

Year 23 • No. 18

Saturday, August 26, 2023

The *Saratoga*

Special

Saratoga's Racing Newspaper since 2001

Show Time

Two-year-old champion Forte meets
classic winners in Travers



Entries & Handicapping
George Weaver Stable Tour
Previews for five
Saturday Grade 1 stakes

GUN RUNNER



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NO HORSE HAS RUN A FASTER BEYER IN 2023 THAN CHAMPION 2YO ECHO ZULU



CHAMPION ECHO ZULU ROMPS
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AT THE SPA, WINNING BY
7 1/4 IN A HAND RIDE

2nd dam

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as of press-time 9/28/23
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Rainy Season. Toofareastiswest (right) leads everybody home in Thursday's wet finale for trainer Mike Trombetta and jockey John Velazquez.

Dave Harmon

Here&There...in Saratoga

License Plates of the Day

(Stacie Benes edition)

88 BYER, Washington, D.C. ZENYATA, Washington, D.C.
NDN CHLY, Washington, D.C. RUFFIAN, Washington, D.C.

Racetrack Shirt of the Day

Uncle of Baby Shark

By The Numbers

1: Hall of Fame trainer to visit The Special's office Wednesday.

1: NYRA CEO walking around the paddock Wednesday afternoon inviting children to come in the paddock. We hear it's a daily occurrence and can't applaud it enough.

1,000: Career wins for trainer Brian Koriner after Thursday.

18,127,050: Handle in Canadian dollars for Sunday's 13-race King's Plate Day card, surpassing the previous record of \$18,005,974 and up significantly from last year's Queen's Plate Day handle of \$13.6 million.

65: Text messages received by The Special's Sean Clancy from the moment Awakened won the Grade 1 Jonathan Sheppard until the second race was official Wednesday.

1: Woman being carried out of the paddock (to keep her shoes dry) in the rain Thursday afternoon. Chivalry isn't dead.

146: Horses in the Fasig-Tipton August Digital Sale. Bidding is open. Closes at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

Worth Repeating

Fan 1 (early morning): "How's it goin'?"

Fan 2: "Good. I haven't lost any money yet."

Names of the Day

The Reds, fifth race. This one's for you, Tom, and Dave Grening.

Shop Liftin, sixth race. The 2-year-old filly is by Into Mischief out of Miss Shop.

Conversing, 13th race. The 3-year-old colt is out of Texting.

Archivist, first race, Sunday. The 2-year-old filly is by Preservationist.

Love Thyself, first race, Sunday. The 2-year-old filly is by Solomini out of Miss Narcissist.

Factually Correct, eighth race, Sunday. What we strive to be every day. Strive.



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

Worth Repeating

“I was going to put my notebook in the fridge and put my sandwich on my desk.”
The Special's Joe Clancy

“How come I haven't been in Worth Repeating yet?”
Declan Molloy, frequent delivery assistant and racing fan, after his younger brother Seamus made it in the Aug. 8 edition

“I don't know about rolling, but we'll keep it.”
Trainer Rudy Rodriguez, when told to “keep it rolling” last weekend

“Is that the Oxy Clean guy?”
The Special's Samantha Loud when other members of the team were discussing baseball legend Willie Mays

“And we're the counselors.”
The Special's Tom Law, after Saratoga was compared to summer camp

“Where'd you go last night? I can spot it a mile away.”
Trainer Bill Mott to a late-night reveler on the morning after

“I didn't need a project.”
Trainer George Weaver with laid-back Labrador puppy Kingsley

“I miss taking photos.”
Connie Bush to Sean Clancy after he said The Special missed her photos

“I was all over the jump race.”
Owner Lee Einsidler Thursday morning

“I used the three horses I liked and you.”
Dick Knapp to trainer Bill Mott about Wednesday's finale won by the 17-1 Mott-trained Cherokee Cottage

“We called it, ‘On Parade.’ ”
Todd Wyatt about hacking around the backside with his old boss Tom Voss after winning a race the day before

“Bring your kid to work day.”
The Special's Tom Law as Joe and Nolan Clancy arrived at the office Thursday

“If Lillian's was open, we would close it.”
Retired trainer Phil Gleaves to The Special's Sean Clancy after winning the Grade 1 Jonathan Sheppard Wednesday

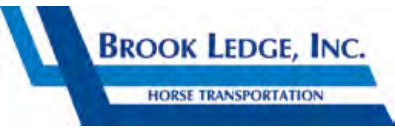
“This is a gift to us.”
Trainer Mertkan Kantarmaci after Evvie Jets won the Ballston Spa Thursday



Seeking Shelter. Photographer Adam Coglianese stays dry – sorta – during Thursday's card. Don't worry, he moved by the time the horses got there. Tod Marks

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“It's pretty cool. Three Triple Crown race winners, and the champion 2-year-old coming together for the Travers.”
Todd Pletcher, who trains the 2-year-old champion, acting like a racing fan for a minute



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THEY'RE COMING IN WAVES...



Amidst Waves after Saratoga's Bolton Landing Stakes



Ship Cadet takes the Skidmore at Saratoga

Midshipman – he's been a top five juvenile sire in 2023 and is **the only stallion with multiple two-year-old Stakes winners** at Saratoga. Just imagine.

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With George Weaver

George Weaver knows the difference a year makes.

"Everything is in perspective," the trainer said. "Everything has evolved."

And everything is better.

A year after Weaver's wife, Cindy, suffered a severe brain injury, the Weaver barn is back in full force. They've won nine races from 35 starts for \$702,600 at Saratoga this summer. Crimson Advocate won the Group 2 Queen Mary at Royal Ascot, one of nine stakes wins for the stable this year. Cindy traveled to England to watch Crimson Advocate and is now at home, watching their horses run and offering insights to George, including how My Sweet Affair had warmed up a few weeks ago (she was right). And a Labrador Retriever puppy named Kingsley bounds around the barn.

Yeah, life is different.

Weaver walked his Horse Haven shedrows with The Special's Sean Clancy Friday morning.

Pass The Champagne: The daughter of Flatter won the Grade 2 Ruffian in May. "Need I say more? She's good, we were going to run her in the Ballerina, but she got sick. That happens in this game sometimes. Bad timing. We're still trying to make the Breeders' Cup Distaff with her. Maybe prep her in that race at Gulfstream or Keeneland. She's always been super talented, and we were very happy she won the Ruffian this year, it was a well-deserved graded stake win. A pleasure to be around and a real pleasure to watch breeze, whew, 'That's what a good one looks like.'"

Sturdy: A \$200,000 yearling purchase, the bay colt has posted 10 breezes at Saratoga this summer. "Unstarted Mitole colt. And he is sturdy. Still figuring it out."

Crimson Advocate: The daughter of Nyquist won a head bob at Royal Ascot June 21. "The champ. She's high on our list of favorites right now. Going over there and getting the job done. When one does something like that for you, you look at them like, 'You just did that for me?' I sent her over to Patty Hogan (New Jersey veterinarian and rehab specialist) for a little bit, she's an April baby, April 30 actually. Traveling-wise, it kind of knocked her down a little, backed her out of the tub, she didn't have that good feeling to her. She came back great. She's really doing good. We're trying to make the Breeders' Cup with her. I expect that we will, but I always say trying because I'm a horse trainer. Might just go straight in, I don't want her to run huge off the bench and then regress. There are limited spots for 2-year-old fillies running on the grass. We're looking forward to seeing what she can do this fall."

Sacred Wish: A \$50,000 purchase at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-old sale, the daughter of Not This Time nearly pulled off a shocker, finishing second in the CCA Oaks before fading to sev-

Tod Marks
Let's Go Big Blue gave the Weaver
barn one of its nine wins at the meet.



enth in the Alabama. "Another nice filly. Head scratcher last time in the Alabama. Same thing at Pimlico. I don't know if it's nerves. What's that wrestling term? She just tapped out at the half-mile pole. Maybe she just came back too quick after running too big. Horses are fickle. She's got a little bit of nerves from time to time. We'll probably try her on the grass because she worked really well on the grass. She's a sweetheart to be around."

Amidst Waves: Two-year-old daughter of Midshipman ran her win streak to three with a score in the Bolton Landing. "Another one of our potential Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprints. She's 3-for-4 now and won nicely the other day. She was working with Crimson Advocate down there at Palm Beach Downs. Crimson was better than her on the dirt, but she kind of moved up. She was a little nervous early and she's learned to be a racehorse since then. It'll be interesting to see how the rest of their '23 goes."

Miss Domina: A \$170,000 purchase from the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-old sale, the 5-year-old daughter of Dominus has banked three wins in 14 starts. "We've had her for ages. She likes running at Saratoga. She ran well here last year and won a race here this year."

Boston Strong Mama: Bred, owned and trained by Weaver, the 2-year-old daughter of Mshawish just missed by a head in her debut at Belmont Park July 8. "This is my horse right here. She's a full-sister to the one who went down with Cindy. She's named after Cindy since she spent a good portion of last year in Boston trying to come back. She's in Sunday. She's OK. I ran her against the boys

for maiden 40 first time out, she finished second. It's been really hard getting spots for these horses. I'm running her a mile, I'm not sure that's what she wants to do but we'll find out Sunday."

Riviere: The 3-year-old daughter of Bolt D'Oro finished fourth at Belmont and sixth here. "Scratched (Friday). Another horse who has suffered from off the turf. We ran her once off the turf and it was horrible. Looking to get in a grass race."

Elite Prospect: Purchased as a yearling, the bay colt has posted three breezes over the Oklahoma this summer. "Nice Nyquist colt. Has not started. He's more a fall horse. Probably run in October. He's closely related to Elite Power. If he can be half as much horse as that one, we'll be all right. Trying to take those little steps, one of these days I'll get the urge to see what we've got. But not yet. Building a foundation."

Arteta: A \$170,000 purchase at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-old sale, the son of Take Charge Indy finished fifth here July 15. "Quick, quick horse who ran earlier in the meet. He got caught chasing and paid the price. Hopefully he'll rebound this meet."

Feltrinelli: A \$250,000 purchase at Fasig-Tipton Select Sale at Saratoga, the 2-year-old colt made his debut after the Stable Tour. "Running (Friday). Uncle Mo colt. Off the turf. We like him. This horse could be all right. I've always had the impression he was a little better on the grass, but we'll see today." He finished third.

Continued On Page 8

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Stable Tour —

■ Continued from page 6

Legends Can't Die: The gray/roan colt stood proud and tall in the back of his stall. "The white ghost. He won at Belmont the day Cindy got hurt. I'm in the hospital watching on my phone, first time out, it was a little bit of a ray of a nice moment on a horrible day."

No Nay Mets: The Irish-bred colt owns two stakes wins from three starts. "Another part of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint. We got scratched off the turf the other day, he might have been able to win that race, but I just wanted to keep my eyes on the ball for the Breeders' Cup. Even if he would have won it or handled it, if I come in the next day and he's busted up, I'd have been like, 'For what?' Colonial on Sept. 9 is the next thing on the horizon. They have a race at Keeneland if that didn't pan out."

Aggelos The Great: The New York-bred 2-year-old finished third in his debut here July 28. "Coach [Rick] Pitino's horse. Ran third early in the meet. Big, City Of Light colt. He's fast for a big horse."

Main Event: The Grade 3 winner has finished fifth twice here this summer. "Ran a couple of times in the three other than, set the pace and he's just not able to hold in the stretch as well as we were hoping. He won the Kent the day before my wife got hurt. Nice horse. Real classy, beautiful-moving Bernardini colt. I told those guys yesterday, 'OK, we were using speed and running that way last year but it's not working as well this year.' I think we'll take the blinkers off him."

Today's Flavor: Purchased for \$80,000 at the Fasig-Tipton New York-bred sale, the son of Lao-ban won four in a row this winter. "A real talented New York-bred, had a great winter. Caught a real salty allowance race here. Under pressure, on the lead, once again. The lead is great when it's the right way. When you're under pressure, it takes a really good horse to overcome that."

Good Lord Lorrie: The son of Hard Spun is 1-for-1 after a debut win here Aug. 12. "This is a 2-year-old we really like. Won first time out. He kind of teetered back and forth with his works and I thought he was going to be quicker with his gate work, so it took us longer to get to the races. Probably Kentucky Downs for him. He can run."

Cumberland: Son of Classic Empire has notched a second and third in four starts. "This horse has suffered from the turf season being screwed up. He never gets to run. I put him in for (today) just because he needs to run. He's a big heavy horse and he's not the most willing work horse. He benefits from running once a month."

Let's Go Big Blue: The New York-bred sold at Fasig-Tipton New York-bred sale for \$120,000 and came back to sell for \$200,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic 2-year-old sale in 2022.

Owned by Bill Parcels' August Dawn Farm, he was disqualified from a win in the Rick Violette Stakes last week. The gray gelding lounged in the round pen Friday morning. The two-time winner is in the fifth race Wednesday. "Coach's horse. He's been running well here. Initially when he got DQ'd, I thought it didn't look fair, I didn't see contact. I know there's a drift, but I don't really feel like Irad (Ortiz) lost momentum and in my heart, if I had to bet my life on it, his horse wasn't getting by, even if my horse stays straight. But the stewards aren't listening to my heart. If I was on the other end, obviously I'd be happy about it, take what you can get in this game, but I don't like taking horses down who are legitimately the best horses in the race. At the end of the day, we got the thrill of winning, we just didn't get paid. I'm kind of stuck now, that was his Derby. Straight 3-year-olds, New York-breds. He ran really big."

Brocknardinini: A two-time Fasig-Tipton graduate, the daughter of Palace Malice won her debut here Aug. 2 for Thomas and Daryn Brockley. "Entered in the P. G. Johnson for Wednesday. Kind of a surprise. She really wasn't ready to run when we ran her. I tried to claim one the day before and he wasn't eligible to claim, so I thought run her and get him eligible to claim. She won, there you go. It reinforced my thought that fitness is overrated. If you're in the right spot with the right horse, don't worry about how fit you are, you'll win."

Let It Ride: The \$260,000 graduate from the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga select sale hasn't run since a win at Aqueduct in April. "Can you believe they got that name? This is a nice horse. Just got beat by Scotland. Came back and broke his maiden at Aqueduct. I do like him. He just came back in. He's got a turn of foot. That's what I like."

Modica: The \$250,000 purchase at Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July made his debut here. "Hard Spun horse who was fourth first time. We'll try to get him back in at the meet on the grass."

Please Advise: The bay colt won his debut at Belmont in June before missing in two stakes. "He ran fourth at Monmouth. I sent him over to Woodbine and he got a bad trip. Bought him for 20 grand because he was out of Randy Hill's old mare, Amansara, that family is good. I looked online, saw a picture as a short yearling. He's pigeon-toed but, hell, he's paid his way."

Noble Wave: The son of Noble Mission has finished fifth in all three tries. "Owned by the sweetest guy, Dr. Robinson. Watch the replay of his race at Monmouth."

Team Captain: The \$450,000 yearling breezed 3 furlongs here Aug. 21. "A relatively expensive Candy Ride colt who just came in. I like him. I don't know how far my string goes here, I might start giving you a Bruce Brown tour."

Theforcebewithyou: "This is a half-sister to Dorth Vader. She wasn't sweating in Florida, so they sent her up north." Weaver looks at a Rocket Ship Racing webbing. "OK, I know that's not me."

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In Tune

Champion Forte, classic winners line up for 10-furlong Gr. 1 stakes

BY JOE CLANCY AND TOM LAW

Forte didn't say it, but you could almost hear it. Right along there with Johnny Cash's "Ragged Old Flag" coming through the speakers on Military Appreciation Day at Saratoga Race Course, the Travers Stakes favorite made his case while paddock schooling Thursday morning.

"I get up early in the morning . . . I go to sleep every night . . . I don't fret the Derby and can't wait to make it right . . . I did not make it to Baltimore . . . 'Cause I'm the champ and there's still time on this tour."

Two-year-old champion of 2022, St. Elias Stable's and Repole Stable's Forte clashes with Kentucky Derby winner Mage, Preakness Stakes winner National Treasure and Belmont

TRAVERS STAKES PREVIEW

Stakes winner Arcangelo – plus Grade 1 winner Tapit Trice, Grade 3 winner Disarm and fresh contender Scotland – in Saratoga's signature race Saturday. Worth \$1.5 million, the 1 1/4-mile summer classic is the 12th of 13 races on a card with four other Grade 1 stakes. Post time for the Travers, first run in 1864, is 6:11 p.m.

None of his opponents were there Thursday morning, but Forte won paddock schooling.

