

Year 24 • No. 1

Thursday, July 11, 2024

The Saratoga

Special

Saratoga's Racing Newspaper since 2001



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BELMONT DERBY
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BREEDERS' CUP TURF (2)
BREEDERS' CUP FILLY
& MARE TURF
DELAWARE HANDICAP
DONN HANDICAP (2)

DUBAI WORLD CUP
FLORIDA DERBY
FRANK KILROE MILE
FRIZETTE
GARDEN CITY
GRAND NATIONAL HURDLE
HASKELL INVITATIONAL
HOLLYWOOD TURF CUP
IROQUOIS HURDLE (2)
JENNY WILEY

JOE HIRSCH TURF CLASSIC (2)
KENTUCKY DERBY (2)
KING'S BISHOP
LONESOME GLORY HURDLE
MAKER'S 46 MILE (3)
MANHATTAN (2)
MAN O' WAR (4)
MATRIARCH (2)
METROPOLITAN MILE
NEARCTIC STAKES
PRIORESS

QUEEN ELIZABETH II
SHADWELL TURF MILE
SPINAWAY (2)
SPINSTER
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Here&There...in Saratoga

Quips, Quotes, Names, Numbers & Notes found along the way

License Plates of the Day

2SADDL, Virginia. FARM KID, Virginia.

Worth Repeating

"She's pretty one-dimensional. There's no sending her, she sends herself. There's no strategy."

Trainer Kyle Horlacher, about Opening Day entrant Shoshanah

"I would have my son there and would dial 911 on my phone and give it to him and say, 'If you see me fall off, and I don't get up, push the button.'"

Horlacher, about playing it safe (sorta) while learning to gallop a 2-year-old

"That's his condominium, it's fully finished like in Tom and Jerry. He's got a whole layout in there."

Trainer Mike Trombetta, about a barn mouse zipping around the barn at Fair Hill

"I love that little barn. If somebody more important asks about it, I'm probably out. So far, they've been very fair about it. If somebody needs that for overflow, I'll be searching."

Trombetta, about his Saratoga string bedding down in Barn 47 in Horse Haven

"All the horses we send up there will be live. I don't want to embarrass Skylar."

Trainer Jimmy Toner, about his Saratoga runners and assistant Skylar McKenna

"You get any reports of Skylar trashing the town up there, you let me know. OK?"

Toner, harassing McKenna some more

"Send Fin Maroney, I'm sure his uncle has sent him on dumber missions."

Joe Clancy on first-year intern and nephew of Hall of Fame trainer Jack Fisher

"I'm the wash-rack technician and the screw-eye guy this year for Jimmy Ferraro. My fingers hurt from putting in all those screw eyes, just right."

Benji Perez, aka "Lipshank 2020"

"I love it here, all the people and the horses. It is harder though, more challenging, but in a good way."

Nicholas Brown, aspiring assistant trainer and son of trainer Bruce Brown

"Are you guys following me?"

Trainer Jim Bond to The Special's crew on a golf cart Wednesday morning near Clare Court



Samantha Decker

Belmont Freight Train. Dornoch, who won the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga last month, rolls through a gallop for rider Priscilla Schaefer.

Names of the Day

Rhombique, second race. Marc Keller's homebred mare is out of Equilateral. It's French and translates to rhombic, an adjective describing something in the shape of a rhombus. What's a rhombus? An equilateral quadrilateral, of course, which describes a four-sided shape where each side is the same length. Something like that anyway.

Neigh Jude, third race. Mr. Amore Stable's 4-year-old filly is out of Ju Ju Eyeballs. Na na na nananana, nannana.

Needed, third race. Vineyard Racing's 3-year-old filly is out of Necessary.

Clancy Fancy, fifth race. One time, let's go.

Mosienko, seventh race. The main-track-only entrant makes Name of the Day pretty much every year. The 7-year-old mare is by Hat Trick and named for Bill Mosienko, who scored the fastest hat trick in NHL history (21 seconds) while playing for the Chicago Black Hawks in 1952.



The Saratoga
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Here&There...in Saratoga

Quips, Quotes, Names, Numbers & Notes found along the way

Worth Repeating

"Congratulations. You're in a great spot."

Trainer Al Stall Jr., meeting five members of The Special's editorial and marketing team, including three newcomers

"I'm ready. Any time."

Retired trainer Carl Domino about his burgeoning dog-walking business Wednesday morning

"I was kidding with someone this week that the biggest challenge for me this week has been not calling the Belmont the Travers."

Trainer Todd Pletcher

"I'll give you a little talk about the horses. Save your money."

Bob the Water Guy to the 2024 Special interns

"Go to the Adirondacks. Go to the lakes. There's a good Mexican place in Schuylerville. Get to the Battlefield, where it all started. That's if you saved your money from the horses."

More wisdom from Bob the Water Guy

"I need self starters."

The Special's Tom Law Wednesday morning

"Nope, but I'll wing it."

Groom when asked if he understood the assistant's instructions Wednesday morning

"I've got a lead pony this year."

Lara Duggan, walking next to her husband, Dave, on the pony Wednesday morning

"He went overtime that year."

Pletcher remembering Sean Clancy's Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour interview during the 2020 Covid-19 season

"I see a lot of Brook Ledge horse vans."

Paul Wasserman driving from Hillsdale to Amsterdam Tuesday morning

"Maybe we need two. One for home and one for that empty parking lot next to the office in Saratoga."

Miles Clancy, 15, when asking for a Nine-Hole Baseball Pitching Net with Pitching Target Pockets. Hey, Boyd...

"I don't think it still has. I'll be riding around on the lawn mower and I'm like, 'Wow, I really won the Derby.'"

Jockey Brian Hernandez Jr. when asked if winning the Derby and sunk in yet

"I got paid for size more than anything today."

Hernandez on the ease of Thorpedo Anna's win in the Acorn



Samantha Decker

Stay Hydrated. Sonny McPeck cools off at the barn this week.

"Things can go wrong. When things go right, you don't get too crazy about it. Even Pat Day said, 'keep it in the middle, never too high, never too low.'"

Trainer Kenny McPeck about keeping an even keel

"Keep him working hard and smiling."

Katharine Maroney, mother of 2024 intern Fin, when seeing a photo from the office Tuesday night

"Both boats running great."

Rich Cristiano to The Special's looking for a day on the lake

"Wishing you all a great meet."

Longtime reader Rob Griffo

"Hot."

The Special's Sami Loud on how Hot Yoga was Wednesday

Weather

It's hot, of course it's hot. It's summer. But be creative. How hot is it, really?

Hotter than the devil's flip flops . . . Hotter than running The Boilermaker in a black shirt (and pants) . . . Hotter than a driveway sealer in Jamaica (in July) . . . Hotter than the propane burners heating those 55-gallon drums of water in the stable area all those years ago . . . Hotter than a Black Labrador at the beach . . . Hotter than wearing black blinkers all day . . . Hotter than the beans coming out of that roaster machine at Uncommon Grounds . . . Hotter than the dance floor at The Rafters back in the day . . . Hotter than Dead Heat Habanero Hot Sauce, which you can buy at Impressions of Saratoga . . . Hotter than an attic apartment in the Algonquin (before AC) . . . Hotter than the Phillies (who are 60-32) . . . Hotter than hot yoga in the Saratoga jockeys' steam room.

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HE TOOK IT TO THE MAX IN HIS CHOSEN FIELD

Undefeated G1 winner at two, with his debut crop of yearlings selling at Saratoga. **The first Maxfield** in the ring at F-T July sold for **\$220k**. Just imagine!



