Saratoga-based since spring, L'Imperator lands jump opener

Arch Kingsley Jr. woke up confident Wednesday morning.

"When you wake up with that feeling, everything just has to keep moving forward and it's an inevitable conclusion," the trainer said Wednesday afternoon. "That's how confident I was this morning."

L'Imperator handled the rest, settling well off a torrid pace by Beat Le Bon, cruising into contention leaving the backside and strolling to an inevitable conclusion in the opener at Saratoga Race Course. Owned by Hudson River Farm, the 6-year-old French-bred reeled in Beat Le Bon and drew off to win by 8 3/4 lengths over the frontrunner. Hoffman was third.

The allowance hurdle, run in memory of steeplechase jockey James "Woody" Maloney Jr., attracted just six starters. The Hudson River entry of L'Imperator and Modus Operandi (trained by Keri Brion) attracted the most support, going off the favorite over Beat Le Bon and Hoffman.

Beat Le Bon made it interesting opening 15 lengths early but couldn't withstand the winner who finished 2 1/16 miles in 3:47.42. The final time was 6.27 seconds faster than the Grade 1 A. P. Smithwick July 19.

"It looked like he always had it under control. It was how I visualized it," Kingsley said. "You know how

WEDNESDAY RACING RECAP

it is, when you have the best horse, you're hoping nothing goes wrong."

Owned by Albany's Ed Swyer, Hudson River plucked L'Imperator for \$75,000 at the Keeneland November sale after three wins in France and five wins, including the Grade 2 Fort Marcy in 2022, for Chad Brown.

Kingsley taught the son of Holy Roman Emperor to jump in Camden, S.C., and unveiled him with a third at the Carolina Cup, a third at Queen's Cup and a win at the Iroquois. The former champion jump jockey tried him back on the flat in the Grade 2 Belmont Gold Cup at Belmont Park June 9. L'Imperator pulled too hard and wound up 12th.

Trainer and horse took that in stride and ventured north.

"It was as it happened. Oh well. He got hot and dirty, we took him home, washed him off and fed him that night. Everything was fine. He was like, 'I got that boy's number.' He's been up here since then, just simmering away," Kingsley said. "It's an old playbook. We've all played a role in it over the years. Unfortunately, it's not feasible for a lot of people to come up here, send help, it's a huge undertaking. I'm just trying to get out

Tod Marks

A Grade 2 winner on the flat, L'Imperator scores in Wednesday's jump race.



of shipping my horses all over kingdom come."

Kingsley and his daughter, Taylor, settled themselves into a house at Stowe Burke's farm and settled L'Imperator, Barbados and Merry Maker into Barn 71 on the Oklahoma and then moved to Clark's Cottage by the Wright Street gate when the meet started.

"Thank God we're still a part of the program. They've been setting up the fences in the infield of the Oklahoma forever. I'm one of the only people to ever want to jump them," Kingsley said. "I really think a lot of this horse. Look at his form. Like a parent loves their child, 'Nobody is going to beat my baby.'"

— Sean Clancy

• Pennsylvania-bred Our Shot presented trainer John Terranova with a welcome birthday present when he won Wednesday's seventh. The 4-year-old gelding gave the newly 53-year-old Terranova his first win at Saratoga this year in the \$126,783 allowance-optional at 5 1/2 furlongs on the Mellon Turf Course.

And while the only official stakes on the card was the Honorable Miss, one could be excused for thinking the seventh looked like one. The field featured four stakes winners.

"Yes, these are class horses," Terranova said. "Clearly some of the

leading grass sprinters going. You'll see these in graded stakes throughout the season. Against this competition, it was a good one to win. He showed me something here."

The race was hotly contested with five horses charging side by side down the stretch. The final photo showed Our Shot with Luis Saez up by a head over Arrest Me Red with Bring Me a Check a nose behind in third. Saez, now 2-for-2 on Our Shot, had Our Shot on the rail early and angled out through the turn. Down the stretch he had two on each side of him, but he never lost the lead after grabbing it just past the quarter pole.