Outfitted in black blinkers, four white polo wraps and white bell boots on his front feet, the bay Violence colt leaned into a D-bit, lip chain, white

Continued On Page 12



Tod Marks

Two-year-old champion Forte meets all three classic winners in today's Travers Stakes, the highlight of a 13-race card with five Grade 1 stakes.



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SPENDTHRIFT

Travers —

■ Continued from page 10

noseband and leather halter. In stall seven, eyes toward the Sea Hero statue, Forte waited as trainer Todd Pletcher placed a saddle towel and pad just so and buckled an elastic girth. Pletcher patted his horse on the belly, the shoulder, then the chest. Forte just kept staring.

As the soundtrack gave way to Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA," Forte walked a small circle with a few other horses in front of the stalls, then took a lap of the entire paddock. Each step produced a little more bow in his neck, a little more jigging, a little more energy. Pletcher watched and smiled.

"He's doing great," said the Hall of Famer. "The thing that's really impressed me is just physically how he's developed. As an early 2-year-old I was wondering if he was going to be one who would stay a little narrow, stay thin, and he's just truly, physically developed into a specimen. You sometimes have champion 2-year-olds who kind of stay the same size and shape that they were as 2-year-olds where he's made that transition."

The 7-5 favorite on the morning line, Forte won four of five starts last year to claim the Eclipse



Tod Marks

Arcangelo walks on the ring at trainer Jena Antonucci's barn Friday morning.

Award as champion juvenile male and came into 2023 as a subject of most Kentucky Derby conversations. Wins in the Fountain of Youth and Florida Derby at Gulfstream Park kept the talk flowing right up until the morning of the Kentucky Derby when regulatory veterinarians scratched Forte because of a bruised foot. The decision upended Forte's schedule and sent him to the June 10 Belmont Stakes. In his first start since April 1, going 1 1/2 miles, he finished second to Arcangelo.

In the Grade 2 Jim Dandy at Saratoga July 29, Forte caught Saudi Crown in the final yards to prevail by a nose and become the Travers favorite even in the presence of the three classic winners. Forte breaks from the rail for Irad Ortiz Jr., aboard for all nine prior starts. Pletcher called the Jim Dandy another step forward. Two half-mile breezes on the main track Aug. 10 (:48.33) and 19 (:50.50) tightened whatever bolts were even slightly loose.

"I think he's actually put on a few pounds since the Jim Dandy," he said. "All the heavy lifting was done getting to the Belmont and then it was freshening him up for the Jim Dandy. Now, it's just been kind of maintenance stuff leading into this. Twenty-eight days between races, a couple of half-miles and he should be ready. We've done the hard part. It's just wanting to keep him happy and healthy."

Forte and his Pletcher-trained stablemate Tapit Trice paddock schooled Wednesday morning, with Forte returning Thursday for a second session.

"We did it just yesterday with Tapit Trice because he was pretty quiet," Pletcher said. "[Forte] will get on his toes a little bit, get on the muscle and sometimes push you around when you're sad-

Continued On Page 14

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Travers —

■ Continued from page 12

dling him so it's just to help with that. To me, two things that really work in racing are paddock schooling and standing at the gate. It's therapy that you can see concrete results from, so we do it. It's two more things to take care of."

Pletcher hopes Forte and Ortiz take care of the rest in a field with two front-running types in National Treasure and Scotland. Forte, Arcangelo and Disarm are primarily stalkers. Mage came from deep in the field when second (to Forte) in the Florida Derby and even farther behind in the Kentucky Derby. He was closer to the pace when third in the Preakness and second in the Haskell. Tapit Trice's wins in the Tampa Bay Derby and Blue Grass came from off the pace.

"On paper it looks like there are two speeds," said Pletcher, who seeks his third Travers win. "To me, what's trickier is who wants to be third, fourth and fifth. We want to break, secure position going into the first turn and go from there."



Tod Marks

Kentucky Derby winner Mage gets his look right for the Travers.

On a three-race winning streak, Arcangelo (5-2) and Javier Castellano break from post two for trainer Jena Antonucci and Blue Rose Farm. Castellano has been the regular rider of the Belmont winner and Derby win-

ner Mage, and was still pondering his Travers choice when the Mage camp enlisted Luis Saez.

"I tried to wait a little longer," Castellano said two weeks ago. "I wanted a couple more days and they

said they couldn't wait. But they were patient with me. Luis Saez rode the horse before and they wanted a commitment. He couldn't ride him in the Derby because of his commitment to Tapit Trice and that's why I picked up the horse. We won the Derby, we celebrated, it was great. Arcangelo is a good horse. They're both competitive horses, really good horses. Arcangelo is getting better all the time and I'm excited to ride him."

Owned by Whisper Hill Farm and Gainesway Stable, Tapit Trice (12-1) takes post three for Jose Ortiz while adding blinkers.

"He showed in the Blue Grass that he's certainly capable," said Pletcher. "Maybe the blinkers will dial him in a little bit, and he can just get into a steady rhythm. I know the mile-and-a-quarter suits him. He's just got to get it done."

Mage (4-1) steps into post four for trainer Gustavo Delgado and OGMA Investments, Ramiro Restrepo, Sterling Racing and Commonwealth. Flavien Prat picked up the mount when Saez suffered a dislocated collarbone and broken wrist in a fall Wednesday.

Continued On Page 16



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Travers —

■ Continued from page 14

California-based National Treasure (8-1) won the Preakness Stakes on the front end and was sixth in the Belmont. Trainer Bob Baffert takes the blinkers off the Quality Road colt, who breaks from post five for John Velazquez and the ownership amalgamation of SF Racing, Starlight Racing, Madaket Stable, Robert Masterson, Stonestreet Stable, Jay Schoenfarber, Waves Edge Capital and Catherine Donovan.

Disarm (8-1, Joel Rosario) takes post six off a fourth in the Jim Dandy for owner/breeder Winchell Thoroughbreds and trainer Steve Asmussen.

LNJ Foxwoods homebred Scotland (12-1) ran away with the Curlin Stakes here July 21 for trainer Bill Mott, who taps Junior Alvarado from post seven.

The 2023 Travers marks just the third time three winners of that year's Triple Crown races are in the field, along with 1918, 1982 and 2017.

History suggests anyone not named Mage, National Treasure or Arcangelo might win, since none of the classic winners from those three memorable renewals came through in Saratoga.

Trivia nuts on the grounds – in the backyard after waiting all night to make a mad dash for the picnic tables or high up in the air-conditioned comfort of The 1863 Club – will be impressed to know that Sun Briar, Runaway Groom and West Coast



Tod Marks
Tapit Trice adds blinkers and tries to win his second Grade 1 stakes.



Tod Marks
Scotland ran away with the Curlin Stakes at Saratoga July 21.

vanquished their classic-winning foes in the Travers. And perhaps more impressed to realize that Exterminator, War Cloud and Johren in 1918; Gato del Sol, Aloma's Ruler and Conquistador Cielo in 1982; and Always Dreaming, Cloud Computing and Tapwrit in 2017 couldn't deliver in Saratoga's 10-furlong test.

None of that history really matters to this year's runners, who all take a unique path to the Travers.

Antonucci will attempt a similar feat pulled off by Nick Zito when he sent out Birdstone to win in 2004 without a prep race between wins in the Belmont Stakes and Travers.

Arcangelo shipped to Saratoga shortly after his 1 1/2-length win over Forte and Tapit Trice in the Belmont, which came four weeks after he won the Grade 3 Peter Pan. The son of Arrogate will have 11 weeks between starts this time, all by design.

"We left wiggle room throughout it," Antonucci said of the stretch that included five breezes between nine and 12 days apart. "We watched the weather and if he needed time here or there, what not. We left wiggle coming through it. We used up a lot of wiggle having to wait for some weather. Those are the nights that are harder where you're like, 'Come on weather gods, work with me here a little bit.' Especially this year. Those would be more nerve-wracking moments."

Arcangelo turned in his last Travers work Aug. 16, going 5 furlongs in 1:01.63 under Castellano. He trained from there with a usual diet of gallops on the main track after the first break, passing through the picnic

Continued On Page 18

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Sept 16	WO	Ricoh Woodbine Mile	Mile	CAN
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Travers —

■ Continued from page 16

area and to the paddock most mornings with Antonucci alongside on the stable pony.

Arcangelo went for a roll or two in a round pen outside Antonucci's barn on the Oklahoma side every morning after training, all under the watchful eye of the stable's canine mascots Lucy and Nando.

"Now it's him resting well, eating well and having his quiet time," Antonucci said after Arcangelo wrapped up his last bit of training Friday. "The next 24 hours is his time more than anything else."

Antonucci gained headlines when she became the first female trainer to win an American classic. Now she bids for a similar result in the Travers.

"It's pretty cool," she said. "It's an absolute honor to be a part of the mentions. Not the 'and also there's this one running, with this said trainer' type of thing. That's a shift obviously. He's done that work to get us here and I'm just trying to stay out of his way."

The connections of Mage take a similar relaxed approach into the Travers.

Trainer Gustavo Delgado and son and assistant Gustavo Delgado Jr. shipped the son of Good Magic from Monmouth Park to Saratoga shortly after he finished second in the Grade 1 Haskell Stakes July 22. He prepped for the Haskell with the rest of



Tod Marks
Disarm (and Scott Blasi) head to the Travers off a fourth in the Jim Dandy. The Grade 3 winner adds blinkers.

Team Delgado's string at The Thoroughbred Center in Lexington.

Mage won the Kentucky Derby over 17 rivals in his fourth start, before a third behind National Treasure and Blazing Sevens two weeks later in the Preakness. His connections skipped the Belmont,

regrouped and aimed at a summer campaign with the Travers the main target.

Delgado, who saddled Paola Queen to a 55-1 upset of the 2016 Test Stakes, has spent every summer in Saratoga since he moved his training operation from his native Venezuela to the United States in 2014.

"He likes it here, better than in Kentucky," Delgado Jr. said last Saturday, after his father kidded with him shortly after Mage turned in a 6-furlong work in 1:15.66 on the main track. "He knows more people here. He has this going on and that's going to dinner with friends, a couple barbecues, cooking."

Mage's team hopes to cook up an upset in the Travers, although it won't quite be to the tune of Paola Queen or even his 15-1 price in the Derby. The Delgados are optimistic the almost five-week stint in Saratoga will benefit Mage.

"He's acclimatized to the track here," Delgado Jr. said. "It's better. That's one thing we realized, the last two races we were only getting there Wednesday or Thursday to run on Saturday. It always takes a little bit. Now we've been here awhile. You can see not much difference, but there is a little help there."

"I'm pretty certain he's going to show up, because he's feeling good. Whether the other horses are doing better or not, we'll see. It's going to be an exciting race. I'm looking forward to it to be honest. It's what horse racing is all about."

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Tod Marks

Katie Davis, here aboard Thursday winner Alterina, gets a Grade 1 chance in the Forego.

First Time

Jockey Davis gets first Grade 1 opportunity aboard High Oak

BY SEAN CLANCY

FOREGO STAKES PREVIEW

"If this horse runs, he's yours. You'll go places with him."

That's how Lee Einsidler described the opportunity to Katie Davis when she picked up the ride on High Oak. She's ridden the Bill Mott trainee twice, an eighth in the Elusive Quality on the turf at Belmont Park in May and a second in an allowance race on the dirt here July 29.

The 4-year-old colt lines up as a 30-1 shot in today's Grade 1 Forego, the seventh race on the Travers card. For Davis, that's going places. The 31-year-old mother of one and winner of 277 races makes her Grade 1 debut. And don't worry, she told Einsidler. Well, sort of.

"I think we're going to a Grade 1," Einsidler said to Davis last week. "Have you ever ridden in a Grade 1?"

"Yeah, I think so," Davis said.

"We're in it. We're going for it," Einsidler said. "You're going to ride your second Grade 1."

Davis went home, thought about it some more and couldn't sleep all night.

"I was like, 'I've never ridden a Grade 1. I feel bad, I just lied to him,'" Davis said.

Davis tracked down Einsidler the next morning.

"Lee, I lied to you. I'm so sorry," Davis said. "I rode a Grade 2 at Belmont and finished second. I didn't ride a Grade 1. You're the first."

"I knew it," Einsidler said.

They laughed.

Davis told the story outside the jocks' room Friday afternoon.

Continued On Page 22



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Forego —

■ Continued from page 20

"I ride every race like it's just another race," Davis said. "It's exciting."

And, of course, daunting.

High Oak won his first two starts including the Grade 2 Saratoga Special in 2021 before losing his next seven. The bay colt is the longest shot in the five-horse field, a chasm away from 1-2 favorite, High Oak's stablemate Elite Power and 6-5 second choice Gunite.

Owned by Juddmonte, Elite Power rides an eight-race win streak into the \$500,000 stakes. The son of Curlin won five races, including the Grade 2 Vosburgh and Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Sprint, on his way to being crowned champion sprinter last season. This year, he won the Grade 3 Riyadh Dirt Sprint in Saudi Arabia, the Grade 2 True North and Grade 1 Vanderbilt. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides from post three.

Gunite owns eight wins in his 18-race career and just missed by a head to Elite Power in the Vanderbilt at Saratoga July 29. Trained by Steve Asmussen for Winchell Thoroughbreds, the son of Gun Runner has two wins and three thirds in five starts at Saratoga. Tyler Gaffalione rides from post two.

Pipeline, 12-1, breaks from post four for Chad Brown. The 5-year-old son of Speightstown seeks his first stakes score in his 12th start and adds pace depth to the 7-furlong stakes. Flavien Prat replaces the injured Luis Saez.

Synthesis completes the field at 20-1. Owned and trained by David Jacobson, the 7-year-old has lost three straight stakes tries, including two behind Elite Power. Manny Franco rides from post five.

"It's a cool story," Davis said.

Davis has been a cool story this summer at Saratoga.

She's won six races from 53 rides to crack the top 15 in the deepest jockey colony in the country.

Married to jockey Trevor McCarthy, Davis took off from May, 2021 to Sept., 2022, to give birth and care for their daughter, Riley. Davis came back

to ride here last summer, finishing sixth on Diva Banker for Ray Handal.

"I wasn't sure I was going to ride again," Davis said. "I just said we'd take it one day at a time. Maybe I don't want to do it, I didn't know that answer until I rode my first race back. When I did, it was game over. I knew it wasn't my time yet. It's been a struggle, but I've got a lot of family help. Riding has not been a struggle."

Davis won two races last year and 15 races before Saratoga this season. She came here with realistic expectations and has rocked them.

"Going into this meet, I was helping Ray galloping and I said, 'Come Saratoga, I know it's going to be tough, and I'll just come in and breeze a couple and go home with Riley.' She's going to be 2 in December. And I told my agent Joey (Migliore), 'Listen, if I could win one, just to check it off my list...just find me one winner, that's it.' He said, 'Katie, one?' " Davis said. "I know how tough it is and there goes one, there goes two, there goes three

Continued On Page 24

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2023 September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 14 – OCTOBER 1

IROQUOIS (GIII)

"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 16
Closes August 30
\$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
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Three-Year-Olds
1 Mile (Turf)



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Tod Marks

First and second in the Vanderbilt, Elite Power (left) and Gunita line it up again in the Forego.

Forego —

■ Continued from page 22

and it's been six. Really cool. I didn't expect it. Those are the best kind."

Davis, the fifth of six children of former jockey Robbie Davis and his wife Marguerite, fell for horses first but waited to become a jockey until 2013. Older sister Jackie started in 2008 and has won 863 races. Little brother Dylan started in 2012 and has banked 1,218 winners.

"I wanted to ride before Jackie and Dylan. When we moved up here in 2003, my neighbor had horses and we hit it off, we just started riding. Jackie played a couple of sports and Dylan liked his dirt bikes," Davis said. "This is what I love to do. I'm going to give every horse the best opportunity possible. If they don't want to ride me back, that's OK. A lot of people doubted me. I keep knocking on the door. My whole career has been about doubters, but I've made them believers."

As for riding her first High Oak exits a second here July 29.

Grade 1, Davis shrugged.

"This is going to be fun. I'm not actually nervous about it, I know my horse," Davis said. "These horses are monsters, but hey, if they want to take each other on up front, be my guest, I'll come late."

Hey Katie Davis, what do you like the most?

"I enjoy the fans, being able to connect with them and drag them along with my journey. It's not an easy one but they love it and I love it, too."