Darley

Here&There...in Saratoga

Quips, Quotes, Names, Numbers & Notes found along the way

By the Numbers

240: Yearlings consigned to Fasig-Tipton's Saratoga Select Sale Aug. 5-6.

103: Editions of the Saratoga Sale counting this year.

2: Consecutive Preakness winners (National Treasure and Seize The Grey) sold at the Saratoga sale.

550,000: Dollars the highest-priced yearling sold for at the Fasig-Tipton July Sale in Kentucky. Consigned by Gainesway, agent for Bridlewood, the Maclean's Music colt was purchased by Resolute Racing – hitting an all-Special advertiser perfecta by the way.

117: Trainers on the Saratoga barn list.

80: Trainers with at least one entry Opening Day.

8:51: Time Wednesday night of Steve Byk's first text to appear on At the Races Thursday morning.

45: Wins for jockey Jose Ortiz at the recently concluded Churchill Downs meet.

1: Fountain of Youth Stakes sign on the backside.

16: More pages in this year's Opening Day Special than last year's edition.

12: Riding titles in New York for Manny Franco, who won the Belmont spring/summer meet (run at Aqueduct and Saratoga) that ended July 7 with 41 wins. Franco edged Irad Ortiz Jr., who won 37, for the crown.

1: Win for trainer Kevin Bond, son of Jim, who scored the first victory of his career with Petrolo at Finger Lakes Tuesday.



The GOAT of Goats? Trainer Jorge Abreu's barn mascot stops traffic in the barn area.

Samantha Decker

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With Todd Pletcher

The success of Todd Pletcher's stable this season at Saratoga Race Course figures to enviably hinge on two fairly typical factors for the 14-time Spa training champion.

"We have a lot of 2-year-olds and we're fortunate to have a fair number of stakes horses," Pletcher said Monday afternoon. "I don't feel like we have a lot of support in the middle though. In order to compete for leading trainer titles, you need to have a really diversified stable that's strong in a lot of categories which I don't think we are this year."

The draft of 2-year-olds, a bulk of which are supplied by Pletcher's most loyal clients, including Mike Repole's Repole Stable and Vinnie and Teresa Viola's St. Elias Stable, figure to be strong.

"Hopefully," Pletcher said as he wrapped up his eighth Fasig-Tipton Stable Tour in the last seven years. He graced *The Special's* readers with two Stable Tours in 2020, one before the spectator-less Saratoga meet and one during. The hopefully came after the question was raised about any other good juveniles to mention. After a lengthy visit, Pletcher earned the right to be a bit close to the vest while still giving out a few potential stars to add to his Hall of Fame resume.

"It'll depend on the 2-year-olds. Some of them have run well already and hopefully we can continue that," Pletcher said, conceding that some of this year's juveniles might be geared toward later in the meet. "A good portion are horses that are bred to run longer, and hopefully they'll make starts at the meet when the maiden races go 6 (furlongs) to a mile basically."

The stable, bedded down in his usual spot on the Oklahoma Training Track with overflow across Nelson Avenue at the harness track and others downstate at Belmont Park, is certainly not without established stars. Top 3-year-olds Fierceness, Mindframe, Tuscan Sky, Leslie's Rose and Candied are among those with starts coming up, the latter two in the Grade 1 Coaching Club American Oaks and the former trio headed to the Grade 1 Haskell Invitational July 20 at Monmouth Park or perhaps in the Grade 2 Jim Dandy July 27 at Saratoga. Along the way there figures to be runners for the older male and female divisions, including Bright Future for the Grade 1 Whitney and Kingsbarns likely for



Samantha Decker

The Todd Pletcher stable is packed with quality headed into another Saratoga season.

the Grade 1 Jockey Club Gold Cup.

Everything starts this weekend with 21 entries over the first four days of the meet, including Carmen's Candy Jar in today's \$175,000 Schuylerville for 2-year-old fillies and Mentee in Saturday's Grade 3, \$175,000 Sanford for 2-year-olds.

Pletcher sat down Monday afternoon with *The Special's* Tom Law to discuss members of the 2024 contingent.

Fierceness: The champ. Repole Stable's homebred 2023 champion 2-year-old male and Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner finished 15th as the favorite in the Kentucky Derby. Pletcher and Repole bypassed the Preakness and Belmont with an eye on a summer and fall campaign. "What we're looking at right now is him and Mindframe targeting the Haskell. We'll have to make sure that's what we want to do. Another option would possibly look at the Jim Dandy. The Grade 1 status of the Haskell staring at us factors. Mike owns 100 percent of Fierceness and 50 percent of Mindframe. It's obviously the Grade 1 status, I'm not going to say it's not important because it's important to both horses, but the fact that Fierceness is already a champion, already a multiple Grade 1 winner, the stakes are so-called higher for Mindframe if he were to win the Haskell. It would solidify his stallion status. You can think about it and discuss, but until you get that final preparation in and know where you are with both horses. I'd prefer not to run the two against

each other, but if that's what we have to do we'll do it."

Discuss bypassing the June 8 Belmont Stakes, after considering the race.

"He ran in the Derby, we gave him a couple days there and shipped him here. I wrapped up there in Kentucky, went to Belmont, checked on things and hadn't seen him for a week when I got here. Right away it was kind of eh, the race, shipping, it seemed to take something out of him. We said let's see how he does, give him a breeze and he's normally an exceptional work horse. It wasn't a bad work but wasn't him. I told Mike, to prepare this horse for the race we'd have to breeze him a few times and I don't see him being on his A-game so we regrouped, targeting the Haskell. Now he's back to himself, training really well."

Mindframe: Maryland-bred son of Constitution won his first two starts before a game second to Dornoch in the 10-furlong Belmont Stakes. Owned by Repole and St. Elias Stable, he's also on target for the Haskell. "He reinforced our belief in him as one of, who knows, maybe the best 3-year-old colt in the crop with his race in the Belmont. The one concern we had going in was lack of experience and seasoning and I think that ultimately cost him the race. It was one of those things where you were disappointed you didn't win but couldn't be disappointed with the horse or his effort. To run like that in his third start."

Antiquarian: Centennial Farm's 3-year-old son of Preservationist finished fifth and 7 1/2 lengths back in the Belmont Stakes. He won the Grade 3 Peter Pan prior

Continued on Page 10

Classic Success

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Stable Tour -

■ Continued from page 8

to that effort. "We sent him to the farm in Virginia. He's getting a little break. He might be back here by the end of the meet."

Leslie's Rose: Whisper Hill Farm's Grade 1-winning daughter of Into Mischief chased Thorpedo Anna in her last two starts – a 13th in the Kentucky Oaks and a runner-up in the Grade 1 Acorn here June 7. The winner of the Grade 1 Ashland Stakes at Keeneland will try that filly again in the Grade 1 Coaching Club American Oaks July 20. "Tall order, obviously. That filly has been exceptional. Happy to see (Leslie's Rose) regroup and run back to her capabilities. Unfortunately, she did not like the off going at Churchill and the Oaks. We kind of saw it one morning leading up to the race. We had a sloppy track there at Churchill and she's normally a pretty aggressive filly galloping and was not liking the track. You were hoping in the race scenario it would be different but Irad (Ortiz Jr.) said at no point was she loving it. So we regrouped and were glad to see her run well in the Acorn."



Samantha Decker

Todd Pletcher checks on a charge this week at Saratoga.