"Going in, we were very confident," Terranova said. "But, of course, it's Saratoga so you can't be too confident. Still, he gives us 100 percent every time."

Our Shot is owned by Gatsas Stables, Steven Schoenberg and Terranova. He is now 5-for-9 and with \$240,913 in earnings. The five wins have come at five tracks. His only stakes start was a second in the Get Serious at Monmouth Park last month. He seems likely to try stakes company again.

"Looking ahead we'll just try to pick the right spots and we'll see how far he takes us in this division," Terranova said. "But, as I said, he showed me something today."

— Terry Hill



Tod Marks

Our Shot (center) digs in to win Wednesday's seventh.

World Traveler

French-raised filly
Hard To Justify wins
debut for Wise Racing

BY JOE CLANCY

When Mike Ryan looked at Hard To Justify at Keeneland September last year, he could see the future. No, not a debut win at Saratoga Race Course; just a horse who would improve with age, time, development.

“She was a big, tall, rangy filly,” he said. “There was plenty of leg, plenty of stretch to her and for a big filly she was very agile and light on her feet. But in fairness to her and what we saw, you knew she was going to improve. You’d have loved to see her carry a bit more weight then, but there was an explanation behind it.”

And about 8,000 miles.

Foaled in Kentucky for international breeder Yeguada Centurion in 2021, the daughter of Justify and the Quality Road mare Instant Reflex went to France as a weanling and was raised there through May 2022.

Hard To Justify comes by her international roots honestly. Spanish owner/breeder Leopoldo Fernandez Pujals founded Yeguada Centurion in 1995 as a farm dedicated to improving and promoting the purebred Spanish horse. According to its website, the farm in Spain consists of nearly 2,500 acres of equine facilities including barns, pastures, arenas, tracks and other amenities. Yeguada Centurion bought its first Thoroughbreds in 2019, and purchased 50 broodmares at auctions in 2019 and 2020. Grade 3-placed in California, Instant Reflex cost \$300,000 at Keeneland November in 2019 and Hard To Justify is her second foal.

Because of her pedigree, she was pointed to Keeneland September and flew back to the United States with 13 others to join consignor Nicky Drion



Dave Harmon

Keeneland September graduate Hard To Justify (2) rallies to win her debut July 23.

at Foxtale Farm. The travel is fairly straightforward and organized by international shipping specialists, Drion said, but can still weigh on a horse.

“It’s a lot on a young horse,” said Drion, whose relationship with Yeguada Centurion began by providing quarantine space and services at the farm in Nicholasville. “I said to try to get them to me a month before we start to prep because they did take a while to settle in. Some lost more condition than others. She stayed pretty steady all the way through. It sounds like a bigger deal than it is.”

Hard To Justify prepped like other yearlings at Foxtale and became a standout. At the sale, she caught the eye of Ryan and trainer Chad Brown, who bid \$190,000 to add her to Wise Racing’s stable. Owned by Allen Wise and sons Brian and Marc, Hard To Justify went to Niall Brennan in Florida and continued to improve. Ryan saw her all winter and continued to watch the improvement while thinking about what he saw at the sale.

“I gave her an eight and two pluses,” he said of his sale score. “She was unfurnished, unfinished but there was a reason for it and she was always going to get better.”

The bay joined Brown’s Saratoga string in May – a year after that second airplane trip – and breezed eight times leading up to her debut July 23. Part of a crowded field of 10 (all but two first-time starters) going 1 1/16 miles on the turf, she found a spot in the middle, checked out of a tight spot on the second turn, briefly dropped back to eighth and then came running wide in the stretch to win by a head for Flavien Prat.

For the Wise family, the win connected plenty of dots. Allen and Hanna Wise moved to Albany for work in 1977 and some friends took them to the races at Saratoga. They were hooked. They moved to other parts of the country (Allen was the CEO

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Hard To Justify —

■ Continued from page 42

of Coventry Health Care and Hanna was a member of the Abramson Cancer Center Director's Leadership Council), but Saratoga stayed part of their lives for summer vacations, trips to the track for the Wises and sons Brian and Marc.