Tod Marks

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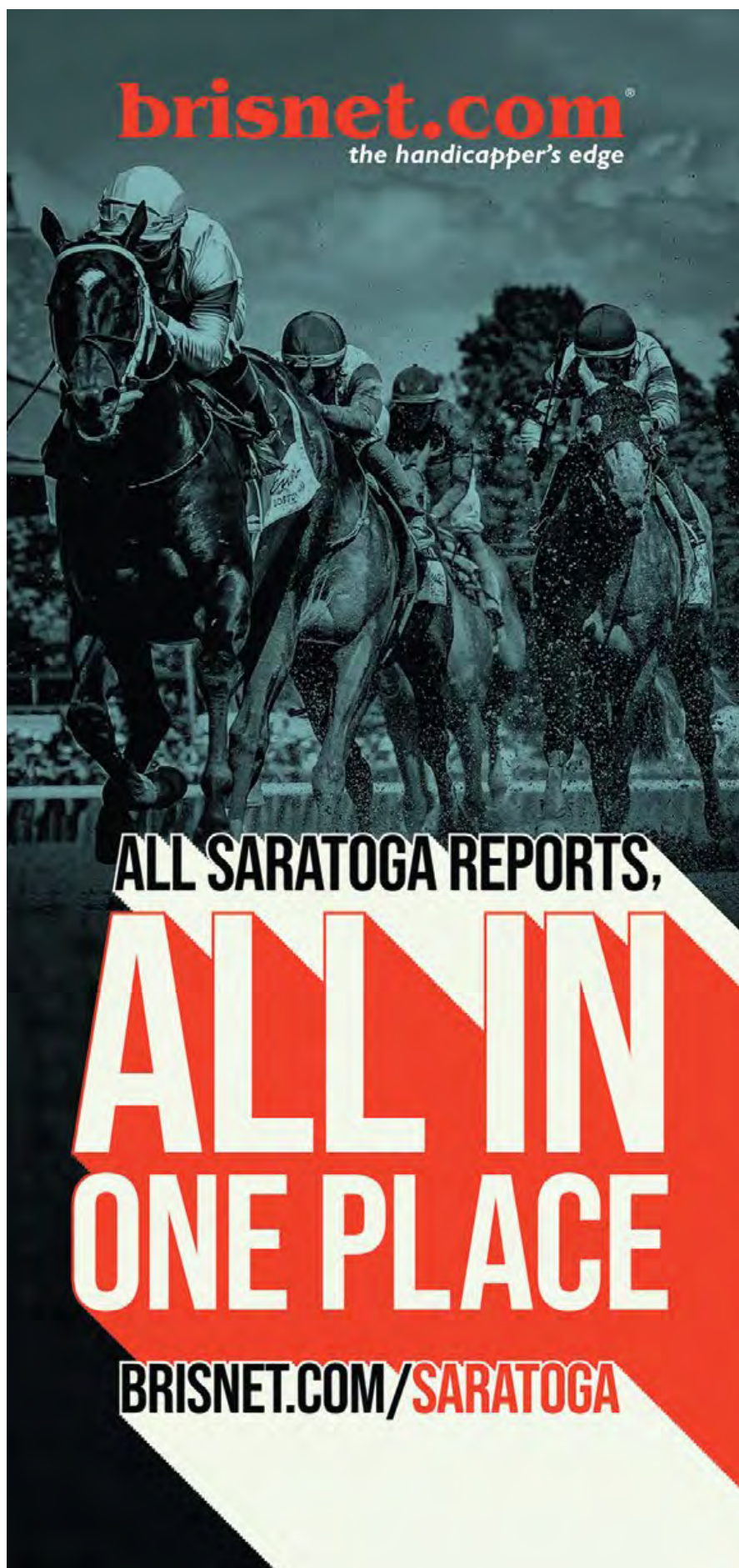
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Joe Clancy

One In Vermillion brought his Santa Anita Derby webbing with him from Canterbury Park.

Road Warrior

Minnesota-based, Cal.-bred
One In Vermillion travels to Spa

BY JOE CLANCY

A little before 8 Friday morning, Kentucky Derby winner and Travers hopeful Mage led a crowd of horses walking from the main-track side toward the chief intersection of the Oklahoma Training Track stable area.

"There he is," Gina Kalman said with a point toward a chestnut colt splashing through the puddles. Kalman and her husband Jonathan let the Derby winner walk right by to greet One In Vermillion, a 10-1 shot in today's Grade 1 H. Allen Jerkens Stakes on the Travers undercard, and trainer Esteban Martinez. The California-bred meets five others in the \$500,000 Jerkens, the ninth race with a post time of 4:19 p.m.

Based at Canterbury Park in Minnesota, One In Vermillion squares off with Grade 1 winner Arabian Lion, Grade 2 winner New York Thunder, Grade 3 winner Fort Bragg, Kentucky

ALLEN JERKENS STAKES PREVIEW

Derby starter Verifying and multiple New York stakes winner Drew's Gold in the 7-furlong race. Leading jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. takes the mount after an injury to Luis Saez, from post two.

"I know there are some tough horses in there, but he is a fighter, he will try, he tries every time he runs," said Martinez, aboard for One In Vermillion's two galloping sessions over the Saratoga main track this week. "We've got to try. I know it's a tough bunch of speed horses. He's a speed horse, but he can be on the lead or fight from the back too. He's been running on the lead because there was no speed in his last two races."

Martinez trains 20 horses at Canterbury and has for several years rotated between that track and Arizo-

Continued On Page 28

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Jerkins —

■ Continued from page 26

na's Turf Paradise while operating a breaking and training business in Phoenix. He came to the United States from Mexico at 16, worked for trainer Kevin Eikleberry and built a business. Martinez has prepped horses for trainer Eric Kruljac for nearly 30 years and saddled his first runners in 2017. The stable has won a career-high 28 races this year, three from One In Vermillion, a \$26,000 purchase by Kalman at the Arizona Thoroughbred Breeders yearling sale in 2021.

"He's the natural guy that everybody goes to to break their horses in Arizona and he's such a great guy and I just said, 'Why don't you just keep him and train him?'" said Kalman of Martinez. "He literally is the first person to put a saddle on that horse, and now he's his trainer. He's broken a thousand horses. He's only been a trainer on his own for the last six or seven years, but everybody sent him horses and he is amazingly talented."

Bred in California, One In Vermillion finished second in his debut



Joe Clancy
Trainer Esteban Martinez cools out One In Vermillion at Saratoga Friday.

last April at Turf Paradise and won his next three – stakes scores in the Turf Paradise Open Spring Futurity, the Lost In The Fog Juvenile and this year's Riley Allison Derby at Sunland Park in January. He was supposed to run in the San Felipe at Santa Anita in March, but an EHV-1 case at Turf Paradise shut down the stable area. Instead, One In Vermillion finished fifth in the Grade 3 Sunland Park Derby March 26 after breaking a tooth while acting up in the gate. Martinez pulled the tooth and got his horse to California for the Grade 1 Santa Ani-

ta Derby in April. At 54-1, he finished fifth after setting the pace. Eventual Preakness Stakes winner National Treasure was fourth. Cut back to 7 furlongs for the Laz Barrera at Santa Anita in May, the son of Army Mule won by 5 1/4 lengths.

At Canterbury in June, he won a 6-furlong allowance and was second in the Canterbury Park Derby on turf. Then came more road trips. In the Iowa Derby, he dead-heated for the win, only to be disqualified for interference and placed second. Three weeks ago, One In Vermillion finished third in the Grade 3 West Virginia Derby at Mountaineer Park.

Traveling, clearly, doesn't faze the horse or his people. Martinez drove the truck and trailer from Canterbury to Saratoga – 20 hours with an overnight stay at a farm in Ohio – and he and his wife Norma are the barn crew. He rides, she leads, he bathes, she holds, he hotwalks.

"We are a team, she doesn't work for me and I don't work for her," Martinez said. "This horse is a really good shipper. He doesn't care where he goes, he travels like it is his house."

Martinez thinks riding his horses in the morning can be an advantage.

"I have quite a few now so I can't ride them all but I gallop most of mine," he said. "It helps me. If I feel that the horse doesn't want to gallop, I just jog or do something else. When you have help and tell them to gallop the horse, they're going to do it. When you ride them, you notice different things from day to day."

Martinez liked One In Vermillion from the start, but wasn't thinking about Grade 1 stakes at Saratoga.

"I thought he was going to be good, but not this good," Martinez said. "He kind of surprised me. He's very well put together. He is the first crop by Army Mule so we didn't know what to expect."

Kalman grew up in northern New Jersey, went to the races at Belmont Park and Aqueduct – he saw Crème Fraiche win the 1985 Belmont Stakes – and called himself a "horse racing nerd." After college, he moved out west and works in information technology project management. He raced his first horse in 2021, won three races last year and three more this year. One In Vermillion's career bankroll of \$378,840 makes up 93 percent of

Continued On Page 30

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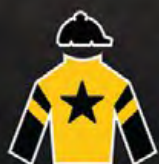
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WEST POINT
THOROUGHBREDS

Jerkens —

■ Continued from page 28

Kalman's earnings total.

"I remember saying that if I ever got the opportunity I would try to own a racehorse," he said. "I had claiming horses, and he's the first yearling I ever bought. I thought I would take a shot on a new sire. It's worked out."

A Jerkens win would add to an already unlikely story.

"It would be huge for his career, him being the horse," said Kalman. "To win a Grade 1 at Saratoga for us would just be the ultimate. I mean, Grade 1 at Saratoga, right? And that race is a Grade 1 with an exclamation point. It will be fun to compete and he's been competitive in every race he's run in."

One In Vermillion will need every bit of that competitiveness. Arabian Lion breaks from the outside off back-to-back wins in the Sir Barton Stakes at Pimlico and the Grade 1 Woody Stephens (also 7 furlongs) at Belmont Park. He's 2-1 for trainer Bob Baffert and jockey John Velazquez. Baffert also trains Fort Bragg, the co-second choice at 5-2 with Joel Rosario from post four. The son of Tapit cost \$700,000 as a yearling and won the Grade 3 Dwyer in his last start July 1. New York Thunder blitzed to a Grade 2 win in the Amsterdam here July 28 and tries to stretch his winning streak to four from post five for Jorge Delgado and jockey Tyler Gaffalione. Verifying comes in off a win in the Grade 3 Indiana Derby for trainer Brad Cox at 4-1 for Flavien Prat from post three while Drew's Gold breaks from the rail at 12-1 for James Chapman and Jose Gomez.

• • •

First comes lightning. And then comes thunder. New York Thunder's lightning speed has elicited thundering roars in his four wins, topped by a 7 1/2-length dismantling of Grade 2 Amsterdam Stakes July 28. Trainer Jorge Delgado looks for a big effort from his undefeated colt.

After winning the Amsterdam, Delgado said he planned on watching that reply a thousand times or more. And he kept true to that promise.

"Oh yeah, like a few hours ago.



Dave Harmon

New York Thunder looks for his fifth consecutive win.

Every time I see that, I feel better," Delgado said. "You see your horses perform at that level and see the way he won."

As the Nyquist colt began training, Delgado never dreamed New York Thunder would blossom into the sprinter he's become.

"I would be lying to you if I say in the beginning I felt he was going to win this way because the first workouts with him were just average," said the trainer.

New York Thunder won his debut on the Tapeta track at Gulfstream Park in November, zipping 5 furlongs in :55.77. A month later, he won a turf allowance in :55.46. His 2023 campaign began on Woodbine's Tapeta surface, and he won the Woodstock Stakes in 1:08.45 for 6 furlongs. The speed was there again in the Amsterdam, his first start on dirt, as he put up fractions of :21.48, :43.56, 1:07.77 (the track record is 1:07.92) and finished 6 1/2 furlongs in 1:14.65.

"The horse can do whatever you want," Delgado said. "If you want him to go fast, he'll go fast."

Born in Venezuela, Delgado is the nephew of trainer Gustavo Delgado, who won the Kentucky Derby with Mage in May and runs his stable star in today's Travers. It's already been a big year for his family and his country's racing industry.

"The idea of winning a Grade 1 is a feeling that would last a lifetime," Delgado said. "It would mean the world. I started training when I was 27 years old and now I'm 33 and I've been dreaming about this forever. As corny as it sounds, I feel blessed. We're very passionate about this sport. Horse racing is I would say the same level or more as baseball [in Venezuela]."

— Mary Rufo

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TWO PHIL'S	OHIO DERBY (G3)	105
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FORTE	JIM DANDY S. (G2)	105
SAUDI CROWN	JIM DANDY S. (G2)	105
ANGEL OF EMPIRE	KENTUCKY DERBY (G1)	104
ANGEL OF EMPIRE	JIM DANDY S. (G2)	104
ARABIAN LION	SIR BARTON S.	103
ARCANGELO	BELMONT S. (G1)	102
DISARM	MATT WINN S. (G3)	102
TWO PHIL'S	JEFF RUBY STEAKS (G3)	101
VERIFYING	MATT WINN S. (G3)	101
DISARM	JIM DANDY S. (G2)	101

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Rematch

Echo Zulu, Goodnight Olive meet again in 6-furlong Grade 1

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Sitting atop his pony, in between sets Friday morning, Steve Asmussen took a question about how long it took after the 2022 Kentucky Oaks to decide to turn Echo Zulu into a one-turn sprinter.

Asmussen paused, cracked a half-smile, and answered with purpose.

"I think it's quite obvious how fast she is and always has been and how brilliant she was at Saratoga as a 2-year-old," he said. "She's from a sprint family and I want to put her in a position that gives her the best chance at all times and takes the least out of her. And I think that's one-turn races."

North America's all-time winningest trainer knows what he is doing.

BALLERINA STAKES PREVIEW

Echo Zulu, champion 2-year-old filly after an undefeated 2021 campaign, has indeed turned into a brilliant sprinter, winning three of four, the only blemish coming in last year's Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint. In the first crop of Gun Runner, trained by Asmussen to a Horse of the Year title in 2017, Echo Zulu brought that brilliance to a new level in the Grade 2 Honorable Miss Stakes July 26, covering 6 furlongs in 1:08.76 and earning a 112 Beyer Speed Figure.

"She's very special," Asmussen said. "We're extremely fortunate to consistently get the best horses, and

Continued On Page 34



Tod Marks

Echo Zulu and Steve Asmussen stroll the paddock during a schooling session Wednesday.



SARATOGA DERBY RECAP

Smart Business

Program Trading edges Webslinger

BY TOM LAW

Mike Ryan will scour the globe on the hunt for a good horse.

He's enjoyed success all over, especially at recent renewals of the Tattersalls October yearling sale, buying for Seth Klarman's Klaravich Stable.

He purchased **TECHNICAL ANALYSIS** out of Book 1 at Tattersalls October Stakes at Saratoga. He purchased **MCKULICK** at the same sale in 2020 for \$245,369 and Thursday the daughter of Frankel won the Grade 2 Glens Falls' Stakes at Saratoga. He purchased **PROGRAM TRADING** at the same sale in 2021 for \$356,551 and Saturday the son of Lope de Vega won the Grade 1 Saratoga Derby Invitational at Saratoga. "All three of them; unbelievable," Ryan said after Program Trading held off Webslinger by a head to win the \$600,000 Saratoga Derby

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Above: Comte Du Passage (French, 1838-1909)
Race Horse and Groom, 1885 (detail)

Ballerina —

■ Continued from page 32

Echo Zulu against the best horses still stands out. You're surprised when she doesn't go faster than everybody else all the time."

With a career record of eight wins in 10 starts, you'd expect Echo Zulu, who will be piloted by Personal Ensign-winning jockey Florent Geroux, to be a prohibitive favorite in today's Grade 1 Ballerina Stakes at Saratoga Race Course, but she isn't the only champion in the field.

Goodnight Olive is the only horse to beat Echo Zulu since Asmussen made the distance change, winning last year's Filly and Mare Sprint by 2½ lengths.

She also brings an 8-for-10 record to the Ballerina and will break from the 7 post, just to the right of Echo Zulu.

"Obviously a very good field, especially with Goodnight Olive at the top, who beat her last year in the Breeders Cup," Asmussen said. "And I didn't expect Echo Zulu to get beat. When you're fortunate enough to be around her, you do not expect her to get outrun."

Echo Zulu is the 7-5 morning line favorite for race 10 on the Travers Day card with a 4:55 p.m. post time. Goodnight Olive, 2022 champion fe-

male sprinter, is 9-5 in the eight-horse field for jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. and faced with the proposition of not allowing Echo Zulu to run away and hide.

"Nothing but respect for Goodnight Olive and what she's done," Asmussen said. "And she did beat us the last time we faced off."

Looking forward to the rematch, Steve?

"You have success by concentrating on what you have control over and making the most of it," he said. "And we feel great about how we're going in without a single thought or clue of who you're doing it against or how they're doing."