Candied: Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners' \$165,000

Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July yearling purchase in 2022 won her debut here last summer before winning the Grade 1 Darley Alcibiades Stakes at Keeneland. Third in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies and fourth behind her stablemate Leslie's Rose in the Ashland, daughter of Candy Ride missed a chance to run in the Kentucky Oaks because of lack of points to make the field of 14. She returned with a victory in the June 8 Lady's Secret Stakes at Monmouth Park and is aiming for the CCA Oaks. "She won Lady's Secret and the filly she beat came back and won the Delaware Handicap. That's a 3-year-old filly beating older fillies so it's not easy to do. Hopefully that has us back on course. . . . It's taken us a while to get back. She was fourth in the Ashland which put us on the AEs for the Oaks, so we've been trying to catch back up and we're finally back in form. Look, if the favorite runs her race we're all running for second, but sometimes crazy things happen at Saratoga."

Tuscan Sky: Spendthrift Farm's 3-year-old son of Vino Rosso, a \$200,000 purchase out of the 2022 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July sale, bounced back from a seventh in the Grade 2 Wood Memorial to win the NYRA Bets Pegasus Stakes June 15 at Monmouth Park. "He didn't fire in the Wood, so we regrouped and everything went well in the Pegasus. He seemed to handle it and get back to the kind of performance we're expecting from him. Now he's got to take another step forward against the top colts. He's been pretty solid. We'll see about those three in the Haskell. I'd love to not run all three with the Jim Dandy right there, too."

Protective: Repole's 3-year-old Medaglia d'Oro colt finished third as a maiden in the Wood Memorial and Grade 3 Peter Pan, then checked in sixth in the Belmont Stakes. He's entered in Sunday's fifth, a 9-furlong maiden on the main track. "Hopefully we'll get him a win soon. He's trained well since the Belmont."

Kingsbarns: Spendthrift went to \$800,000 to buy the Uncle Mo colt at the 2022 Fasig-Tipton Gulfstream Sale. He's won six of nine with two seconds, including a victory last time out in the Grade 1 Stephen Foster Stakes at Churchill Downs. He also won the Grade 3 Ben Ali at Keeneland and finished second in the Grade 3 Pimlico Special. Kingsbarns finished 14th in last year's Derby and second in the Pegasus before some time off. "He's come back really well this year. Big win in the Stephen Foster. Great to see him earn his way back into the Spendthrift stallion barn. That's what their program is all about. Glad to see them rewarded for purchasing an expensive 2-year-old. Either Whitney or Jockey Club Gold Cup. Right now, I'd say we're leaning toward waiting for the Jockey Club. He seems to run well fresh. If we run in the Whitney, it's pretty far out from the Breeders' Cup Classic. At the same time I don't know that I want to run him twice, the Whitney and then again. We'll see. Play it by ear but right now leaning toward the Jockey Club."

Bright Future: Repole and St. Elias' 5-year-old son of Curlin made a splash at Saratoga last summer with an allowance win before a mild upset in the Grade 1

Jockey Club Gold Cup. Sixth in the Breeders' Cup Classic, he returned to win the Grade 3 Salvator Mile June 15 at Monmouth. "We're pointing for the Whitney. His Salvator Mile, he got the job done there. That was sort of our plan, to run well there and come back in the Whitney. He won two races here last year, seems to like it here and hopefully he can make a move here in his second start of the year."

Crupi: Repole and St. Elias' 4-year-old son of Curlin won the Grade 2 Suburban going 10 furlongs before a second to Next in the Grade 2 Brooklyn Stakes at 11 furlongs. "He ran great. Unfortunately, that Next, he's tough. He might be the most dominant horse in his division out of any division in racing. Crupi ran well, just second best. He's pretty tough and durable, so I wouldn't rule out the Whitney or Jockey Club for him. The Birdstone, too. It'll be interesting to see what direction Next goes."

Surprisingly: Repole purchased 5-year-old daughter of Mastery for \$1 million last November. She's made four starts for Pletcher, finishing second in two graded stakes at Gulfstream, seventh in the Grade 3 Modesty at Churchill Downs and fourth in the Grade 1 New York June 7 at Saratoga. Pletcher bypassed Saturday's Grade 1 Diana. "We're going to the Matchmaker on Haskell Day (July 20) with her. She's run well at Monmouth before. She ran well in the New York. Unlucky trip at Churchill, aside from that every one of her races has been solid."

Audacious: Bass Stable's 3-year-old daughter of Into Mischief, a \$700,000 yearling, won her debut June 6 at Saratoga going 7 furlongs. "Trying to get an allowance race to go, maybe to stretch her out a little bit. It took us a little while to get her there but a good debut."

Manama Gold: Pletcher's first trainee by leading Louisiana sire Star Guitar, the Victorious Racing 3-year-old filly finished second in her first start for the stable in the Jersey Girl Stakes here June 6. Winner of the Grade 3 UAE Oaks, full sister to leading turf sprinter Ova Charged sports 3-for-4 record. "We're going to try the Lake George (July 20) with her. She's got that full sister that is a fast filly on the turf. We worked her on the grass and she seemed to handle it well. We have a lot of options with her. She can sprint, she can route and hopefully she can turf."

Munnys Gold: A two-time graduate of the Fasig-Tipton sales ring, including for \$300,000 at the 2021 Kentucky July yearling sale, stakes-winning daughter of Munnings finished third in the Grade 1 Test before going to the sidelines. She returned with an allowance victory June 7 at Saratoga. "Good comeback. We're targeting the Honorable Miss (July 24). She's come back in good form."

Charge It: Whisper Hill Farm's homebred 5-year-old son of Tapit won last year's Grade 2 Suburban and the Grade 3 Dwyer in 2022. Fourth in last year's Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile, he was third in the Grade 3 Westchester at Aqueduct and fifth in the Hanshin last time out at Churchill Downs. "Little disappointing at Churchill.

We haven't gotten quite on track. He was scratched from the Suburban with a temperature the morning of the race. That would have been a good fit for him, with a favorable pace scenario. Not sure what way we're going to go. He continues to train great but we're trying to identify his specialty."

Carmen's Candy Jar: The sentimental filly. Named for the late, great Carmen Barrera's signature desk treat holder, daughter of Vino Rosso is 6-1 for today's \$175,000 Schuylerville off a maiden win June 23 at Aqueduct. Mike Repole named the filly for the late respected horsemen's liaison who passed away suddenly in 2019 at Saratoga. "Cool little filly. When she first came in we thought she was on the small sign, but could tell right away she was competitive. Good debut. It's back a little quick but thought if she could win an open stake or run well in an open graded stake, that's great, if not then the timing would be better to the New York-bred stakes that way. If she did well then there's plenty of time back to the Spinaway."

Got any favorite Carmen Barrera stories?

"She would always kid me and Kiaran (McLaughlin) that we were her two favorites. She would call us 1 and 1A. I would always say, 'I know Kiaran's 1, you just don't tell me that when we're around.' We have a photo of us going like this (holding up their index fingers). To me she was one of those people that made a difficult job seem easy. You know, especially on those big days, trying to accommodate everyone and make them pleased with their seating. It had to be a nightmare. But it never seemed to bother her. I appreciated the job she did, liked her. A lot of times I'd stop by her office, sit down and shoot the breeze with her. She was a special person. Sad to lose her so early and unexpectedly."

Classic Catch: Whisper Hill's 4-year-old Classic Empire colt is entered in today's ninth, a stakes-quality allowance 9 furlongs. He's won three of 13 with four placings for earnings of \$360,953. "Lost a tough photo last time. He's doing well. Been a consistent, solid horse that's just on the brink of breaking through. Had a good win here last year. Didn't draw a great post for either one of those in that race. Hopefully we can make the most of it. He's 10 and Untreated is 11."