"We lived here for several years, but they got transferred again and we grew up in the Philadelphia area," said Brian Wise of Saratoga. "Our one constant, no matter where we lived, we always made it to Saratoga. We never missed a summer vacation in Saratoga, ever."

Owning racehorses was a dream, but not much more until Hanna Wise died 10 years ago.

"When my mom passed that gave us the shove to get into it," said Brian. "We started asking around, trying to figure out what to do and here we are."

Wise Racing had its first runners in 2017 and has won graded stakes with Fools Gold and Turf King among 35 total victories. The horses have won five of 11 starts this year, topped by Turf King's Grade 3 score in Woodbine's Marine Stakes. Last week at Saratoga, Revalita was fourth in the Grade 3 Lake George on Friday and Hard To Justify won her debut.

Brian Wise paid full credit to the experts.

"The three guys involved would tell you a story that gives credit to the other two guys, but we're really, really lucky to be involved with Niall Brennan, Mike Ryan and

Chad Brown," he said. "They're an amazing team who found this horse together. Niall took her to the farm and finished the process. We feel really lucky to be involved with those three guys. Every time I talk to any of them, I learn something."

September in Saratoga

The first two weeks of the 2023 meet featured several juvenile winners with Keeneland September roots. **Sugar Hi**, a \$180,000 purchase by CJ Thoroughbreds, won an opening-day maiden special weight . . . A September RNA, **Becky's Joker** won the Grade 3 Schuylerville for owner Lee Pokoik . . . Harrell Ventures and Starlight Racing won a maiden special with \$350,000 purchase **Pirate** (featured in last week's Saratoga Sensations) July 15 . . . **Queen's Martini**, a \$19,000 buy by Grade One Investments, captured a maiden special July 19 for Reeves Thoroughbred Racing . . . **Noted**, a \$200,000 purchase by Repole Stable, won a turf maiden special July 22 . . . Drion sold **Valentine Candy** for \$250,000 and watched the Justify colt win his debut in a maiden special July 22 for buyer Jackpot Farm and several partners.

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"DEADLINE DINNER"



Saratoga Kids

I was in the middle of an interview with Clark Miakisz in the picnic area at the track when he called timeout. He wanted to go over to the television and watch the fifth race. I watched Clark from our interview spot at the table as he got increasingly excited. As they came down the stretch he was cheering and jumping up and down like a little kid.

I was willing to excuse him for this childish behavior because from my perspective, he is a kid. Clark is 8 years old.

He came running back to the table saying, "He won! Kendrick won!"

Indeed, he had. Kendrick Carmouche, aboard 3-year-old colt Mariachi, had just knocked down his 3,719th win at age 39 and made an 8-year-old boy's day.

"He's my favorite jockey," Clark told me when we continued the interview.

Apparently one evening the Miakisz family went out for dinner at the popular racetrackers' restaurant Solevo Kitchen on Phila Street. Carmouche was also there that night. During dinner, Clark lost a tooth. Carmouche was in the vicinity, saw the incident, came over and presented the boy with a dollar bill. Thus giving Kendrick the top spot on Clark's personal jockey standings. In second place is the tooth fairy.

Clark and his younger brother Cruz, 6, also at the picnic table, both said they loved watching the races, though Cruz seemed as interested in his pea-

nut butter and fluff sandwich as the odds board. The two are frequent visitors to the track. Their parents, Mike and Lindsay, now live in Ballston Spa but both went to Saratoga Springs High School. The boys come with Saratoga racing in their bloodlines.

I had wanted to write a piece about children at the track because I figure they are the racing fans of tomorrow. I thought it might make a good column. So, I spent a couple of days wandering around interviewing children at the track.

Some of you may remember a television host named Art Linkletter. He used to have a regular segment on his show called "Kids Say the Darndest Things."