Steve Laymon, whose Front Row Partners owns Goodnight Olive along with Team Hanley, is aware of the perceived pace advantage enjoyed by Echo Zulu.

"I'm a handicapper and it looks like a race that doesn't have a lot of speed," said Laymon, a retired optometrist from North Carolina. "Definitely glad to be outside (of Echo Zulu). And I think Irad may have to lay a little closer, keep her within distance. These big days, these tracks get to be speed-favoring a lot. I think you want to be close to her, but Echo Zulu is fast."

Goodnight Olive, by Ghostzapper out of the Smart Strike mare Salty Strike, is a lightly raced 5-year-old,

Continued On Page 36



Tod Marks

Goodnight Olive has won eight of 10 including two this year.

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Ballerina —

■ Continued from page 34

having been set back twice by bone chips in her ankles. She didn't start until March of her 3-year-old year and was off for seventh months heading into last year.

"After the second ankle surgery, Dr. (Larry) Bramlage called and said, 'I believe I have her fixed this time.' He was good to his word," Laymon said. "Chad always felt like she was very talented. He compared her early to some of the good Ghostzapper fillies he had had along the way. And now he says she's as close to anything as he's had to Ghostzapper."

When she has run, she has been virtually unbeatable, winning a maiden, allowance and two optional claimers before jumping up into Grade 1 company in the 2022 Ballerina, which she won easily to punch her Breeders' Cup ticket.

"I watched the replay from the Breeders' Cup last night and Echo Zulu's outside of us and we're kind of in a little bit tight and we're kind of equal most of the race," Laymon said. "And we simply got the jump on her. She just really accelerated."



Matareya checks out the Saratoga paddock Friday afternoon.

Tod Marks

Goodnight Olive's 5-year-old campaign began with a win in the Grade 1 Madison at Keeneland, followed by a troubled third in the Derby City Distaff at Churchill Downs on Kentucky Derby day. The 3-5 favorite, Goodnight Olive was pinned on the rail, behind eventual winner Matareya and

inside of Wicked Halo, Echo Zulu's stablemate. It is not uncommon for a horse to encounter traffic in a race; it is rather unusual for it to last an eighth of a mile.

"That was my first trip to the Derby and you're 3-5 in the race, you look like you're the best horse and she never got to stretch her legs," said Laymon, who was treated for lymphoma in 2021 and recently received a clean scan. "And I respect Irad for not trying to force her in there. Half a path is all she needed to get through there."

It wasn't to be, but the \$170,000 Fasig-Tipton October 2019 purchase, selected for Front Row by Liz Crow, rebounded with a work-woman-like win in the Grade 2 Bed o' Roses at Belmont June 17, setting the stage for an epic showdown today.

"Very quality race," said Laymon, who was part owner of 2014 Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf winner Dayathespa. "Just fortunate she's been able to do well at 5. And there were some questions from some folks that we may not race her at 5, but we're a racing partnership, and we're just so blessed that she's held her good form as a 5-year-old."

Continued On Page 37

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Ballerina —

■ Continued from page 36

Echo Zulu, out of the Menifee mare Letgomyecho, sold for \$300,000 to L and N Racing and Winchell Thoroughbreds at Keeneland September in 2020. She hit the ground running, breaking her maiden at first asking at Saratoga in July 2021 and winning the Grade 1 Spinaway in her second start. She went on to win the Frizette and the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies.

Asmussen ran her in the Fair Grounds Oaks to start her 3-year-old campaign and she responded with a nose win. She attended the pace in the Kentucky Oaks before fading to fourth in what turned out to be her last two-turn start.

"She has spoiled us," Asmussen said. "She is as difficult as we want to make it. Sometimes it's simply that easy. She's faster than who she's in with usually."

That may very well be the case in the Ballerina, but she is facing a formidable field in addition to Goodnight Olive. Asmussen opted to keep Wicked Halo in Saratoga rather than running in the Misty Bennett Pink Ribbon Stakes on the Charles Town Classic undercard Friday night.

He said he wanted to give her another shot at a Grade 1 win, after she ran third in the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint last year and second in the Derby City Distaff in May.

"As well as she's done, the only other thing she could do is the Grade 1," he said. "She is a win machine (8-15 lifetime), as tough as they get. She ran very competitively against Goodnight Olive in the Bed o' Roses (second by a neck). And you could see a setup here where Good Night Olive and Echo Zulu worry about each other to the detriment of each other."

Wicked Halo is 8-1 and will break from post 5 under Tyler Gaffalione.

They will also have to deal with Godolphin's Matareya, who has won six of 12 career starts and been out of the money only once. She earned her first Grade 1 score in the Derby City Distaff and is 6-1 on the morning line with Flavien Prat up.

Dr. B, second to Echo Zulu in the Honorable Miss, Godolphin's Caramel Swirl, second in last year's Ballerina, Sterling Silver and Maryquitecontrary complete the field.



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Long Run

Ribaudo, Keller aim high with homebred 4-year-old colt Daunt

BY NOLAN CLANCY

“Turf horses, if they’re sound they stick around a lot longer,” trainer Bob Ribaudo said Friday morning, watching his Grade 1 Sword Dancer hopeful Daunt get a bath after paddock schooling and training.

Ribaudo and owner Marc Keller won Saratoga’s biggest turf prize twice with Grand Couturier, defeating English Channel in 2007 and Better Talk Now in 2008. Grand Couturier was sound and stuck around, running in the 1 1/2-mile stakes for five consecutive years beginning as a 3-year-old in 2006.

“We were fortunate enough to win this race a couple times, just because the horse was doing great and he belonged,” Ribaudo said. “We’re not in that boat this year.”

This time around, they’ll try to spring an upset with 4-year-old Daunt.

“Here’s a horse that’s capable, he loves the distance, and he’s a nice racehorse, he’s not of that caliber yet, but he seems to be getting better,” Ribaudo said. “He’ll actually be better next year and the year after.”

Fourth in the Grade 2 Bowling Green last time, the son of Nyquist is trying to grab more black type for his owner and breeder Keller and his dam Promotional.

“We’re now officially breeders,” Ribaudo said. “I don’t know if that’s good or bad, but the fact that we have the mother, I’ve got his sister [Quarrel]



Dom Napolitano/NYRA Photo

Channel Maker (right), Daunt (second from left) and Verstappen (second from right) are part of the Sword Dancer field after clashing in the Bowling Green.

here. He’s stakes-placed in a listed stakes, but to be graded stakes-placed would be a feather in the cap. For the value of the mother and the sister, it means a lot more than just getting second or third purse money.

“We might be reaching a little bit, but when you’re dealing with families you look at things a little differently.”

Ribaudo played the numbers game heading into this week, opting for the Sword Dancer over Wednesday’s John’s Call in hopes that the field might stay small.

“We had our option to go in the John’s Call, at the time we were figuring that this was going to be maybe five definites, we would be six,” Ribaudo

said. “Linda [Rice, and her horse Pioneering Spirit] was in the John’s Call and she came out and came in here.”

Daunt was second three times this spring in allowance races at Belmont Park. He breaks from post four with Javier Castellano aboard, at 20-1 on the morning line.

Grand Couturier won four graded stakes in his five-year career, earning a race named for him at Belmont. The 9-year-old turf veteran Channel Maker won the 2022 running of the 1 1/2-miler, and today runs in his sixth and final Sword Dancer for Bill Mott. No horse in recent history has run

Continued On Page 39

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Sword Dancer —

■ Continued from page 38

in the \$750,000 stakes more, and this will be his last trip due to NYRA's rule against horses racing at 10.

"You don't really even think about that part of it," Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott said. "We're not running in there just because we want to run one more time, but it's just because he's doing well and acts like he deserves a chance."

Owned by Wachtel Stable, Gary Barber, R. A. Hill Stable and Reeves Thoroughbred Racing, the 9-year-old won the Bowling Green, the natural Saratoga prep for the Sword Dancer, July 30 at 1 3/8 miles. Like he's done in most of his 10 wins, Channel Maker got it done on the lead, with his head held as high as a Saratoga backyard pine. He won the 2020 Sword Dancer on soft turf the same way.

"He couldn't be doing better, he's doing great," Mott said. "Obviously coming off a good race, seems like he's going into this one in good order, so we're happy with him."

The son of English Channel has earned \$3,890,358 in his seven-year career that includes five starts in the Breeders' Cup Turf. In the last three installments, he finished third, fifth and seventh, but each time, he's beaten every American-bred horse except stablemate War Like Goddess in 2022.

Channel Maker might have the best form of the field on less than firm turf courses, with two Grade 1 wins over turf rated soft. He breaks from post six with Manny Franco, at 7-2 on the morning line.

Bolshoi Ballet is one of three European-bred horses in the field and represents a chance for trainer Aidan O'Brien's first win at Saratoga. The 5-year-old son of Galileo and T. J. Comerford, traveling assistant to O'Brien, arrived in Saratoga Monday.

"We've had horses here in the past. We've never had a winner in Saratoga, but we've had horses that have run well here," Comerford said. "I suppose [O'Brien] thought it was a race for him that he could maybe have a strong chance."

Bolshoi Ballet won the Grade 1 Belmont Derby and finished fourth in the Grade 1 Saratoga Derby in 2021.

Continued On Page 40

KEENELAND September Yearlings

BOOK ONE

Monday 9/11 • Barn 6

37 c. AUTHENTIC – Beyond Blame
Out of a GSW and dam of G1 SP Loggins.
Family of STREET BOSS, JACK CHRISTOPHER

Tuesday 9/12 • Barn 6

222 f. GUN RUNNER – Mama Yay
Half-sister to SW, GSP EMPIRE HOUSE out
of a full sister to G1 SW DIALED IN

BOOK TWO

Wednesday 9/13 • Barn 34

638 c. NOT THIS TIME – New Angel (GB)
Out of a daughter of GSW ANGLE TERRACE.
Family of Champion ORDER OF ST. GEORGE

712 c. MACLEAN'S MUSIC – Si Si Tequila
2nd foal out of a Stakes-placed half-sister
to G2 SW/G1 SP RUN AWAY

756 f. MUNNINGS – Tropical Wave
1st foal out of a mare from family of G1 SW
GENERAL QUARTERS and G2 SW A SHIN TOP

BOOK THREE

Saturday 9/16 • Barn 11

1176 c. MUNNINGS – Bella Aurelia

1242 c. VOLATILE – Exclude (GB)

1244 f. MCKINZIE – Fancy and Flashy

1307 f. NYQUIST – Kauai Katie

1421 f. GOOD MAGIC – Ragtime Hope

1433 c. GHOSTZAPPER – Roberta Turner

1445 f. MUNNINGS – Saratoga Belle

1456 c. COLLECTED – She Is Bedazzling

1487 f. PRACTICAL JOKE – Star Super

1488 f. CARAVAGGIO – Stayclassysandiego

1500 f. LIAM'S MAP – Sumptuous

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Sword Dancer —

■ Continued from page 39

He's earned \$921,459 in 16 starts in Ireland, Great Britain, the U.S. and Hong Kong. O'Brien hopes to improve on a second with Japan in last year's Sword Dancer last year.

"He's starting to come good now, you know what I mean? He ran in Newbury, his [second] run this year, on quick ground," Comerford said. "He ran well (third by a head). But it was a sign of him starting to show us something again."

While a lot of European shippers might prefer softer going, Comerford is hoping the course dries out as much as possible for Bolshoi Ballet.

"He's training well and doing things right, but you'd still like to see top of the ground for him," Comerford said. "So hopefully no more rain between now and tomorrow."

Bolshoi Ballet will break from post three under John Velasquez at 5-1 on the morning line.

The Irish-bred Stone Age, a Group 1 competitor for O'Brien who finished second in last year's Breeders' Cup Turf at Keeneland, makes his first start for Saratoga's leading trainer Chad Brown. Another well-traveled entrant, the 4-year-old son of Galileo makes his fourth start in the

U.S. after also finishing fourth in the Belmont Derby and Saratoga Derby in 2022. He's earned \$1,150,899 in 15 starts. Stone Age, the 6-5 favorite from post seven under Flavien Prat, hasn't run since finishing 12th in The Amir Trophy in February in Qatar.

The English-bred Soldier Rising got a rough trip in the Bowling Green and was declared for purse money only following the race. Trained by Christophe Clement, the 5-year-old son of Frankel's last win came in a 1 1/16-mile allowance race last year at Saratoga. He's 5-1 from post one with Jose Ortiz.

Verstappen comes off a second in the Bowling Green for Brendan Walsh. He won the Grade 2 Elkhorn Stakes at Keeneland, where Channel Maker finished fourth. He breaks from post two with Declan Cannon at 8-1.

Pioneering Spirit rides a four-race win streak into his first stakes, with Rice scratching from the John's Call for today's Grade 1. The 4-year-old gelding rose up the ranks since being claimed for \$40,000 on March 24. He's 8-1 from post five with Jose Ortiz.

The Sword Dancer is the 11th race on the card at 5:31 p.m.

*Additional reporting
by Paul Halloran.*

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Stone Age schools in the paddock Thursday.

Tod Marks

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SARATOGA ENTRIES

Saturday, August 26.

1ST (11:40AM). \$83,000, MSW, 2 YO, 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double					
1	.....1	.....Stunnem	.....L. Saez	.....K. McPeek	.....8-1
2	.....2	.....Catire Vizcaya	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....J. Avila	.....3-1
3	.....3	.....Secret Lover	.....T. McCarthy	.....A. Sano	.....5-1
4	.....4	.....Threewhitesoldiers	.....D. Davis	.....W. Morey	.....10-1
5	.....5	.....Fire Brigade	.....J. Gomez	.....A. Chichakly	.....30-1
6	.....6	.....Uncle Eddie	.....J. Castellano	.....G. Contessa	.....12-1
7	.....7	.....First Trumpet	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....C. Baker	.....8-1
8	.....8	.....Walstib	.....J. Alvarado	.....K. McPeek	.....2-1
9	.....9	.....Awesome for Sure	.....J. Torres	.....F. Abreu	.....10-1

2ND (12:13PM). \$95,000, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4, Daily Double					
1	.....6	.....City Mischief	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....M. Casse	.....9-5
1a	.....8	.....Image of Quality	.....F. Prat	.....C. Englehart	.....9-5
2	.....1	.....Ortus	.....J. Rosario	.....C. Clement	.....3-1
3	.....2	.....Dreampoint	.....K. Coa	.....R. Sells	.....15-1
4	.....3	.....Feathers Road	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....10-1
5	.....4	.....Kreesa	.....J. Velazquez	.....D. Donk	.....8-1
6	.....5	.....Courageous Oh La	.....N. Alvarado	.....L. Dixon	.....6-1
7	.....7	.....On Our Way Boyz	.....L. Saez	.....J. Kirby	.....30-1
8	.....9	.....Volkert	.....D. Davis	.....M. Hennig	.....12-1
9	.....10	.....Athenry	.....J. Torres	.....M. Nevin	.....15-1
10	.....11	.....Empire Sky	.....T. Gaffalione	.....K. Demasi	.....15-1
11	.....12	.....He's Got It	.....T. McCarthy	.....J. Abreu	.....30-1
12	.....AE-MTO	.....Golden Arm	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....H. De Paz	.....5-2
13	.....AE-MTO	.....High Tone	.....Rider TBA	.....J. Englehart	.....4-1
14	.....AE-MTO	.....Newport Bridge	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....3-1

3RD (12:46PM). \$70,000, STR \$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1 1/8M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double						
1	.....1	.....What's Up Doc	.....J. Torres	.....R. Ginter, Jr.	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....St. Elmo	.....J. Velazquez	.....M. McCarthy	.....8-1
3	.....3	.....Money Supply	.....L. Saez	.....J. Sharp	.....9-5
4	.....4	.....Mistical Curlin	.....J. Alvarado	.....G. Rodriguez	.....2-1
5	.....5	.....Skylander	.....J. Castellano	.....A. Trites	.....12-1
6	.....6	.....Watasha	.....T. Gaffalione	.....J. Sharp	.....6-1
7	.....7	.....Mighty Atlas	.....M. Franco	.....M. Maker	.....8-1

4TH (1:19PM). \$156,000, AOC \$62,500, 3 YO'S & UP, 6F

Exacta, Quinella, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double, Pic 4					
1	.....1	.....Scocciatore.....	F. Prat.....	R. Rodriguez.....	9-2
2	.....2	.....My Harbors Dream.....	M. Franco.....	D. Jacobson.....	12-1
3	.....3	.....Osbourne.....	I. Ortiz, Jr.....	R. Moquett.....	6-1
4	.....4	.....Monday Morning Qb.....	J. Torres.....	R. Ginter, Jr.....	20-1
5	.....5	.....Shivaree.....	J. Castellano.....	C. David.....	12-1
6	.....6	.....Lord Captain.....	J. Ortiz.....	L. Rice.....	7-2
7	.....7	.....Milton the Monster.....	T. McCarthy.....	M. Nevin.....	6-1
8	.....8	.....Sky and Sand.....	R. Santana, Jr.....	R. Diodoro.....	6-1
9	.....9	.....Bold Journey.....	J. Rosario.....	W. Mott.....	8-1
10	.....10	.....Champions Dream.....	L. Saez.....	D. Gargan.....	6-1

5TH (1:55PM). \$156,000, AOC \$62,500, 3 YO'S & UP, 1 3/16M (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3					
1	.....7	.....Dynadrive	.....J. Castellano	.....T. Morley	.....5-1
1a	.....AE-MTO	.....Mystic Night	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....R. Diodoro	.....5-1
2	.....1	.....Catch That Party	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....M. Maker	.....4-1
3	.....2	.....English Conqueror	.....J. Leparoux	.....D. Banach	.....8-1
4	.....3	.....Bear Oak	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....N. Casse	.....15-1
5	.....4	.....The Reds	.....L. Saez	.....J. Sharp	.....12-1
6	.....5	.....Nobel (IRE)	.....T. Gaffalione	.....B. Walsh	.....7-2
7	.....6	.....James Aloysius	.....J. Rosario	.....D. Gargan	.....2-1
8	.....8	.....Cross Border	.....M. Franco	.....M. Maker	.....10-1
9	.....AE-MTO	.....Iron Works	.....Rider TBA	.....T. Pletcher	.....9-2
10	.....AE-MTO	.....Tonal Impact	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....8-5



Tod Marks

Ballerina hopeful Wicked Halo schools in the paddock this week.