Untreated: Team Valor International's 6-year-old son of Nyquist also goes in today's ninth, a stakes-quality allowance-optional March 19, 2023. A three-time winner, Untreated placed in the Grade 2 Suburban and Grade 3 Pimlico Special in 2022. "He's been out for a while but he's come back and is training well. It's a tricky spot to start back in but he doesn't have a lot of conditions he's eligible to."

Miss Justify: Daughter of Justify drew post one and is 3-1 on the morning line for Friday's \$135,000 Wilton. Owned by Twin Oaks Bloodstock, IEE Racing, Joseph Bulger and Will Campbell, she cost \$200,000 at last year's Fasig-Tipton Midlantic May sale. She's won two of four, including June 1 allowance-optional at Churchill. "She comes off a nice win going a mile. This is similar, not quite a one-turn mile but not quite a two-turn mile."

Courbe: A 3-year-old Quality Road filly for the Wertheimer brothers, she drew post six and is 6-1 for Friday's Wilton Stakes. Off since winning in October at Keeneland, she's 2-for-3 with the lone defeat in the Grade 3 Pocahontas Stakes at Churchill. "It's a little bit of a tricky spot for her, having already won two races and a two-other-than allowance would have to be against older horses. Maybe she can fit in here."

Chanteuse: Bass Stable's homebred 3-year-old Into Mischief filly finished fifth in debut here June 6 and is entered in Friday's first race. She's out of Dazzling Song, the dam of Pletcher's Grade 1 Arkansas Derby winner Magnum Moon among other winners. "She was the pacesetter in the Audacious maiden. Those two have been training together and kind of on pretty even terms in the morning. She seemed to just get tired the last part. She was cruising along pretty well. Hopefully with a race under her belt and solid works since then she'll move forward."

Continued on Page 12

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



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

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

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Stable Tour –

■ Continued from page 10

Storm Ready: Four-year-old son of City Of Light, placed in two of three starts, goes in Friday's third race, a 1 1/16-mile maiden on the grass. "He's been knocking on the door. Not sure what's going to happen with the weather. Might be one that we run if it comes off the turf."

Value Area: Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners' and Gary Lewin's stakes-placed 3-year-old daughter of More Than Ready is main track only for Friday's \$150,000 Coronation Cup Stakes. "The forecast certainly looks like rain. You know how that goes up here though."

Talk Of The Nation: Allen Stable's and CHC Inc.'s 4-year-old stakes winner by Quality Road is one of five entered in the body of the race for Saturday's Grade 3 Kelso. First or second in eight of 10 starts, he finished third in the Grade 3 Poker on the Belmont Day undercard. "Two good efforts since we got him. Ran well here. Seems reliable, shows up, tries hard."

Illuminare: Centennial Farm's 3-year-old City Of Light colt won debut June 7 at Saratoga. He drew post two of eight in \$110,000 allowance going 7 furlongs in the fourth race Saturday. "That was a very good debut and has trained well since then. Hopefully we keep moving forward."

Tenacious Leader: A \$375,000 yearling for Spendthrift and Repole, 2-year-old son of Not This Time makes debut in Saturday's seventh at 5 1/2 furlongs. The 5-2 favorite on the morning line is out of the unraced Curlin mare Diamonds And Rust. "Been training forwardly at Belmont. His last gate work was sharp. Seems like he's prepared to run well in his debut."

Upstanding: Three-year-old son of Curlin makes his debut in Saturday's eighth for Repole and St. Elias. A \$400,000 yearling, he's out of the Grade 3-placed Unbridled's Song mare Mannerly. "It's taken a little while to get here but the horse trains like he's very nice."

Mentee: Repole's homebred 2-year-old full brother to Fierceness is the 6-5 morning-line favorite for Saturday's Grade 3 Sanford. Son of City Of Light colt won his debut by nose over Colloquial June 15 at Aqueduct, after leading by 5 lengths in midstretch. He drew post one for the 6-furlong Sanford, which attracted eight runners. "Cool little brother. They're different physicals. Similar mental makeup,



Samantha Decker

Munnys Gold targets the Honorable Miss.



Samantha Decker

Turf stakes winner Agate Road could be headed back to the dirt.

both pretty laid-back, quiet colts, easy to train. Good debut. Of course he drew the one hole. He was good from the gate in his breezes leading up to his debut and same thing for this. Hopefully he can get away cleanly."

Alpha Bella: Don Alberto's homebred 4-year-old daughter of Justify finished fifth in the July 7 Robert G. Dick Memorial on the turf at Delaware Park. She's won three of 15 starts with four seconds and earned \$371,865, including the Grade 3 La Prevoyante in late January at Gulfstream Park. "The (Robert G. Dick) didn't work out great. She made the lead but always had pressure and got a little bit late the last part. I'm not sure where we'll resurface yet."

Agate Road: A winner here in his second start last year before taking the Grade 2 Pilgrim, son of Quality Road found mild success with two stakes placings this winter on the turf and dirt in Florida before a seventh in the Grade 2 Louisiana Derby. Sixth in the American Turf and fifth in the American Derby, both at Churchill, could be headed for another change for Repole and St. Elias. "We might go back to the dirt with him. We're thinking about the West Virginia Derby with him. His race in the Louisiana Derby wasn't bad, his race at Tampa wasn't bad. We've always felt he was a little better on the turf. Maybe he didn't love the course at Churchill."

Emmanuel: A multiple graded stakes winner and \$718,005 earner for Siena Farm and WinStar Farm, 5-year-old son of More Than Ready finished fifth in the Grade 1 Maker's Mark Mile and sixth in Grade 3 Arlington Stakes after winning the Grade 3 Canadian Turf in early March in his 2024 debut. "We're going to try and stretch him out and go to the United Nations (July 20 at Monmouth) to see how he handles that."

Tizzy in the Sky: KimDon Racing's 5-year-old Sky Kingdom mare won the Top Flight in mid-April at Aqueduct then finished sixth after breaking through the gate in the Grade 1 Ogden Phipps here on Belmont Stakes Day. She's won four of 12 and earned \$388,525. "Possible for the Shuvee (July 21). The Phipps was as tough as it gets and she broke through the gate. It didn't go as planned."

Dreamlike: Last year's surprise runner-up finisher in the Grade 1 Pennsylvania Derby – which earned him a spot in the Breeders' Cup Classic – 4-year-old son of

Gun Runner finished second in a Keeneland allowance and third in the Grade 3 Blame at Churchill to start the season. He finished eighth last time out in the Stephen Foster for Repole and St. Elias. "He got in some trouble in the first turn of the Foster, got shuffled back to last and just never could re-rally from that point on."

Major Dude: A multiple graded winner and earner of \$786,712 for Spendthrift Farm, 4-year-old son of Bolt d'Oro returned from almost 10 months off to finish second in June 23 allowance-optional at Aqueduct. "He had a good comeback, just missed. He's a cool horse, really professional in his training. One of those horses that does what he's supposed to do all the time."

Capture the Flag: Four-year-old son of Quality Road bounced back from sixth in 5 1/2-furlong allowance at Saratoga June 8 to win 1-mile turf allowance July 6 at Belmont for connections that include Allen Stable and Coolmore representatives. Trained by Shug McGaughey at 2 and 3, he scored debut maiden win on the dirt here July 30, 2022. "We were trying to figure out where to bring him back. We knew the 5 1/2 that we ran him in here Belmont Week was probably a little sharp for him, which it was. He closed well. It was one of those situations that it helped set him up to get the job done."