I don't know where Linkletter was getting his information, but they don't.

At least they don't for me. And I was kind of hoping for an easy column of kid quotes. I think the problem is that all of the 20 or so children I talked to were nice. They were polite, maybe a little shy and (I'm sure they'll cringe at this) sweet. They were the kind of kids you'd want your own to be.

Linkletter seemed to specialize in obnoxious, smart-alecky foals sired by Don Rickles. I'm sure they all came with hovering stage mothers and a team of gag writers feeding them lines.

With my interviewees, the most common answer I got to the question "Do you like coming to the races here?" was an emphatic nod. A nod doesn't make a very good quote.

Or from Michael (10), Rachel (8), and Freddy (6) Seiler from South Bend, Indiana, three excitedly raised hands to the question, "Which one of you wanted to come here?" They were first-time racegoers, so they hadn't bet any money yet. They were waiting for their father who was coming from a business meeting near town and had promised to teach them how to wheel an exacta.

Every child I talked to seemed to love coming to the track. Even Payton Garver, who was engrossed in a book at her parents' table. But when I asked, she said she very much liked the races but she'd been unlucky so far so she was giving it a rest for a bit.

Not so her brother Ty (8), enthusiastically looking forward to the next race. Ty's father Greg was born in the Saratoga area and now lives in Land O' Lakes, Fla., ("It's small, so it's not on the map," Ty told me.) Going to the races as a boy had given Greg the bug so while this was Ty's first time at Saratoga, the family had been introduced to racing at Tampa Bay Downs, where Ty and Payton are veterans.

I've been to a total of 29 racetracks all over the world but find more children, and a more welcoming atmosphere for them, here than at any other track. Some of this is due to the meet being during summer vacation and some to the large and very



Susie Raisher

At Saratoga, the kids get to high-five the jockeys.

family-friendly picnic area but much of it comes down to the people who work here. And the jockeys, all of whom seem to make a point of accommodating autograph and selfie requests on the "jockey walk" from the winner's enclosure to the jockeys' room after each race.

A couple of days after the Clark and Cruz interview, I caught up with a mud-spattered Carmouche on that walk after a race. I wanted to let him know that if he was looking for a president of his fan club, I had a candidate in Clark. And I told him the lost tooth story.

"Yeah, I remember that. Last year," he said with a laugh. "It was fun."

Three times on my walk/talk with Carmouche he was stopped and asked to sign programs or pose for pictures. All the jockeys are patient and gracious with these requests, but Carmouche clearly genuinely enjoys these kids. He's the Pied Piper of Saratoga.

"You finished riding a race where you had mud kicked in your face for 7 furlongs, and yet you just took the time to put a huge smile on that kid's face. How do you do it?"

"I was that kid," he answered.

"My dad was a jockey and growing up I was around the track all the time. I know how you get into being a fan. Plus," he added, "I like kids."

The one thing I told myself when I thought about writing this column, was that the word "youngster" would not appear. Probably because I didn't want to be referred to as an "oldster." But I'm about to open myself up to that by telling you why I wanted to write this piece in the first place.

Seventy-four years ago I started becoming a racing fan when I went with my family to my very first race at Hipodromo de Las Americas in Mexico City.

I was that kid.



Susie Raisher

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The Return

John Velazquez turned left out of the jocks' room, away from the races Wednesday afternoon. The 51-year-old Hall of Famer walked slowly, gingerly, sore, already stiff after his third race fall. His wife, Leona, followed him. He thanked his comrades who wished him well. His day was over.

Jose Ortiz turned right out of the jocks' room, toward the races. Off since Friday's first race when Same Old Fears clipped heels and fell. With bruised ribs, Ortiz blessed himself, his right hand hitting once below and twice above Augustin Stable's green and white halves. His day, his return, had just begun.

Ortiz walked to the paddock for the fifth. He shook two hands and signed his name in the top left corner of a little girl's Hall of Fame magazine. He'll be in that magazine someday. If he stays healthy.