6TH (2:31PM). \$136,500, MSW, 2 YO, F, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double					
1	.....1	.....She's Wicked Smart	.....J. Torres	.....R. Falcone, Jr.	.....10-1
2	.....2	.....Colonial Rose	.....J. Leparoux	.....A. Stall, Jr.	.....7-2
3	.....3	.....Antenna	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....T. Pletcher	.....6-1
4	.....4	.....Shop Lifting	.....J. Ortiz	.....A. Dutrow	.....6-1
5	.....5	.....Lady de Berry	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....12-1
6	.....6	.....Cowgirl Charm	.....J. Velazquez	.....T. Pletcher	.....5-1
7	.....7	.....Willowly	.....D. Davis	.....W. Catalano	.....15-1
8	.....8	.....Here's your trouble	.....T. Gaffalione	.....C. Brown	.....10-1
9	.....9	.....Just F Y I	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....9-2
10	.....10	.....Life's Joy	.....L. Saez	.....W. Mott	.....10-1
11	.....AE	.....Ringy Dingy	.....L. Saez	.....D. Gargan	.....12-1
12	.....AE	.....Ice Cold	.....J. Leparoux	.....K. McPeek	.....15-1
13	.....AE	.....Clearly a Test	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....J. Camejo	.....8-1

7TH (3:07PM). \$500,000, STK - THE FOREGO, 4 YO'S & UP, 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double, Pic 6					
1	.....1	.....High Oak	.....K. Davis	.....W. Mott	.....30-1
2	.....2	.....Gunite	.....T. Gaffalione	.....S. Asmussen	.....6-5
3	.....3	.....Elite Power	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....W. Mott	.....1-2
4	.....4	.....Pipeline	.....L. Saez	.....C. Brown	.....12-1
5	.....5	.....Synthesis	.....M. Franco	.....D. Jacobson	.....20-1

8TH (3:43PM). \$149,500, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double, Pic 5					
1	.....1	.....Elusive Edge	.....J. Velazquez	.....M. Hemingway	.....10-1
2	.....2	.....Monet Never (IRE)	.....F. Prat	.....P. Antonacci	.....6-1
3	.....3	.....Handsome Cat	.....L. Saez	.....J. Sharp	.....20-1
4	.....4	.....Talkin Pharoah	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....6-1
5	.....5	.....Harry Time (IRE)	.....D. Davis	.....S. Joseph, Jr.	.....8-1
6	.....6	.....Highly Flammable	.....J. Castellano	.....M. Casse	.....9-2
7	.....7	.....Acoustic Ave	.....M. Franco	.....C. Clement	.....8-1
8	.....8	.....Detroit City	.....T. McCarthy	.....J. Sisterson	.....20-1
9	.....9	.....Immortalization	.....T. Gaffalione	.....N. Casse	.....15-1
10	.....10	.....Extendo	.....J. Torres	.....C. David	.....10-1
11	.....11	.....Notah	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....J. Terranova, II	.....30-1
12	.....12	.....Southern Horse (ARG)	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....D. Jacobson	.....7-2
13	.....AE	.....Souper Quest	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....M. Casse	.....3-1
14	.....AE-MTO	.....Kigali	.....T. Gaffalione	.....P. Bauer	.....12-1
15AE-MTOTwelfth ManJ. CastellanoM. Nevin5-1
16AE-MTODaufuskie IslandRider TBAR. Rodriguez9-5

Continued On Page 44

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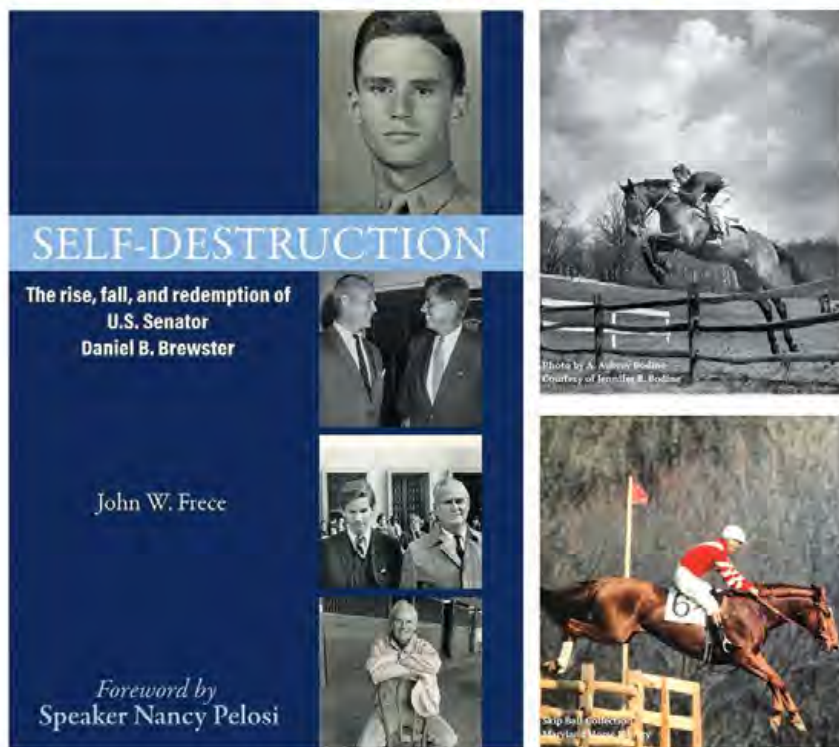
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SARATOGA ENTRIES

Continued from page 42

9TH (4:19PM). \$500,000, STK - THE H. ALLEN JERKENS MEMORIAL, 3 YO, 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 5, Daily Double, Pic 4

1	.....1	Drew's Gold	.....J. Gomez	.....J. Chapman	.....12-1
2	.....2	One in Vermillion	.....L. Saez	.....E. Martinez	.....10-1
3	.....3	Verifying	.....F. Prat	.....B. Cox	.....4-1
4	.....4	Fort Bragg	.....J. Rosario	.....B. Baffert	.....5-2
5	.....5	New York Thunder	.....T. Gaffalione	.....J. Delgado	.....5-2
6	.....6	Arabian Lion	.....J. Velazquez	.....B. Baffert	.....2-1

10TH (4:55PM). \$500,000, STK - THE BALLERINA, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Pic 4

1	.....1	Sterling Silver	.....J. Castellano	.....T. Albertrani	.....30-1
2	.....2	Matareya	.....F. Prat	.....B. Cox	.....6-1
3	.....3	Maryquitecontrary	.....L. Panici	.....C. McGaughey III	.....15-1
4	.....4	Dr B	.....L. Saez	.....R. Reid, Jr	.....15-1
5	.....5	Wicked Halo	.....T. Gaffalione	.....S. Asmussen	.....8-1
6	.....6	Echo Zulu	.....F. Geroux	.....S. Asmussen	.....7-5
7	.....7	Goodnight Olive	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....C. Brown	.....9-5
8	.....8	Caramel Swirl	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....10-1

11TH (5:31PM). \$750,000, STK - THE RESORTS WORLD CASINO SWORD DANCER, 3 YO'S & UP, 1 1/2M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	.....1	Soldier Rising (GB)	.....J. Ortiz	.....C. Clement	.....5-1
2	.....2	Verstappen	.....D. Cannon	.....B. Walsh	.....8-1
3	.....3	Bolshoi Ballet (IRE)	.....J. Velazquez	.....A. O'Brien	.....5-1
4	.....4	Daunt	.....J. Castellano	.....R. Ribaud	.....20-1
5	.....5	Pioneering Spirit	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....L. Rice	.....8-1
6	.....6	Channel Maker	.....M. Franco	.....W. Mott	.....7-2
7	.....7	Stone Age (IRE)	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....6-5

12TH (6:11PM). \$1,250,000, STK - THE TRAVERS, 3 YO, 1 1/4M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

1	.....1	Forte	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....T. Pletcher	.....7-5
2	.....2	Arcangelo	.....J. Castellano	.....J. Antonucci	.....5-2
3	.....3	Tapit Trice	.....J. Ortiz	.....T. Pletcher	.....12-1
4	.....4	Mage	.....L. Saez	.....G. Delgado	.....4-1
5	.....5	National Treasure	.....J. Velazquez	.....B. Baffert	.....8-1
6	.....6	Disarm	.....J. Rosario	.....S. Asmussen	.....8-1
7	.....7	Scotland	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....12-1

13TH (6:48PM). \$136,500, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, 1M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

1	.....6	Right to Win (IRE)	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....7-5
1a	.....7	Growth Capital	.....I. Ortiz, Jr	.....C. Brown	.....7-5
2	.....1	Fly Right	.....J. Castellano	.....L. Gyarmati	.....3-1
3	.....2	Conversing	.....J. Velazquez	.....C. McGaughey III	.....6-1
4	.....3	Flat Top Box	.....T. McCarthy	.....J. Abreu	.....20-1
5	.....4	Create Trouble	.....T. Gaffalione	.....B. Walsh	.....15-1
6	.....5	Party With Smarty	.....K. Davis	.....J. Gutierrez-Herrera	.....50-1
7	.....8	Arro Smash	.....D. Davis	.....P. Bauer	.....30-1
8	.....9	Torigo	.....L. Saez	.....D. Gargan	.....6-1
9	.....10	Magiadoro	.....J. Torres	.....G. Rodriguez	.....50-1
10	.....11	Cumberland	.....M. Franco	.....G. Weaver	.....15-1
11	.....12	Baie Longue	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....10-1
12	.....AE-MTO	Mindtap	.....Rider TBA	.....T. Pletcher	.....7-2
13	.....AE-MTO	Motivo	.....J. Rosario	.....R. Dutrow, Jr	.....12-1
14AE-MTO	CoalvilleJ. OrtizC. Brown9-5
15AE-MTO	LucencyRider TBAT. Pletcher2-1

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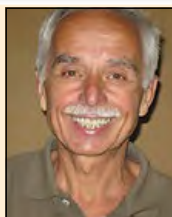
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John Shapazian



Tom Law



Rob Whitlock



Charles Bedard



Jessica Paquette

Race	John Shapazian	Tom Law	Rob Whitlock	Charles Bedard	Jessica Paquette
1	Walstib Secret Lover Stunnem	Walstib Catire Vizcaya Stunnem	Awesome For Sure Walstib Secret Love	Catire Vizcaya Walstib Secret Lover	Walstib Catire Vizcaya Stunnem
2	Golden Arm City Mischief Ortus	Newport Bridge Barber entry Ortus	Courageous Oh La Volkert Ortus	Barber entry Dreampoint Ortus	On Our Way Boyz Kreesa Empire Sky
3	Mistical Curlin Money Supply What's Up Doc	Money Supply Mistical Curlin Mighty Atlas	St. Elmo Mistical Curlin Watasha	Mistical Curlin Money Supply What's Up Doc	St. Elmo Money Supply Mighty Atlas
4	Scocciatore Sky And Sand Champions Dream	Scocciatore Osbourne Lord Captain	Scocciatore Osbourne Shivaree	Scocciatore Lord Captain Shivaree	Lord Captain My Harbors Dream Bold Journey
5	Tonal Impact Nobel James Aloysius	Tonal Impact Catch That Party James Aloysius	Iron Works Nobel Dynadrive	Tonal Impact Nobel James Aloysius	Nobel Dynadrive Cross Border
6	Colonial Rose Just F Y I Cowgirl Charm	Colonial Rose Cowgirl Charm Just F Y I	Shop Lifting Colonial Rose Antenna	Colonial Rose Antenna Here'syourtrouble	Shop Lifting Colonial Rose Antenna
7	Elite Power Gunite Pipeline	Elite Power Gunite High Oak	Gunite Elite Power Pipeline	Elite Power Gunite Synthesis	Gunite Elite Power High Oak
8	Daufuskie Island Souper Quest Southern Horse	Daufuskie Island Souper Quest Highly Flammable	Daufuskie Island Acoustic Avenue Detroit City	Daufuskie Island Harry Time Southern Horse	Talkin Pharoah Elusive Edge Notah
9	Arabian Lion Fort Bragg New York Thunder	Arabian Lion New York Thunder Verifying	Arabian Lion New York Thunder Fort Bragg	Arabian Lion Fort Bragg New York Thunder	Verifying Arabian Lion New York Thunder
10	Echo Zulu Goodnight Olive Wicked Halo	Echo Zulu Goodnight Olive Sterling Silver	Good Night Olive Echo Zulu Maryquitecontrary	Goodnight Olive Echo Zulu Wicked Halo	Matareya Echo Zulu Caramel Swirl
11	Stone Age Channel Maker Bolshoi Ballet	Stone Age Channel Maker Daunt	Stone Age Channel Maker Bolshoi Ballet	Stone Age Bolshoi Ballet Soldier Rising	Bolshoi Ballet Channel Maker Stone Age
12	Forte Arcangelo Disarm	Mage Arcangelo Forte	Arcangelo Forte Disarm	Scotland Forte Arcangelo	Scotland Arcangelo Forte
13	Lucency Brown entry Conversing	Coalville Brown entry Torigo	Motivo Right To Win Growth Capital	Coalville Brown entry Conversing	Conversing Create Trouble Right To Win
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The Duke

Front-runner Idiomatic runs to trainer Cox's confidence level in Gr. 1

BY TOM LAW AND PAUL HALLORAN

Brad Cox spotted Garrett O'Rourke on the way to the winner's circle through the warm mist Friday at Saratoga Race Course and reminded him of a text exchange from a few days prior.

"John Wayne," Cox told O'Rourke, general manager of Juddmonte's American operation.

The reference to the late iconic actor known as "The Duke" came from a chat when Cox looked at the overnight for the Grade 1 Personal Ensign and saw Juddmonte's Idiomatic draw post one in the stakes for fillies and mares without any expected speed.

"Oh, I'm loving this," Cox texted O'Rourke of the 4-year-old daughter of Curlin's spot in the field of six that included champion Nest and Grade 1 winners Clairiere and Secret Oath. "She's training



Dave Harmon

Idiomatic stays clear (and clean) late in the stretch of Friday's Personal Ensign.

super. She's progressing beautifully. Oh, I'm loving the draw. I'm loving the setup."

Pegged as the 3-1 third choice behind the 4-5 Nest and 5-2 Clairiere in their rematch from the Grade 2 Shuvee July 23 at Saratoga, Idiomatic came in off back-to-back wins and all the confidence of her people.

"Do you remember the original True Grit movie where Robert Duvall said to John Wayne, 'That's tough talk for a one-eyed fat man?' " O'Rourke said. "We've been joking about that ever since. And when he came in here afterwards, he said, 'John Wayne.' "

Continued On Page 47

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Personal Ensign —

■ Continued from page 46

Idiomatic lived up to the confidence and those that backed her at 4-1 by post time with a front-running 4-length victory under Florent Geroux. Secret Oath, winner of the 2022 Kentucky Oaks and the 7-1 third choice for trainer D. Wayne Lukas, edged Nest by a neck for the runner-up spot with 45-1 longshot Malloy fourth, Clairiere fifth and Sixtythreecaliber last of the half-dozen.