Tapit Trice: The winner of last year's Grade 1 Blue Grass and Grade 3 Tampa Bay Derby hasn't been out since finishing third in last year's Travers Stakes for Whisper Hill Farm and Gainesway Stable. "He could come back in the Monmouth Cup. Probably going to breeze this week. If it goes well that could be the plan. Tricky to find spots for horses like him to bring back."

Nudge: Repole's 2-year-old Uncle Mo colt finished fourth behind stablemate Mentee in the June 15 maiden at Aqueduct. A \$200,000 yearling, he's out of the multiple stakes-placed Tapit mare Awestruck. "His debut was just too short for him, and I think he'll appreciate stretching out."

Noble Confessor: St. Elias' homebred 2-year-old son of Quality Road out of the winning Noble Mission Sweeter Than Wine breezed a half from the gate in :48.47 on the Oklahoma Training Track dirt July 6. "He's trained well, and getting close."

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Saratoga still creates perfect racing canvas as 2024 meet arrives

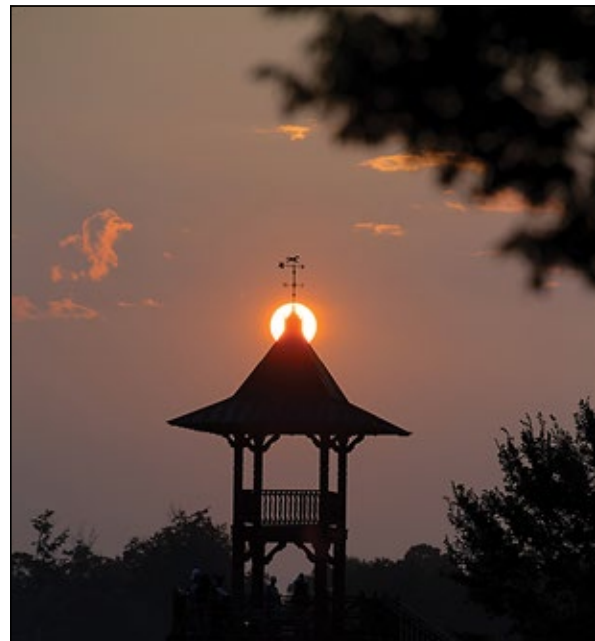
BY JOE CLANCY AND TOM LAW

Why Saratoga?

You can ask anyone in Thoroughbred racing that question and get an answer. Nobody hesitates, not for long anyway. People know why.

“It’s the blue-ribbon meet of America, it’s like the Royal Ascot of America, the Cheltenham of America,” said Bruce Jackson, a former trainer and now co-owner of Fair Hill Equine Therapy Center in Maryland. The Englishman first went to Saratoga in 1985 when, with about 10 minutes’ notice, his boss Jonathan Sheppard said the van was leaving and Jackson should be on it. “I think it’s just the best, the best of the best, all coming together and sorting it out on the track. It just has certain intangibles about it that make it special.”

Jackson got on that van with Over Indulged, a Texas-bred entered in a maiden hurdle race at Saratoga Aug. 1 and some other steeplechasers. Bred and owned by Will Farish, Over Indulged won going



Tod Marks

The Whitney Viewing Stand is part of what makes Saratoga special.



Tod Marks

Iconic Saratoga Race Course hosts another meet as the calendar turns to July 2024.

2 1/16 miles. Ten days later, the Sheppard-trained Storm Cat – future, breed-shaping stallion – made his debut.

“That was quite an introduction, it was terrific,” Jackson said. “We stabled at the Annex. All the steeplechase horses were back there. Jonathan had a load of flat horses as well. That was in Storm Cat’s day, it was only the four-week meet then so it was even more special or unique.”

Jackson won one race at Saratoga as a trainer, with New York-bred 2-year-old Scientist in 2008, but more quickly recalled a tough beat from 2006.

“Clifton Park,” Jackson said. “He debuted at Saratoga and led all the way until the last little bit and just got beat. He was 25, 30-1, something like that, and I still remember the commentator halfway down the stretch saying, ‘Clifton Park . . . he’s still in front.’ I couldn’t believe they caught him.”

Clifton Park settled for third at 35-1, beaten a half-length and a nose, but bounced back to win the Oliver’s Twist Stakes in September and the Maryland Million Nursery in October. Nowadays, Jackson gets his hands on Saratoga winners – champion Just F Y I recently checked in, as did the recently retired Casa Creed – sent by trainers Chad Brown, Bill Mott and others for the various therapies at Fair Hill. They aren’t Over Indulged or Storm Cat, or Clifton Park for that matter, but they’re part of the power of Saratoga.

“It’s satisfying whenever they go on and do well and perform at the top level like some of them

have,” Jackson said. “Saratoga brings that extra little bit to it and makes it even more special.”

There’s more to it than horses, of course.

There was a time when most racetracks in the country hosted Saratoga-like crowds. People bought tickets, arrived by train and car, got dressed up, ate in the dining room, bet their money. Save for a few special events, that’s changed. Except Saratoga.

“The fans, the racing fans,” Jackson said, “they’re the biggest part of it. They’re why Saratoga is Saratoga year after year.”

Trainer Mike Trombetta won five races at last year’s meet and will have plenty of chances this summer, too, with Future Is Now and Arzak looming large in stakes company, but he won’t forget his first trip to the Spa.

“My dad took me up there a year or two out of high school . . . I had never seen the place before and we were coming up that hill toward the track, I’m a teenager, and I look up and here comes a horse running down the road headed to the Northway,” said Trombetta, who grew up in Maryland. “He had gotten loose, and the outrider was trotting down the asphalt after him and there were two guys in golf carts behind him. There goes the horse, heading toward 87. That was my first Saratoga experience.”

“I remember thinking, ‘These horses cross the street, they’re part of the town.’ To this day, I’m

Continued on Page 16

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2024 September Meet Stakes Schedule

SEPTEMBER 12 - 29

IROQUOIS (GIII)

"Road to the Kentucky Derby Points Race"
"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 14
Closes August 28
\$300,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Two-Year-Olds
One Mile, Dirt

POCAHONTAS (GIII)

"Road to the Kentucky Oaks Points Race"
"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 14
Closes August 28
\$300,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Two-Year-Olds
One Mile, Dirt

LOCUST GROVE (GII)

Runs Saturday, September 14
Closes August 28
\$400,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

LOUISVILLE THOROUGHBRED SOCIETY

Runs Saturday, September 14
Closes August 28
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
Six Furlongs, Dirt

OPEN MIND (Listed)

Runs Saturday, September 14
Closes August 28
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
Six and One Half Furlongs, Dirt

SENECA OVERNIGHT STAKES (Listed)

Runs Saturday, September 21
Closes September 4
\$175,000
Includes \$65,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

BOURBON TRAIL

Runs Saturday, September 21
Closes September 4
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
One Mile and Three Sixteenths, Dirt

HARRODS CREEK

Runs Saturday, September 21
Closes September 4
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
Seven Furlongs, Dirt

DOGWOOD (GIII)

Runs Saturday, September 21
Closes September 4
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds
Seven Furlongs, Dirt

ACK ACK (GIII)

"Win and You're In Dirt Mile Division"

Runs Saturday, September 28
Closes September 11
\$400,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile, Dirt

LUKAS CLASSIC (GII)

Runs Saturday, September 28
Closes September 11
\$500,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Eighth, Dirt



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Why Saratoga -

■ Continued from page 14

horrified when my horses go across that road."

The horses do indeed cross Union Avenue, and Fifth and Nelson (any others?) and are definitely part of the town.