"How you feeling, Jose?" asked a fan in a Mets shirt, leaning over the rail of the paddock chute, not expecting an answer.

Ortiz nodded, as he Velcroed the number eight to his right shoulder.

"Good to see you back," said another fan, this one older, looking up from his Form and clapping.

Ortiz walked into the paddock, hugged a woman, low fived a couple of kids, checked his number again before meeting with trainer Jonathan Thomas about the tactics for Moon Watch, the favorite for the turf claimer.

"Exactly. Exactly," Thomas said after Ortiz summarized the plan in a few words.

Ortiz buckled his chin strap, walked with his older brother, Irad, toward the Big Red Spring before Thomas leaned over and boosted him into the saddle. Horse and the jockey walked toward the track.

Ortiz settled Moon Watch in fifth, failed to find cover, moved up briefly leaving the backside and faded to ninth. The claim box for the horse. A pipe opener for the jockey.

Thirty-four Saratoga races since he left in an ambulance, the 29-year-old jockey was back.

"It's just part of the job. You've got to be clear



By Sean Clancy

what you sign up for. I know why I'm here. I know the risks, man. I've been riding for more than 10 years now, I know what can happen," Ortiz said. "It's a very fun sport, the greatest sport for me, but there are a lot of risks involved. We are clear of that. You don't want that to happen, but, when it happens, you have to take it day by day. That's what I did. It wasn't long. Just happy to be back. Hopefully get a win later."

A race later, Ortiz notched his ninth win at the meet and first since Thursday. He kept favorite Ichiban on the inside, close in a field of seven, slid out, looked beaten before rallying to win in the final stride.

Announcer Frank Mirahmadi welcomed him back. Ortiz smiled as Susie Raisher snapped a photo. He smiled for the win photo and walked to the scale to weigh in. He stepped off the scale and walked to the water cooler. He scooped ice in a plastic cup, filled it with water and then was summoned back for a photo with the regional president of Berkshire Bank. The cup untouched. After the photos, Raisher handed him the cup. Ortiz thanked her and talked with four reporters for a few minutes. Ortiz stood, wavered and walked back toward the scale, peeling off the green and blue silks. He sat down on the wooden box over the old scale. By himself. His chest rising and falling, not heaving, but playing a hard game of catch up.

"Man, she made me work a lot," Ortiz said. "Probably caught me a little out of shape."

Asked if he was in the next race, Ortiz climbed to his feet.

"Yeah."

It was a slow walk back to the jocks' room, Ortiz took his off his helmet, trying to release the heat and told a kid he would sign his program after the next race. Ortiz melted into the safety of the jocks' room, emerging minutes later, crossing the scale at 122 pounds for the seventh. He was the last jockey to leave the room.

"I'm OK now," Ortiz said. "The first one I didn't have to really ride hard because the horse stopped. This one I had to ride. It's different."

Ortiz got a leg up on Arzak at the paddock gap, no time for instructions. The Maryland shipper pinched back at the start, rallied late but failed to threaten in the turf sprint. On the way back to the room, agent Steve Rushing checked with Ortiz, compared notes briefly.

A race later, Ortiz put favorite Amanda's Folly on the lead, doled out slow fractions, drifted out late but lasted by a neck. He slapped hands with a fan, sipped a cup of water and walked back to the room.

"I feel pretty good," Ortiz said. "Two out of four. Fifty percent, that's pretty good."

Ortiz sat out the ninth, a helpful break, and prepared for the 10th, a maiden claimer for New York-breds on the turf.

"One more," he said on the way to the paddock.

Indian Mischief broke sharply from post 10, Ortiz moved forward, clearing eight horses to join Vince The Prince into the first turn. A mile, an inquiry and a controversial non-disqualification later, Ortiz had his triple. He flashed three fingers in the winner's circle.

Ortiz walked back to the jocks' room with his arm around trainer Linda Rice, supplier of the three wins, and his wife, Taylor.

"Great day," Ortiz said. "Like I never left."

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