“Coming into a race when you’re taking on three fillies with the accomplishments of those three, you’re hopeful,” O’Rourke said after the victory, Idiomatic’s seventh in 10 starts. “But in fairness to Brad, he said she has trained up a storm. If you’re going to take them on, you take them on when she’s absolutely at the top of her game.”

Idiomatic hinted at a big performance well before the field of six made their way around the rainy Saratoga paddock the day before the loaded Travers Stakes card. She touted herself in four works over the Oklahoma Training Track – including a 5-furlong tightener in 1:00.20 two weeks ago – and in her last start.

Cox watched the Grade 2 Delaware Handicap from Horseshoe Indianapolis, where he’d saddle Verifying to victory in the Grade 3 Indiana Derby an hour later. He nearly couldn’t watch when Idiomatic, hammered down to 2-5 in the field of six, stumbled so bad at the start that Geroux nearly fell off.

“I was glad he stayed on her. It was one of those where you’re like, ‘ooooooh, ok, he didn’t come off.’ Thankfully it was all right,” Cox said. “Whoa man, it was a bad stumble. A bad stumble.”

Idiomatic recovered and Geroux didn’t force the issue. He allowed the homebred filly who is out of the First Defence mare Lockdown – a full sister to 2014 Personal Ensign winner Close Hatches – time to recover before making the lead. Cox thought a big run was coming before Classy Edition engaged Idiomatic in the lane and the two battled to the wire. Idiomatic edged that rival by a head for her second straight graded stakes win after the Grade 3 Shawnee in early June at Churchill Downs.

“He did a good job of gradually letting her creep up in there,” Cox said. “It looked like she was going to win by 10 at the three-eighths pole, and Todd’s filly can run. She’s a good filly.”

Juddmonte’s stellar run this summer continued in the Personal Ensign, the operation’s fourth Grade 1 since mid-July along with Whitebeam in the Diana and Elite Power in the Alfred G. Vanderbilt at Saratoga and the Cox-trained Set Piece in the Arlington Million at Colonial Downs.

O’Rourke, who will stick around Saturday to see if Juddmonte can add another Grade 1 prize with Elite Power in the Forego Stakes, remembered Close Hatches’ 5-length thumping in the Personal Ensign and shared Cox’s confidence.

“That made me feel good about how she’d do well,” he said. “Curlin, obviously, you know that they’ll go the 9 furlongs and yeah, it set up well. What made you a little bit hesitant to say she’s going to win was Nest, Clairiere and Secret Oath. And to not just win a race like this, but to beat fillies of that caliber? I think it’s even all the more satisfying.”

Nest, Clairiere and Secret Oath came in with combined earnings of \$7,574,209 and a collective 22 wins, including eight Grade 1s.

The Personal Ensign returned to the Friday card before the Travers – shades of old when it was known as the John A. Morris before being renamed in 1998 honor of one of the greatest fillies of all time who retired unbeaten in 13 starts.

Nest brought an undefeated record at Saratoga – 3-for-3 including the Grade 1 double in last year’s Coaching Club American Oaks and Alabama – and went to the post as the 2-5 favorite. She broke well under Irad Ortiz Jr. from post five and took up the chase outside Idiomatic on the rail and Malloy to her immediate inside heading into the first turn.

Geroux kept Idiomatic a path or two off the rail around the bend, held a length advantage over Malloy to the quarter in :24.53 and a 1 1/2-length edge to the half in :48.84. The complexion didn’t change up the backstretch and to the half-mile pole, exactly as Geroux hoped.

“Today was a clean break, a great draw,” Geroux said. “Like you can

Continued On Page 48

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Personal Ensign —

■ Continued from page 47

see on the PPs, it was not going to be much pace, so I just took advantage of it, set some very reasonable fractions. When she started picking up, you know, slowly at the half-mile pole, I thought she was going to be extremely hard to catch at this point."

Secret Oath and Javier Castellano inched up inside Malloy as Nest took on that foe from the outside midway around the far turn, as Idiomatic passed 6 furlongs in 1:12.61. Idiomatic left an opening to her inside leaving the far turn and Secret Oath dove for the hole, while Nest countered to the outside.

Idiomatic shrugged off the challenge approaching the eighth pole, opened up after Geroux gave a glance at the infield monitor. Secret Oath stayed on the rail to edge Nest at the finish. Idiomatic won in 1:49.12 over the sloppy and sealed surface.

"Based off the paper, I felt pretty confident she could establish a pretty solid lead," Cox said. "I liked her (on the wet track). Just the way she's made. She's big but she's not real heavy. I thought she could bounce

through it, I really did. I liked what I saw earlier on the card with the times being a little quick. ... The horses were skipping over it and that gave me a little confidence as well."

Idiomatic pushed her earnings past the seven-figure mark with the victory. She's now earned \$1,049,490.

Nest lost for the first time in her four Saratoga appearances, but trainer Todd Pletcher couldn't fault his Curlin filly's trip and saluted the winner.

"We got the trip we were expecting to get," Pletcher said. "We got into the first turn in the position we wanted to be in. We had to sacrifice a little ground but it seemed like she was traveling pretty well down the backside. The winner is a quality mare and was setting down pretty easy fractions."

"She just beat us in the Delaware Handicap and she's a good filly. Anytime you take a quality horse and you go :12, :12, :12 and :12, it's hard to make up ground. I was hoping someone would try to mix it up a little bit with her, but we were still trying to get into that stalking position where we weren't too far off it. We were able to do it but she was unable to quicken the last part."



Florent Geroux and Idiomatic stretch for the finish line in the Personal Ensign.

Tod Marks



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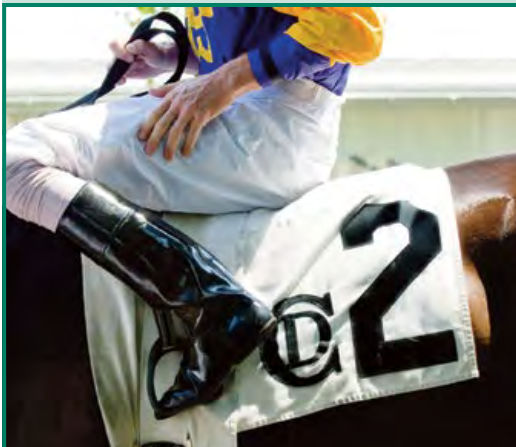
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Sprint Star

Roses For Debra adds second stakes win at meet for Clement

Caravel parlayed a victory in last year's Smart And Fancy Stakes into a victory in the Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint in a 42-1 upset. Roses For Debra, winner of this year's \$135,500 Smart And Fancy Friday at Saratoga Race Course, might try to follow in the footsteps of the multiple Grade 1 winning mare.

"We'll go to the Masters next, which is a Grade 2 going 6 1/2, because she's already won four races at Presque Isle," said John O'Meara, who co-owns the Liam's Map filly with Cheyenne Stables. "We'll go back there and try the Masters. Then from there we've got to go to Keeneland or we'll go to the Breeders' Cup."

Roses For Debra got her connections thinking big after she raced third behind pacesetters Train To Artemus and Bubble Rock in the early stages of the 5 1/2-furlong turf stakes. Under Irad Ortiz Jr., the 4-year-old filly gobbled up ground turning for home and darted to a 3 1/4-length score for trainer Christophe Clement. The final time was 1:01.82 over the Mellon Turf Course labeled good.

FRIDAY RACING RECAP

The Smart And Fancy was the second victory of the meet for turf sprinting's rising star. Roses For Debra won the Grade 3 Caress Stakes by 2 1/4 lengths. Ortiz, who also rode Roses For Debra to victory that day, said that he was just along for the ride Friday.

"Beautiful trip," Ortiz said. "The ground was a little soft, but I rode her with confidence. She did it easy. Very, very impressive, the turn of foot on the soft ground. She gave me a great kick."

Roses For Debra has raced exclusively on turf since switching to trainer Clement's barn this year, and the success is growing. She's 4-for-4 on turf, and all of the wins have been by at least 2 lengths.

"She's brilliant," Miguel Clement, the trainer's son and assistant. "She's shown she can win on the lead, nearly; from way off the pace, very firm turf, soft as it was today. It doesn't matter. She has a devastating turn of foot on any going. It's exciting."



Tod Marks

Fierceness cruises to a win in Friday's sixth race for owner/breeder Repole Stable.



Tod Marks

Roses For Debra leads the way late in Friday's Smart And Fancy Stakes.

Roses for Debra has now won seven of nine, with one second when disqualified from first in her debut. She has amassed earnings of \$406,430, with \$288,650 coming in 2023.

— Alec DiConza

- When Fierceness delivered a jaw-dropping debut win in the sixth, owner and breeder Mike Repole drew comparisons to arguably the best horse he's ever campaigned.

"Thirteen years ago, I had a horse like this called Uncle Mo," he said. "He won by about 14 lengths. I'm curious to see how much he [Fierceness] won by. Very special."

The betting money indicated that the 2-year-old son of City Of Light could be a good one. Off at even-money in the 6-furlong maiden, Fierceness briefly chased Change Of Command before taking control heading into the far turn. He ran splits of :22.02 and :44.65 and was alone at the top of the stretch. Fierceness won by 11 1/4 lengths in 1:09.56 over the muddy and sealed track for trainer Todd Pletcher and jockey Irad Ortiz Jr.

"The money said that the horse was training well, and it said that we liked him in the morning," Repole said. "But until you put them in that paddock, behind that gate and you break, you never know what they're going to do in the afternoon. We liked him a lot and he exceeded our expectations."

Repole bred Fierceness out of his Stay Thirsty mare Nonna Bella, a two-time winner who was bred and owned by Repole. That mare's dam is Nonna Mia, who was purchased by Repole for \$200,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga yearling sale in 2008, and gave him two victories in seven starts.

"It's great when not only did I race the granddam, I also raced the dam and now the son," Repole said. "To watch him do this today, and we got Forte tomorrow, pretty special."

"We're blessed for anything that happens, but he's a really, really special horse. We're just happy about this one. Hopefully tomorrow he's OK, and maybe we'll point to the Champagne."

— Alec DiConza

- Ontheonesandtwos won in her second start off a 13-month layoff in the seventh for trainer Norm Casse and owners Pura Vida Investments, Cindy Hutson, Madaket Stables and Thomas Romano.

"She's always been a really talented filly, there's obviously some gaps in her races because she had some issues," Pura Vida's Deuce Greathouse said of 4-year-old filly by Jimmy Creed. "She's just a real big filly and she's got to be able to get in the rhythm."

Ontheonesandtwos broke sharp-

Continued On Page 51

Friday —

■ Continued from page 50

ly and took the lead with Ricardo Santana Jr., opening up 2 lengths through an opening quarter :22.17 ahead of 3-5 favorite Headland. The half went in :45.06 as Santana, in spotless green, blue and yellow silks, let the filly romp through the final quarter-mile of sloppy going. On-theonesandtwos won the 6-furlong race by 6 3/4 lengths in 1:09.84. Headland settled for second, while You Look Cold finished third.

“We’ve always known 7 (furlongs) was kind of great for her, we weren’t sure going 6 if she’d be able to get the lead without rushing, but it worked out there,” Great-house said. “Ricardo got her out of the gate and she got in a rhythm, and once she does that, she just can’t check. She’s such a big filly.”

Norm Casse improved his already stellar meet record to six wins in 11 starts.

“It’s awesome. Norm and I have been really close since we had Tepin with Mr. (Robert) Masterson, and when he went out on his own, I sent him a lot of horses,” Great-house said. “We keep getting better quality in the barn, and his success keeps going up. It’s been fun being a part of it since the beginning.”

— Nolan Clancy

- Chad Summers earned his first victory of the meet in the nightcap when White Chocolate won an off-the-turf maiden event for fillies and mares going 5 1/2 furlongs.

“I’m just glad that a terrible trainer was able to win a race at Saratoga,” Summers joked after the race.

Breaking from the outside post, White Chocolate sped to an early lead over her six rivals through a sharp :21.85 opening quarter. She continued to widen around the turn, and gave owner Al Gold’s Gold Square and jockey Flavien Prat a 5 1/2-length score in 1:03.86.

“She’s a fast filly,” Summers said. “When we breezed her out of the gate a couple weeks ago, she went pretty fast, so we had the idea that she was quick. In an off-the-turf race, you kind of want to use your speed to the advantage over some of these turf horses.”

White Chocolate finished second in a maiden special weight at Fair Grounds last December for trainer Steve Asmussen. Summers was confident the daughter of City Of Light would be ready off the bench.

“She’s been training like a really good horse all along since she came back from the farm,” he said. “She’s a talented filly and we were just happy to finally get a chance to run her.”

Summers trained all-time leading New York-bred earner Mind Your Biscuits, who will be honored during Sunday’s Saratoga Showcase Day card.

“He’s a horse that we picked out right here across the street for \$30,000 and took us and my family and my team around the world many times over,” he said. “Now he’s the leading sire in Japan. He got 211 mares this year. It’s an honor that we feel is just deserved. He’s the leading all-time money earner in New York at \$4.3 million and he did it the hard way. He showed up and brought his lunch box to work every day.”

— Alec DiConza

Saratoga Leaders

JOCKEYS.....1ST	
Irad Ortiz Jr.....	46
Jose Ortiz	31
Luis Saez	30
Tyler Gaffalione.....	28
Manny Franco.....	26
Flavien Prat	25
Joel Rosario.....	21
Jose Lezcano.....	18
Dylan Davis	16
Javier Castellano	13

TRAINERS.....1ST	
Chad Brown.....	30
Linda Rice	26
Todd Pletcher.....	22
Bill Mott.....	14
Christophe Clement	12
Mike Maker	10
Rudy Rodriguez	9
George Weaver	9
Steve Asmussen	8
Brad Cox.....	8
Mark Hennig	8

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SCAN TO GIVE





Cleared for Takeoff

Evvie Jets flies to upset
of Brown trio in Gr. 2

BY PAUL HALLORAN

If you dug deep enough into the past performances for Thursday's Grade 2 Ballston Spa Stakes, you would have seen that trainer Mertkan Kantarmaci had experience facing – and beating – three Chad Brown trainees in a turf stakes. And if that prompted you to back Evvie Jets, you were rewarded handsomely.

"We did at Belmont, but it wasn't a graded stakes," Kantarmaci said, referring to the July 2 Perfect Sting, when Evvie Jets took down the Brown trio of Technical Analysis, Haughty and Customer List. "It means a lot, of course, to beat



Dave Harmon

Evvie Jets (right) digs in to win Thursday's Ballston Spa over a host of challengers in the stretch.

the best trainer, the best horses on the turf in the toughest meet. That means a lot with this filly. This is a gift to us."

And to those who scooped up the \$60.50 win mutuel. If you're wondering how this 5-year-old daughter of Twirling Candy floated up to 29-1 from David Aragona's 15-1 morning line, not only was there another Brown troika (after scratches) – Technical Analysis, Consumer Spending and Fluffy

Socks – Evvie Jets also had to contend with a European import for Joseph O'Brien and a Grade 3 winner for Shug McGaughey, among others.

"That was an honest field today. I know there were no Grade 1 winners in there, but it was an honest group," said Michael Amendola, whose father, Robert, owned Evvie Jets before passing away

Continued On Page 53

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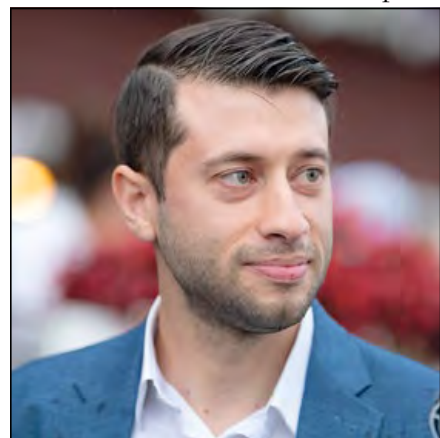
■ Continued from page 52

just before Thanksgiving last year. “She had to dig. I just saw the replay. Man, she lost the lead, and she came back again. I mean, she’s just all heart. It’s just unbelievable.”

Those who expected Evvie Jets to revert to her front-running tactics after what the connections felt was a head-scratching trip in the Aug. 2 De La Rose Stakes may have been surprised to see her fourth after a quarter-mile. If that could be considered bad news, the good news was that Technical Analysis was engaged early by Katie Davis and Sister Bridget, who took off like Sally Field in “The Flying Nun” and matched her stride for stride.