"It's the best place in the world to race a horse, it's that simple," Trombetta said. "I don't know of anything better. I haven't experienced Royal Ascot in my life yet, but in this country, I don't know of any place better. It's one little meet a year, and everybody takes their best horses up there to showcase them and it's just a fun place to race. The atmosphere is just unbelievable. That's why."

Owner Larry Johnson's Irish Laddie gave Trombetta his first Saratoga win in 2004, a \$65,000 claimer. Two years later, Trombetta won the P.G. Johnson Stakes with Changeisgonna-come. Don't look for him in the win photo.

"Larry made me run a filly up there that I didn't think could win and I watched the race from Delaware Park and she won," Trombetta said. "I missed my first stakes winner at Saratoga. She crossed the wire and I was like, 'Oh, I should probably be there.'"

Todd Pletcher knows the Saratoga winner's circle better than anyone. He's topped the trainer standings a record 14 times including a five-year

run from 2002 to 2006 and a six-year stretch from 2010 to 2015.

Pletcher started working at Saratoga during his days with fellow Hall of Famer and six-time leading trainer D. Wayne Lukas in 1989, but his first trip goes back further.

"I came one time with my dad, who was training for Dan Lasater, one of the leading owners at the time and they came here to buy a horse," Pletcher said. "I went to the races one day with them. I don't remember what year it was but one thing I do remember, wherever we were sitting, Jimmy The Greek was right there. At that point I was young enough to know the 'NFL Today' and Jimmy The Greek was a legend. I remember that. I remember being on the backside, going by Frank Martin's barn and watching his grooms work, how meticulous they were and seeing some top horses at the time train."

Pletcher has trained some of the top horses of the modern era out of his barn on the Oklahoma Training Track and he's won every major prize in upstate New York from the Alabama to the Whitney, the Hopeful to the Travers and the Fourstardave to the Spinaway. The horses, trainers and jockeys make the headlines, but there's much that makes the meet go.

"From a trainer's perspective, the owners are so much more into it, involved, present and in attendance for the races," Pletcher said. "When Saratoga ends, life gets back to nor-

Continued on Page 18



Tod Marks

Horses, and the setting, are why Saratoga matters.



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Why Saratoga -

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mal for a lot of them. A lot of times you go to the rail in the summer for turf works and it'll be like a who's who cast of owners lining the rail watching horses train, which you just don't get everywhere.

"On top of that, when you go to the races it's generally a full house. Maybe not a packed house every day but there's a lot of fans in attendance. In today's world of simulcast where everyone is watching on their tablet or their phone, or whatever, this is one of the few places besides Keeneland that on a daily basis you get good attendances. That's a significant part of it. Then there's obviously all the history, tradition, and all of that which goes along with it."

Al Stall Jr., a Saratoga regular since 1996 and trainer of 2010 Whitney winner Blame, also knows how important it is to win at Saratoga. Stall made his first trips to Saratoga in the 1970s alongside his father, the late innovative regulator and owner Al Stall Sr.

"I grew up in the game and Saratoga has always been the holy grail," Stall said. "My first time here was in the '70s. I came up here with my father. I remember the races, the Woody Stephenses and all that kind of stuff. I came up on my own in '96 and I've been here every summer since then.

"I'm a traditional, old-school type person. I don't



Tod Marks

Trainer Mike Trombetta.

change things too much, but I want to be here also, and my family loves it, too. That helps. It's fun, it's different. In this day and age with cell phones, you win a race on a Wednesday at Saratoga and by the time you get your picture taken, walk back into the grandstand, look at your phone and you'll see 37 text messages. That doesn't happen anywhere else. Everybody's watching."

Graham Motion typically summons his trip to Saratoga with Wooing for the 1989 Diana when prompted for an early Saratoga memory. Trained by Sheppard, Wooing started at 30-1 and led from the start for jockey Antonio Nunez only to get dis-

qualified for interfering with Glowing Honor and Jerry Bailey.

"I galloped that filly and Jonathan sent me because she was kind of difficult, kind of silly, and I got on her at home," said Motion. "She won, or we thought she won, and then she didn't."

Welcome to Saratoga. As a trainer, Motion horses have finished second in six Dianas – five by a neck or a less. Saturday, he runs Mission Of Joy in this year's Grade 1 turf stakes. A win would mean the world, and slot in nicely with Motion's 32 Grade 1 wins including Saratoga's Whitney and Sword Dancer (twice).

"There's nothing like winning those old races at Saratoga that have such prestige and such reputations," he said. "They're not easy to win. It's never easy at Saratoga. I'm in a two-other-than on Thursday (second race with No Show Sammy Jo) that might as well be a Grade 2, so why do we do it?"

"From a business point of view, if you're winning a race at Saratoga in August everybody sees it. One win at Saratoga can feel like eight or nine at some other tracks."

Long before he was a trainer, Motion came to Saratoga with his father Michael, an international bloodstock agent with England's Tattersalls company and eventually spent time on the Fasig-Tipton muck crew on the sales grounds at Saratoga – a job Mike Rowe would love.

Tasks included toting grimy burlap muck sacks,

Continued on Page 20

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Why Saratoga -

■ Continued from page 18

shuttling trash to the dump (losing the occasional can over the side of the pick-up truck) and pretty much anything someone higher up the ladder told him to do.

“My boss was Lee Watson, he was in charge of the crew,” Motion said. “He used to page us over the speaker when we weren’t where we were supposed to be. We’d be out all night and go straight to work. You’d have a hangover, and you’d have to pick up those muck sacks. If it was raining, the muck would be running down your back. It was terrible, but we had such a good time.”

Watson sent Motion and his mates across the street to make bets, with confidence, but also with a warning. He’d say, “I got a good tip here. You boys go over there. Don’t bet your money, but put some on for me.”

Watson couldn’t have known it, but he was introducing Motion and the others to Saratoga. Forty-something years later, Motion has trained the winners of 2,744 races and is a regular at the nation’s oldest racetrack.

Jeremiah Englehart grew up in New York and in a racing family, the son of leading Finger Lakes conditioner Chris Englehart. He remembers coming with his father to run Frattare, winner of the 1989 Finger Lakes Budweiser Breeders’ Cup Handicap,



Tod Marks

Trainer Jimmy Toner, talking to a jockey such as John Velazquez, is part of Saratoga's magic.

in a mid-August allowance and the filly Iron Tizzy in the final race on the second-to-last card at the 1992 meeting.

“Iron Tizzy won the last race with Eddie Maple aboard and it literally took my dad and I close to three hours to get her on the trailer to head home,” Englehart said. “We laugh about it now . . . It was just him and I. We were using brooms, whatever we could to get her on the trailer and I think she just finally gave up. She went on. It’s a funny story now. Literally three hours to get on the trailer from the receiving barn. But we smiled the whole way home because she won. You have a lot more patience when they win, especially at Saratoga.”

Englehart took a while to do that on his own, losing with his first 58 starters before his first victory with Winter Games in the first race on Opening Day in 2014. He’s won plenty since, including four at the 2023 meet.