Manny Franco, who picked up the mount after Luis Saez was injured Wednesday, was content to save ground with Evvie Jets, laying fourth after a quarter-mile in :23.50 and fifth after a half in :48.67. Jose Ortiz moved Technical Analysis inside of Sister Bridget to take the lead heading into the far turn, but once they straightened out, it was clear the favorite was in deep water.

Evvie Jets burst through to take the lead with a furlong to run then held off a cadre of closers that included Fluffy Socks (second), O’Brien’s Jumbly (third) and Consumer Spending (sixth), who was bottled up inside the final 70 yards. Calling it a nightmare trip would be akin to describing the Titanic as a minor marine mishap.



Trainer Mertkan Kantarmaci.



Tod Marks

Evvie Jets hangs on at the wire to win by a head over Fluffy Socks.

“It was really lucky because they put on a hot pace when those two horses got together and Manny did the right thing, just save and save,” said Kantarmaci, who won his second graded stakes in the United States and first Grade 2. “Our plan was only to stick to the rail and he did that, and save in the second turn also. She just made a late run after the hot pace. She can do that. She showed that a long time ago already. Today was the day for her to close.”

Winning a stakes here left Amendola, who lives on Long Island and made many trips to Saratoga with his father, searching for words.

“Come on. Come on. It’s unbelievable. It’s unbelievable,” he said, and no, there was not an echo. “It’s always been a fun journey. I’ve been my dad’s number one fan the whole time. We had a lot of good memories up here, and whether it was a stakes race, or most of the time we were running claimers, they’re all wins. We had a horse Bank Audit run fourth in the Ballerina, but Evvie takes the cake, to win a race like this.”

While the connections were naturally disappointed to lose Saez, who would have ridden Evvie Jets for the first time, they were thrilled to pick up Franco.

“We decided right after we heard Luis can’t ride,” Kantarmaci said, “but we didn’t even ask him because we knew he was open. I just waited for noontime to make the change.”

“Picking up Manny was a no brainer,” Amendola said. “Manny’s been good to us. He’s been solid. When we picked up Luis, we were excited to have him ride, but obviously things happened yesterday, so there was no doubt about who we were going to pick. And he was the man.”

Franco said he didn’t have much of a decision to make when Technical Analysis and Sister Bridget ran as if their manes were on fire.

“I didn’t have much choice,” he said. “They broke out of there, (Sister Bridget) and (Technical Analysis), they just break out of there running, sending hard. So I just saved ground all the way around and they come back, you know they come back big time, and I had the filly under me and she just responded to everything I asked her.”

Evvie Jets is one of the remaining horses running under The Estate of Robert Amendola name.

“We had like 20 as of last year,” Michael Amendola said. “And we weaned down the stable, so we have these last few. And Evvie’s obviously the champion of the group.”

Her trainer is not surprised.

“Since the first day, we took care of her like a stakes horse because I knew she was going to come to that level, but we wanted to go step by step with her,” Kantarmaci said. “Now, of course, she’s extra special after this race. Unbelievable she did that today.”

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Double Up

Gallagher's Stud celebrates two New York-bred winners on card

BY ALEC DICONZA

Marlene Brody's Gallagher's Stud bred a pair of winners on Thursday's card at Saratoga Race Course – one sold at public auction and another that raced in the Ghent-based operation's yellow and red colors.

Alterina delivered the first in the opener, winning her dirt debut for trainer Mark Hennig and owner Alan Brodsky. The 3-year-old daughter of Alternation out of the Bernardini mare Adorina won the 1-mile state-bred maiden claimer on the main track by 1 1/2 lengths. Brodsky purchased Alterina for \$55,000 at the 2021 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale.

Sweet Mystery provided the second win, taking the seventh race for trainer Pat Quick. The 4-year-old homebred daughter of Cupid out of the Elusive Quality mare Fanfare won the 1-mile state-bred allowance-optional by three-quarters of a length.

"It's a first," Brody said of the two-win day. "It's an absolute first. It's very exciting."

Racing just off the pace early, Sweet Mystery made the lead on the turn under Trevor McCarthy and fought off 3-5 favorite Bustin Bay from the Linda Rice barn in the stretch.

"I was hoping," Brody said cheerfully, describing her emotions as the

THURSDAY RACING RECAP

field turned for home.

Sweet Mystery had already run once at this meet, finishing second by a neck in a similar race at 9 furlongs. Gallagher's Stud manager Mallory Mort said the complexion of the race, rather than the cutback in distance, helped Sweet Mystery.

"A mile and an eighth is fine for her," he said. "The way the race was run was better. Her being right on the pace and right with Linda's filly was really the difference. We got a jump on her, too."

- Whisper Hill Farm's Mandy Pope hugged jockey Tyler Gaffalione in the winner's circle after Grand Sonata, her graded stakes-winning homebred won the third race, a 9-furlong allowance on the inner turf.

Though Gaffalione hadn't ridden Grand Sonata since last year's Grade 3 Dueling Grounds Derby, where the pair finished second at Kentucky Downs, Pope was very excited to see him back aboard. She said the bond between the two is special.

"It's absolutely wonderful and we're so glad that we got reunited with Tyler," she said. "They love each other, so that was awesome."



Tod Marks

Sweet Mystery pulls away to win Thursday's seventh for Gallagher's Stud.

Grand Sonata broke from the inside post in the field of six and settled in the third early, saving ground behind Main Event and Kuramata. Bursting between these two rivals with less than a furlong to run, Grand Sonata's late kick allowed him to fend off Easter to win by a neck at 11-1.

Trained by Todd Pletcher, the 4-year-old son of Medaglia d'Oro came off a seven-month layoff in a similar race July 30. He finished ninth of 10, beaten 9 lengths, but Pope remained confident given the firm condition of the turf Thursday.

"Having the firmer turf definitely helped," she said. "The other time, it

was very soft. He had just been campaigning for a while and deserved some time off. He's always been very sound."

Pope co-owns Travers Stakes entrant and Grade 1 winner Tapit Trice, also trained by Pletcher.

"We are very excited," Pope said. "Very hopeful, fingers crossed."

- Trainer Jeremiah Englehart added his third win of the meet in the fifth when Lady Arwen broke her maiden in her second start going 7 furlongs on the main track.

Continued On Page 55

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AWAKENED wins Grade 1 stakes at Saratoga | ROCKET ONE romps in maiden at Colonial Downs
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Thursday —

■ Continued from page 54

The 5-2 favorite to win her career debut in July, Lady Arwen broke very poorly from the gate that day. The New York-bred daughter of Audible made up ground by the top of the stretch, but wound up third in the 6-furlong contest. Thursday proved different.

Stretching out an additional furlong, Lady Arwen broke better and sat second early behind Sun And Wind. She took the lead past the quarter pole and drew off to a 2 1/2-length win under Irad Ortiz Jr.

Englehart was pleased to see his filly act more professionally in her second start.

"Definitely with that experience, with her first start, and having the difficulty she had in the gate, I was kind of hoping she was going to be better in the gate this time, and she was," Englehart said. "She was more relaxed in the gate this time. Irad was able to sit a nice trip right behind (Sun And Wind) and picked the right time to pounce, and she did."

"I was a little worried about that [the extra distance]. She's not a really big filly, but she's well put together.



Dave Harmon

Lady Arwen scores in Thursday's fifth race.

She's got To Honor And Serve on the bottom side, which I thought would be OK. Seemed like it was OK today."

Owned by Neal Allread and Gold Star Racing Stable, Lady Arwen could be seen in a stakes next.

"We'll probably look for something, like a New York-bred stake somewhere, whether that's here or Finger Lakes," Englehart said. "They

have a nice New York-bred program in this state, so hopefully we'll find the right spot for her next out."

- It's becoming apparent that Sosua Summer's favorite season is, well, summer. Winning Thursday's sixth, a 5 1/2-furlong turf allowance, the 4-year-old colt by Summer Front is now 3-for-3 at Saratoga for trainer

Bill Mott.

"He broke his maiden here last year, so he's run good over the course and he's obviously very good at the distance," Mott said. "Horses cycle around, and I guess this time of year is a good time of the year for him."

Sosua Summer won his first start at Saratoga at 3, taking a maiden special weight over the same 5 1/2-furlong trip on grass. He also won July 27 going 5 1/2 furlongs. Mott said Sosua Summer will most likely stretch out for his next start.

"You can't always find the right distances, or the proper distances, or the distances you feel that they need," Mott said. "Sometimes we stretch them out a little further just because of the lack of a different race."

Mott has Scotland entered for today's Grade 1 Travers Stakes. The lightly raced colt will break from the outside gate in the field of seven, and his Hall of Fame trainer is not worried about the post affecting his chances.

"They should have a good clear run down the frontside," he said. "The seven-hole shouldn't be an issue. I would think the field should spread out a little bit, too."

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All in the Family

Well-bred Awakened wins Gr. 1 over jumps

BY JOE CLANCY

Pedigree matters. The cross of leading sire Curlin and A.P. Indy mares has produced the likes of champions Malathaat and Nest, millionaire Global Campaign, Grade 1 winner Julia Shining and so on. Add Grade 1 steeplechase winner to the mix after Awakened won the \$150,000 Jonathan Sheppard at Saratoga Race Course Wednesday.

Owned by Riverdee Stable and Ten Strike Racing, the 6-year-old was by no means bred to run over jumps but the quality was there. Leading sire Curlin is, well, Curlin. He earned \$10 million on the track, stands for \$225,000 and sired the sales-topper at this year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga yearling sale. For all that, Awakened's female family might be even stronger. He goes back generations with the Phipps and Wheatley stables, traces to La Troienne, perhaps the broodmare of all broodmares, and is related to Grade 1 turf winner Imagining, influential stallion Not For Love, champions Numbered Account and Rhythm and Horse of the Year, champion and Hall of Famer Busher.

A \$725,000 buy-back at Keeneland September as a yearling, Awakened won his 10th flat start for Phipps Stable and trainer Reeve McGaughy at Ellis Park in 2021 before being purchased as a steeplechase prospect. Sent to trainer Jack Fisher, the chestnut won a maiden hurdle in September 2022 and started this year with a third in allowance company in April and a win in allowance company in May. Next came Saratoga, where he was second in a novice stakes Aug. 2. Weather cancellations and short fields conspired to shuffle the Spa's jump-race calendar, knocking out the second novice race and creating a 10-horse Sheppard. A Grade 1, it attracted a single Grade 1 winner but an otherwise competitive group topped by meet winners McTigue and L'Imperator.

Awakened made the most of his chance, bidding time deep in the field, saving ground and winning a stretch battle with Jimmy P by a length after 2 3/8 miles in 4:32.51. McTigue was a neck back in third.

Jockey Tom Garner wasn't thrilled with the early part of his race.



Tod Marks
Awakened jumps early in
Wednesday's Jonathan Sheppard.

"My plan was to jump off handy," he said. "I got a little bit muscled back at the start which is not like me because I do like to think I'm a bit sharper than that. I wanted to be handy. I had to play the cards I was dealt and I sat, sat, sat and the horse traveled great, jumped great, I was a passenger for a while there."

Eighth after three fences as West Newton led Jimmy P and Noah And The Ark up front, Awakened stayed inside and listened to his jockey. With a lap to go, they were ninth but hadn't done much to change that. West Newton jumped the last in front, landed to his left and was gang-tackled by Noah And The Ark, Jimmy P, L'Imperator and McTigue. Awakened entered the final turn in seventh, but going the right direction. He went around West Newton, beat Caramelised to the fifth spot, cut the corner and rolled through on the cones as Jimmy P drifted out and McTigue came out from behind horses. Those three kicked away and were 7 lengths clear of Merry Maker in fourth as Awakened owned the final furlong to win for the third time in nine jump starts.

Win or lose, Garner would have been proud of the effort.

"I'd have been happy with his run if he'd been a good second, but he quickened and once he hit that top gear, he felt like he could have gone another half-mile," said the jockey. "What a lovely horse. I got the splits when I needed to and I pressed ev-

ery button going up the straight and he quickened. He probably benefited from having that run three weeks ago."

Garner passed credit to Fisher, the team at the farm in Maryland and Awakened's previous jockey Jamie Bargary.

"I rang him before I rode him the first time and he told me about the horse, told me everything to a T," Garner said. "Just through complications with his visa, he probably should have been on the horse. His loss is my gain, but that's racing, you know?"

An Englishman like Bargary, Garner rode six American races in 2017 and ultimately made it home with highlights like sweeping both Grade 1 jump stakes at Saratoga in 2019 (with Winston C) and 2021 (with Baltimore Bucko and The Mean Queen). While thinking of those, and the future, he savored Wednesday.

"That's probably my last ride at Saratoga," he said. "At the end of the year I'm going to retire. It's been 16 years. I had my first ride when I was 16 in England and I really appreciate everyone that has put me up. I got a little emotional when I crossed the line. I'm going to ride the rest of the season here . . . I'm going to focus on training and doing some bloodstock and my wife Devon will be delighted to hear that I'm finishing in the year. I rode my first Grade 1 winner here on Winston C. This place holds a very special place in my heart and I'll miss it but hopefully I'll win it one day as a trainer."

Long Stretch

New turf horse Tawny Port handles 13 furlongs of John's Call

From the Kentucky Derby Trail to the longest flat stakes on the turf at Saratoga Race Course.

Tawny Port ran 12 times on the dirt, winning three races at 2 and 3 before finishing seventh in the 2022 Derby for trainer Brad Cox.

"He's always had a tremendous amount of ability. We've seen that previously with his previous outfits," said Miguel Clement, whose father picked up training duties after a seventh in the Grade 3 Ben Ali Stakes at Keeneland in April. "Nevertheless, we thought he had an affinity for turf, and he was able to revive his old form. He's got a high cruising speed."

The son of Pioneerof The Nile showed that turf affinity and cruising speed in Wednesday's \$135,000 John's Call, a 1 5/8-mile stakes for horses that haven't won a Grade 1 or 2 on turf this year.

Peachtree Stable's 4-year-old debuted on the grass last time out in the Grade 2 Bowling Green at 1 3/8

WEDNESDAY RACING RECAP

miles, finishing fifth in Channel Maker's gate-to-wire win.

Clement said they aimed the dark bay colt at turf marathons after recognizing stamina in his works.

"He lacked the turn of foot that many of our other horses in the stable have; he doesn't have a sharp high turn of foot," Clement said. "Nevertheless, he never quits and he kept sustaining it."

"If you look at his cardio, he has one of the best cardios in the entire stable. As a result, we're sure he can go on to do more, but it wasn't quite showing in his works. Quarter-pole to wire he was not having the same turn of foot as the others. Nevertheless, his cardio is remarkable, and that's why we thought we had to try him, the further the better."

Continued On Page 58



Dave Harmon

Tawny Port streaks to victory in Wednesday's John's Call Stakes.



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Wednesday —

■ Continued from page 57

Tawny Port broke sharply but was taken back by Joel Rosario to allow Tide Of The Sea to be the lone leader into the far turn for the first time, and through an opening quarter-mile in :22.94.

Six lengths covered the field through the lane, through a half-mile in :46.85. Tawny Port moved up along the rail to take the lead from Tide Of The Sea near the half-mile pole, while the rest of the field organized their chase behind.

Good Skate and Irad Ortiz Jr. were the first to confront Tawny Point around the far turn, with Sy Dog and Manny Franco also looking to unleash a run. Tawny Port proved he was much the best in the stretch, kicking away from the two closest challengers to win by 3 1/2 lengths. Sy Dog closed for second, while Good Skate faded to third. Woodbine shipper British Royalty and Kazushi Kimura, on his first Saratoga mount, finished fourth. Tide Of The Sea faded to fifth after setting the early pace.

Burning Bright suffered a fatal cardiovascular event on the clubhouse turn and crashed through the inside rail. Jockey Luis Saez suffered a dislocated right collar bone and a slight fracture of his left wrist, and will be out three to five weeks. Saez was slated to ride Kentucky Derby winner Mage in today's Grade 1 Travers Stakes.

Bred in Kentucky by WinStar Farm,

Tawny Port was a \$430,000 yearling purchase at the 2020 Keeneland September sale. The colt out of the Macho Uno mare Livi Makenzie bumped his career earnings to \$914,500, with a 5-1-1 record in 14 starts.

"He's always been a very good mover, very efficient, very straightforward in his training," Clement said. "And as a result, the mile and five-eighths today seemed ideal for him. The longer the better, and I think he's onto bigger and brighter things."