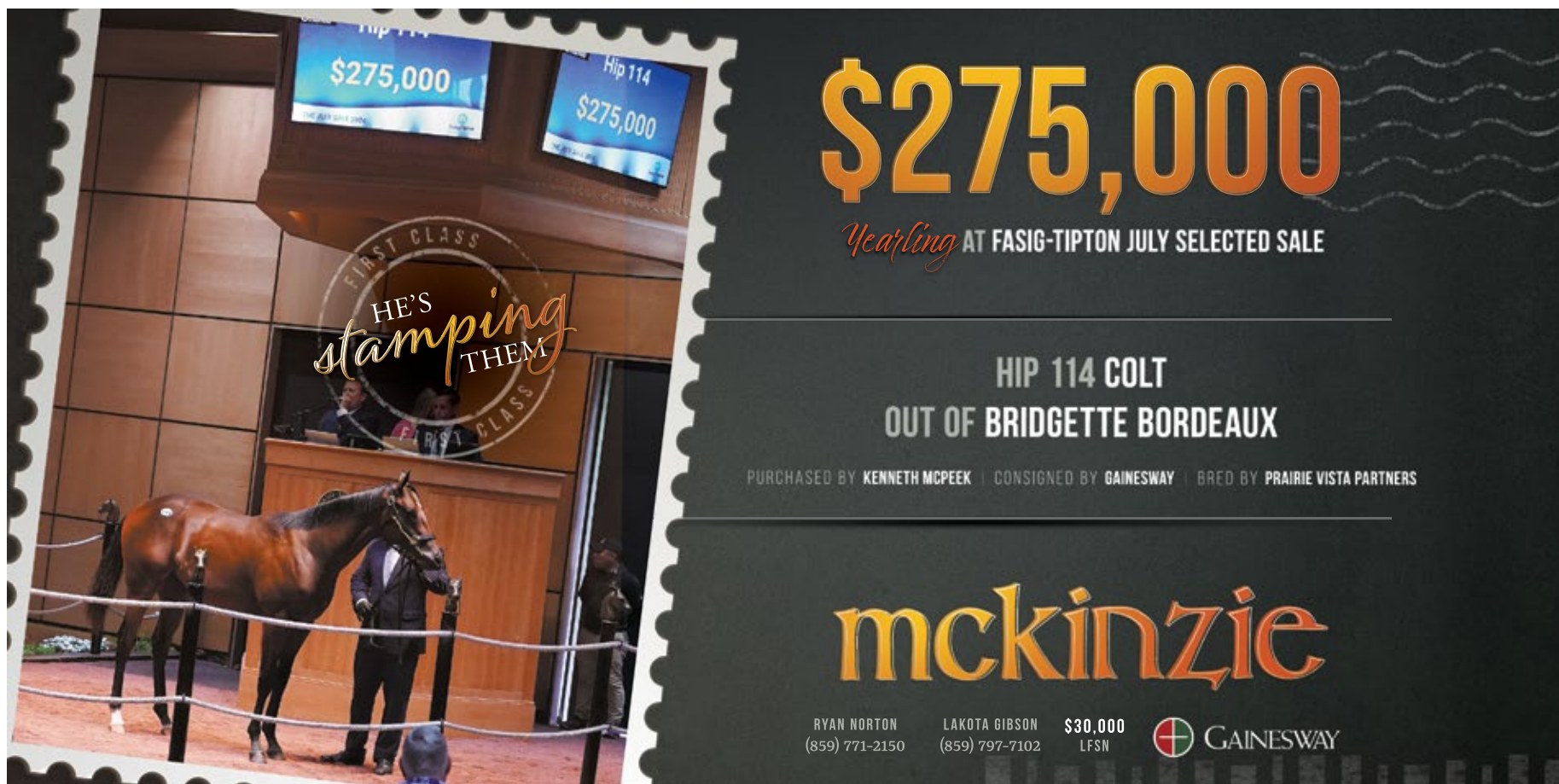
“I have a hard time getting over the fact that if I walk outside the gates, somebody might stop me at Stewart’s and ask ‘Do you have anything going this week?’ and I don’t even know who it is,” Englehart said. “The town loves the racing. The history here is unbelievable.

“When I first had horses and I’d walk over to watch training, I’d look up at the trees and think, ‘Man, what have those trees seen over the last couple hundred years?’ It’s amazing. I think NYRA and everybody has done a great job making Saratoga special, and to me, it will always be special. Honestly, everybody that comes to the meet, the fans, the horses, the trainers, the clients, together they make it special. Everyone has the same feeling. I don’t know anyone that walks in on the first day at Saratoga and says, ‘I can’t believe I have to be here.’ It’s like being 47 years old and wanting to go to Disney World. This is my Disney World. That’s how I feel about it and why it’s special to me.”

You have to dig a little deeper to find Jimmy Toner’s Saratoga origin story, but it’s back there.

“I was the assistant,” he said of his job with trainer Bill Mitchell. “I was staying with Jim Dailey the outrider and Bart Sweeney who worked on the

Continued on Page 22



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Why Saratoga -

■ Continued from page 20

gate. I had four horses in what is Shug McGaughey's barn now. Eddie Neloy was there then."

The four horses included Little Tumbler, targeting the Schuylerville after winning the Astoria at Aqueduct, and Lucky George, "a nasty sucker." Little Tumbler finished second in the stakes, but Lucky George came through with a win.

"From there I proceeded to go to Suffolk Downs and Lincoln Downs for years," Toner said. "They kicked me out and said come back later. That was 1960."

Sixty?

Yes, sixty.

Toner came back, and became a fixture. In 1983, he won the Adirondack and the Spinaway with Buzz My Bell for owner Caesar Kimmel. Two years later, the team landed the Schuylerville with I'm Splendid. "That's when I was a claiming trainer winning stakes with 2-year-olds and before they started calling me a turf trainer." Toner won Saratoga's Grade 1 Diana with Memories Of Silver in 1998 and Wonder Again in 2004, the latter in a rainstorm that might have made Noah flinch.

"She was a wreck in the paddock," Toner said. "It starts to drizzle and everybody goes inside to saddle. We bring her in, and I could see her start-

ing to shiver so I wanted to take her back outside."

Toner's assistant Manu Davy, in a new suit for the occasion, wasn't so sure.

"He looked at me like, 'What?'" Toner said. "Then the valet came out and he walked right by us to the stalls. It was raining by now, but she was quieting down and we saddled her outside in the rain."

Out on the track, in the mist and gloom, Wonder Again followed Sand Springs and Ocean Drive early, stayed on the inside hedge turning for home and drew off late for Edgar Prado. Toner wasn't sure where his mare was until the stretch despite the fluffy white shadow roll across her nose.

"You could see them break and you couldn't see much until they turned into the lane," he said. "I spotted her and she got up and she won. You couldn't see, it was raining so hard. That was a fun race, and we had a lot of them. We had some good luck there."

Toner, based at Fair Hill Training Center with 25 horses, won't keep a string at Saratoga this summer but will be a regular shipper.

"It's the premier place to be in the summertime, that's for sure," said Toner, who runs Battlefield Park in the 11th race on Opening Day. "The atmosphere, the town, it's a great place. I miss it. There wasn't much there in 1960, I'll tell you. It's changed a lot."

But it's always mattered.



Trainer Al Stall Jr. (right) recognizes Saratoga's influence on racing.

Tod Marks

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Baby Talk

Gargan sends out favorite as 11 fillies clash on Opening Day

BY ALEC DICONZA

Saratoga has been pretty good to trainer Danny Gargan this year. In the first ever Belmont Stakes held at Saratoga Race Course in June, his current stable star Dornoch delivered a 17-1 upset victory to give Gargan the biggest win of his career.

"It's a horse we've been waiting for to jump through and win a big race," Gargan said. "He finally did what we've always expected from him and we're pretty excited at being able to get that. Any time you win a Triple Crown race it's a big deal and we're happy for him and all the owners."