Clement mentioned the Sept. 30 Joe Hirsch Turf Classic at the Belmont at the Big A meeting and the Oct. 13 Sycamore Stakes at Keeneland as possible options.

"Wouldn't be completely opposed to wheeling him right back in two weeks maybe at Kentucky Downs, so we'll keep everything on the table, enjoy it, and see how he comes out of it," he said.

Sy Dog, by Slumber out of the Scat Daddy mare My Love Venezuela, and his full-brother Jimmy P each finished second in the co-featured stakes on the card, the former on the flat and the latter over hurdles in the Grade 1 Jonathan Sheppard. Both were bred by Madaket Stables and Head of Plains Partners.

John's Call raced on the flat and over jumps in his eight-year career, finishing in the money 30 times in 40 starts. Trained by the late Hall of Famer Tom Voss, he won four races at Saratoga including the 2000 Grade 1 Sword Dancer Invitational.

— Nolan Clancy

Continued On Page 59



Dave Harmon

Cherokee Cottage (9) gets up in time to win Wednesday's 10th over a crowd.



Dave Harmon

Perfect Munnings wins Wednesday's second race.

Wednesday —

■ Continued from page 58

• Perfect Munnings was the even-money favorite going into Wednesday's second race.

It made sense. The 5-year-old New York-bred was clearly the class of the 6-furlong, \$25,000 claiming race. He'd been in five stakes races and won or placed in each. No one else in the field had even appeared in a stakes the last two years. He also had a higher winning percentage, higher speed ratings and had earned more money than any of the others. He also hadn't been out in eight months.

"I really don't know what was wrong," said trainer Linda Rice, who took over the horse's training this year. "When he came to me about three months ago off the farm, he was fat, unfit and he just didn't want to do it. So you look to find a way. You try things."

"Sometimes you have to give a horse some competition. Give him someone to train with, maybe a baby. Maybe you run him harder in the mornings. He started coming 'round, started getting over that attitude. We just found a way to get him happy and like his job again."

If there was anything that could have set Perfect Munnings back to his

lazy ways, it might have been Lohengrin Two taking off from the gate at the start and getting an 8-length lead on him in the opening quarter-mile in :21.93.

Rice's go-to jockey, Jose Ortiz, patiently waited his turn.

When it came it was over quickly and decisively. Perfect Munnings was 14 1/2 lengths the best at the wire. He was also claimed for \$25,000 by trainer Steve Asmussen.

"I knew there was a good chance he'd be claimed," said Rice. "But his owners (JP Racing Stable) wanted to see him run once more at Saratoga."

Perfect Munnings improved to 3-for-3 at Saratoga, winning in each of the last three seasons. The win extends the remarkable success the Rice-Ortiz team has enjoyed recently. In the last two years, they've been winning at a 29 percent clip together in more than 160 races. And they weren't even done Wednesday.

In the ninth, a 7-furlong allowance-optional for New York-breds, the two paired again for their second win of the day. This one with a front-running Amundson, who easily turned away a challenge on the turn from favorite Radio Red and pulled away to win by 3 lengths.

Amundson was was Rice's 24th win of the meet and Jose's 28 to that point.

— Terry Hill

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AQUAPACER

79&sunny

BY TERRY HILL

I asked my editors if I could cover the annual New York Racetrack Chaplaincy charity basketball game Aug. 3. The request was genuine, but I do have to admit I had an ulterior motive in asking.

The game pits the Saratoga jockeys against the horsemen. If you've never seen one of these games, I highly recommend it. I know it sounds like a publicity stunt because height is such an advantage in basketball. And athletes who are required to weigh somewhere between 110 and 115 in order to compete don't often have to bend down to walk through doors. So no, there's not a lot of height on Team Jockey.

Would it surprise you then to learn that for the last four years the jockeys have won this matchup? It shouldn't when I remind you that the jockeys are all active professional athletes while most of the Horsemen haven't had to push themselves physically since they last ran a fast break back in high school.

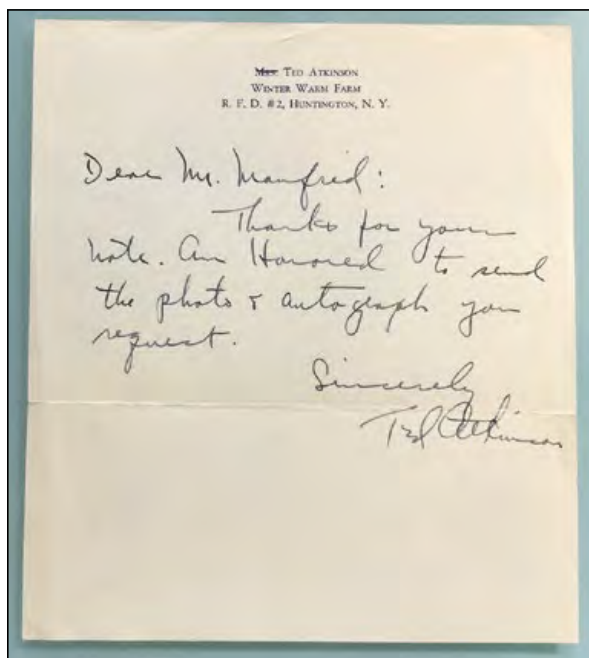
There is one height equalizer: Team Jockey is allowed a ringer. One player with some height that might be able to stop the Horsemen from getting every single rebound. And the Jockeys had a good one – John Wallace. After starring four years at Syracuse, Wallace played seven seasons in the NBA.

Oh yes, and Wallace is 6-foot-8. Meaning that in the NBA where definitions of words like tall and small are somewhat different than they are in the rest of the world, his position was "small forward."

When the game begins there's no doubt that this is no publicity stunt. Both sides are serious about winning.

After the game I spoke with Jockey Manny Franco who gave me the standard post charity-game quote. "It's for a great cause and it really doesn't matter who wins."

"I don't know," I responded. "It looked to me like it mattered to you."



Manny was all over the court during the game, playing with the same kind of intensity and determination he brings to a stretch duel at the track.

He got a sheepish look on his face and amended his earlier "it really doesn't matter" line. "Yeah," he admitted, "I always want to win."

The Jockeys took an early lead, but the Horsemen whittled away at it and by halftime they were up 36-34. Six minutes into the second half the Horsemen had opened up by 10 points. It looked all over for the Jockeys. But the Silk-Clads dug deep and fought back, and with 1:36 left, Franco calmly knocked down two free throws to put the Jockeys ahead by one for their first lead since early in the second quarter.

(One of the perils of writing sports is that you

must constantly invent new ways of referring to the teams. Otherwise, if you were a Detroit baseball writer, for instance, you'd wind up using the word Tigers 10 times every paragraph. Instead, you vary the reference, calling the team the Bengals, the Cats, the Felines, the Tabbies and whatever else you could invent, just to mix it up. All of this is by way of asking forgiveness for "Silk-Clads" in the last paragraph.)

Team Horsemen retook the lead with a three-pointer, however, and with only 5.9 seconds left in the game, the Horsemen held a two-point advantage and had two free throws coming. The announcer, with a deft phrase of his own invention I believe, informed the crowd of about 400 that the game was a "nail-biter."

The Equine-Minders (see earlier note on Silk-Clads) sank both free throws to put the game out of reach. For the first time in four years, the Horsemen tasted victory over the Jockeys 68-64.

Wallace was gracious in defeat.

"Last year we won by 21 but they seem to have drafted some top college talent since then," he said. "They were tough."

Kinnon LaRose, who played college basketball before his current position as an assistant to trainer Tom Amoss, was one of the draftees Wallace referred to. He was high scorer for the Horsemen with 16.

After the game I approached the Jockeys' coach, Hall of Fame rider Angel Cordero Jr., and asked if I could get a quote from him.

"We played hard, but you can't win them all," Cordero said.

I countered with my second question: "Could I have your autograph?"

This gets to the ulterior motive I mentioned in

Continued On Page 61

Saratoga Bulletin Board



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Sunny —

■ Continued from page 60

the first paragraph. I have a jockey autograph collection that I've been building since 1957. It's small, but very high quality – two Hall of Fame jockeys and the leading female jockey of this century.

Willie Shoemaker. I got his signature when I was 12 years old when I wrote him a no doubt soppy fan letter and asked him to sign an enclosed self-addressed, stamped (3 cents) postcard. He did. Eight thousand eight hundred and thirty-three wins. Four Derbys. Five Belmonts. If you don't know who Shoemaker is, then I don't know why you're reading The Special.

Ted Atkinson. Three thousand seven hundred and ninety-five wins, including numerous Graded Stakes before they were even graded. He is also the only jockey I know of whose name appears in a poem by a major American poet. Atkinson is a key figure in Marianne Moore's poem "Tom Fool at Jamaica." I have to acknowledge that I understand more about Atkinson's accomplishments than I do most of Marianne Moore poems. However, in the poem, she refers to the jockey as "Master Atkinson," and that I understand.

I bought Atkinson's autograph on eBay. It came as a note he wrote on his wife's stationery to a fan.

The third and final autograph in my collection is Rosie Napravnik's. I'm not sure it counts as a legal autograph since it's signed "Rosie N." I understand why she left off the last eight letters because there were a lot of people behind me also waiting

for her autograph and it takes time to write those last eight letters each time. Still, Rosie is married and she could have opted for something more honed.

Rosie's iconic moment came three months after I got her truncated autograph in 2014 when she won the Breeders' Cup Distaff on Untapable. In the winner's circle on national television, she announced to her mother and the rest of the world that she was pregnant and would be starting a family. The following day she rode four races and called it a career. She may not be in the Hall of Fame, but neither Shoemaker nor Atkinson pulled that off.

At my age (conveniently pointed out to you in the name of this column) you start to think about your final estate. What of importance and value will I pass on to succeeding generations? My autograph collection seemed like the perfect thing. But with only three signatures (well, two and a half) it felt a bit paltry. I vowed to double that number to six this year at Saratoga.

My targets were three Hall of Fame riders – John Velazquez, Javier Castellano and Angel Cordero Jr. Velazquez and Castellano ride most days here so, if I can muster the nerve, I can get them on the jockey walk.

But Cordero isn't consistently available. When I read he was coaching Team Jockey, I saw my chance. Thus, my hidden agenda in volunteering to cover the game. It worked. I now have Cordero's autograph.

I know it's his because I saw him sign the reporter's notepad I was using for game notes. For those of you who can't quite make it out I have added a caption for the photo.

Only Johnny V and Javier to go!



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Above: Henry Shrady (American, 1871-1922)
Horse and Jockey, 1904 (detail)

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Jimmy Jerkens and wife Shirley standing in front of the clubhouse big screen in 2014, imploring Wicked Strong to get home in the Travers. “Come on Wicked. Come on Wicked. Come on Wicked.” Only to be foiled by their other runner, V. E. Day, in the last jump. It was elation and deflation all at the same time. I could only print about half of what I heard. Still waters run deep.

Shug McGaughey leaning behind a pole behind the front row clubhouse box seats, in solitude. His wife and his owners in front of him, in explosion. He didn’t utter a word, didn’t budge during the 2019 Travers, slipping down the backstairs by himself as Code Of Honor streaked out of sight. “That was fun to watch.”

Steve Asmussen cavorting with his people, the two-dollar, newspaper-to-hold-the-seat, cooler-tugging racing fans. Three, four, five deep along the chain-link fence near the quarter pole, watching Jackie’s Warrior blow past in naked-eye brilliance one time, two times, three times.

Rick Violette slamming his hand down on the wooden ledge of a front-row box. “Yes,” the trainer declared as Diversify piled on the coals in the 2018 Whitney. The front-runner still had a furlong to go, Violette reveled in that furlong as I watched, worrying he might still get caught. Violette’s black-and-white conviction had never been more clear. A lifelong horseman, he was gone two months later.

And all the others, connections watching Grade 1 victories at Saratoga. They’re printed in this paper, etched in my soul. I haven’t gotten them all right, not even close, there have been losers along the way, fleeing the party that just got busted. Bob Baffert shaking his head, a few strides before the wire of the 2015 Travers, another Triple Crown winner vanquished in Saratoga. “I should have gone to Parx.” I slid out the back door of the glass-enclosed finish-line box before hearing arx.

For 23 years at Saratoga, I haven’t watched Grade 1 stakes, I’ve watched people watching Grade 1 stakes. Wednesday, I watched a Grade 1 stakes. It went something like this:

As the full field of 10 rushed toward starter Hector Soler’s flag on the far side of the Saratoga backstretch, Jack Fisher stared at the TV from the back row box, “Go Tom. Go Tom. Go Tom”

Grade 1 View



By Sean Clancy

Sean Clancy leaned back in his chair as the field broke for the Jonathan Sheppard.

“Too far back,” the former jockey said, in disgust as paddock plans disappeared into the thin air of another race gone awry.

“Too far back.”

“Get there, Tom.”

“Too far back.”

“Get there, Tom.”

For 2 miles, Fisher and Clancy watched Tom Garner and Awakened. The trainer and the owner, comrades for 29 years, begging and leaning for a seam, a slot, an opening in a jam-packed 10-horse field.

“Too far back.”

“Get there, Tom.”

“Too far back.”

“Get there, Tom.”

Into and around the fifth turn, Awakened in a flash wasn’t too far back and Tom began to get there.

The writer in me skidded out somewhere in that segue and the owner in me took over.

On the final turn, Garner found that seam, that slot, that opening and Awakened pounced. I was long gone, side-stepping, snapping, slapping and screaming, stride for every stride with my first Grade 1 winner.

Seventeen furlongs of deflation, one furlong of creation and one beautiful furlong of elation.

Awakened separated from Jimmy P by a length. I separated from Fisher and my team by about 10. I wound up in the middle of the stairs, by myself, stunned in disbelief, holding back tears as Awakened galloped out of sight.

Tears for the little horse who came through, a horse who lived outside for five months before we put a saddle on him and had just repaid our faith. For the Phipps family’s legacy of taking care of horses.

For my dad at the beach, the man who instilled any shred of horsemanship I possess. For my mom, who lived and breathed every jump I ever jumped. For my sister, Sheila, the big sister who always had my back. For my brother way down in Asmussen land holding onto his emotions on the Fox show. For my nephew Nolan, here for one full season, a gifted summer for all of us before he goes off to conquer the world.

For Tom Law, who’s watched me lose far more than win and has never wavered. For Kerry, Tim and their son Declan, for their confidence. For Robert back home, who jumped into the horse game this spring. For Marshall and his Ten Strike Racing team, a big-time flat stable supporting the jumpers.

For Jack, who changed my life when he asked if I wanted to ride first call for him way back in 1994 and again when he convinced me to find him horses in my travels, the first one was a Violette-trained gem named Bubble Economy. For Jack’s crew at the races and at home, all their hard work makes the difference. For Jamie Bargary who taught Awakened early. For Garner, who I like as much as a person as I do as a jockey.

For Annie and Miles at home, riding this crazy ride. For Saratoga, the magic maker of my life.

I caught the tears in my throat and took a deep breath. For once in my life in a Grade 1 stakes at Saratoga, I watched the race.

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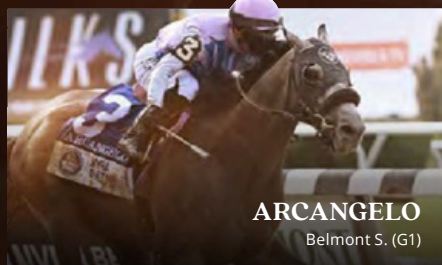
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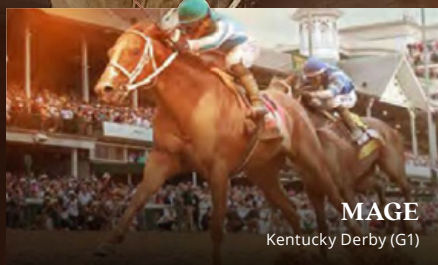
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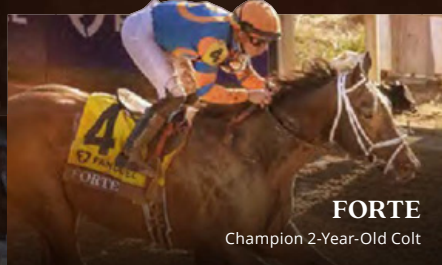
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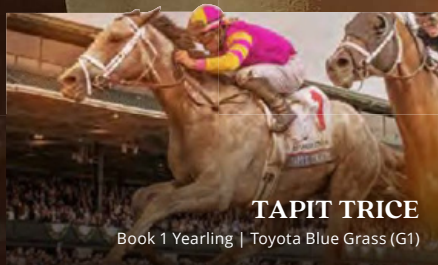
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