Dornoch's expected start in the Grade 1 Travers Stakes August 24 is

SCHUYLerville STAKES PREVIEW

surely top of mind for Gargan as the summer meet at Saratoga begins today, but there are plenty of races to keep him distracted in the meantime. First up is the Schuylerville Stakes on Opening Day, a 6-furlong stakes for 2-year-old fillies, and Gargan has a great chance to end up in the Saratoga winner's circle once again with Complexion.

A half sister to Jack Christopher, a Grade 1 winner at Saratoga, Complexion will look to go 2-for-2 in her career as the 7-2 morning line favorite

Continued On Page 26



Samantha Decker

A half-sister to Grade 1 winner Jack Christopher, Complexion looks for her second lifetime win in today's Schuylerville Stakes.

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Schuylerville -

■ Continued from page 24

for the Schuylerville. The daughter of Complexity owned by Arnmore Thoroughbreds and Carl and Yurie Pascarella made her debut a winning one, wiring a nine-horse field by 6 1/2 lengths going 5 furlongs at Aqueduct. Going off as the favorite that day under John Velazquez, who will ride her again in the Schuylerville, the public had confidence in the filly's abilities. Gargan was in agreement with the bettors.

"She went off 6-5," he laughed. "I think everybody expected a big performance from her and we're just pleased that she showed what she was training like. We don't really win first time out. So for her to run that well with only several half-mile works, we haven't seen the best of her yet and we won't see the best of her in her next race, but throughout the year I think she'll keep going forward."

Gargan hopes Complexity has bounced well enough out of her debut and gotten enough out of her preparations since then to compete in a field as tough as she will face today.

"We only worked her once," he said, referring to Complexity's workouts since her debut. "It's coming back a little faster than we wanted. They didn't really offer a maiden race here like they normally do on Belmont Day. It would've been perfect tim-



Tod Marks

Danny Gargan looks to continue a fun 2024 after winning the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga in June.

ing. But we just breezed her one time, a half-mile in :49 and change. Hopefully we did enough to have her as fit as she needs to be to run with these."

As is common in these early 2-year-old stakes, there is an abundance of speed, including the Wesley Ward-trained Long Neck Paula and the Steve Asmussen-trained Viggiedale. Complexity may have to show a new dimension.

"She's really fast, but she's really level headed," Gargan said. "She's a really smart horse. If somebody's going crazy, she doesn't have to have the

lead. It's just where she found herself the other day. If she breaks good, she's quick out of the gate. She stumbled the other day and still cleared pretty easy. So she's fast. We're not going to grab her and strangle her. Wesley has one in there if he wants to go ahead and go faster, he can go to the lead. Steve's horse maybe from the outside goes, and we can sit third, but if not we'll be right on it."

Ultimately, wherever Complexity finds herself in the early stages of her stakes debut, Gargan just hopes she runs a strong race so she can continue on an upward trajectory.

"I'd like to see a big race out of her, but we're trying to springboard from this into the big race at the end of the meet," he said.

Repole Stable's homebred Carmen's Candy Jar, a New York-bred daughter of Vino Rosso named in honor of the late respected horsemen's liaison Carmen Barrera, is among Compexion's main competitors.

Trained by Todd Pletcher, Carmen's Candy Jar won her debut over fellow state-breds June 23. Irad Ortiz Jr. rides from post six.

"It's back a little quick but I thought if she could win an open stake or run well in an open graded stake, that's great, if not then the timing would be better to the New York-bred stakes that way," Pletcher said. "If she did well then there's plenty of time back to the Spinaway."

Sherbini made a strong impression in her first

Continued on Page 27



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Schuylerville -

■ Continued from page 26

career outing for trainer Mark Casse with a 3 1/2 length score at Churchill Downs. She is the 9-2 co-second choice on the morning line and figures to be one of the major players. Casse's son Norm Casse trains Slang, who will break just outside of Sherbini in post 4 and also comes in off a maiden victory at Churchill.

The top two fillies from the Astoria Stakes will be back for a rematch after being separated by a head at the wire in that affair. Whatintheliteral, the race's winner, will aim to make it 2-for-2 at Saratoga for trainer Jena Antonucci after narrowly prevailing in that first match-up with the Asmus-

sen trained Aoraki. Asmussen also sends out Viggiedal, an eye-catching 5-length winner in her career opener at Churchill Downs.

Long Neck Paula won her debut in May and will likely be one of the early pacesetters stretching out from 4 1/2 furlongs to 6 furlongs of the Schuylerville. The Queens M G will break from the outside post for Saffie Joseph Jr, exiting the Astoria where she finished seventh. Dreamgirl aims to win again for trainer Mike Maker after a triumph in her debut in Kentucky. West Memorial, who won the Kentucky Juvenile Stakes earlier this year, is hoping to rebound after a fifth in the Astoria for trainer George Weaver.

Additional reporting by Tom Lau.



Samantha Decker

Whatintheliteral tries to duplicate her win during the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival.

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Flying High

Pilot turned trainer Horlacher aims for Saratoga with Shoshanah

BY JOE CLANCY

“Is there anything about being a Navy pilot that helps you train Thoroughbred racehorses?”

Kyle Horlacher heard the question, and took a pause before diving into an answer.

“When you go fly you’ve got to do a pre-flight of your airplane to see if you’ve got any problems,” the retired Navy pilot turned horse trainer said. “Before you train or race you’ve got to do a pre-flight of your horse. Is anything out of whack here? Understanding fitness is comparable. In the Navy you had to stay in shape. I’ve run a marathon, I’ve trained, I was an athlete, I played football. I think I understand what it takes to get to an appropriate fitness level, then I think the

tough parts – what really separates horsemen – is understanding what your horse really needs and trying to do that for your horse.”

As an example, Horlacher turned to look across the barn at Shoshanah. The 5-year-old mare, five times a winner with a stakes-placing in 14 starts, gives Horlacher his first Saratoga Race Course runner in today’s fourth race.

The \$120,000 allowance turf sprint drew a field of eight and is part of an 11-race card on Opening Day.

“The first year I was training her she didn’t want to come out and train,” said Horlacher, who bases his two-horse stable at Fair Hill Training Center in Maryland. “I used to have to convince her to come out of the stall, I had to give her encouragement to leave the stall and the barn and go to the track to train.”

Trainer Mark Shuman suggested Horlacher try training Shoshanah in the fields surrounding the 300-acre training center.

“I gave it a shot and that turned her attitude around 100 percent,” Horlacher said Saturday. “We train probably 95, 97 percent in the fields, almost never on the track. We’ll breeze on the Tapeta. We’ll go on the dirt if we need to go gate schooling or something. Today we went out in the field, galloped three laps.”

Her races don’t even go one lap, a preference Horlacher figured out early. Bred in Pennsylvania by her trainer and raised on his farm in Earlville, Md., Shoshanah looked like a sprinter from the start and trended more that way as she grew up. Her sire Weigelia set a track record for 6 furlongs on the turf at Belmont Park in 2006.



Maggie Kimmitt

Shoshanah looks to give trainer Kyle Horlacher his first Saratoga runner in today’s fourth race.

Her dam, Dancingwithdebbie, won twice going a mile but is by Mizzen Mast, whose daughter Caravel earned the bulk of her \$1.9 million in turf sprints.

Like her family, Shoshanah is fast. Unraced as a juvenile, she won twice as a 3-year-old on the Tapeta track at Presque Isle Downs.

Last year, she won three times on the turf – twice going 5 furlongs at Penn National and once going 5 1/2 furlongs at Laurel Park. Sent off at 22-1 off a six-month layoff in the \$100,000 The Very One Stakes at Pimlico May 17, she set the pace and finished second. The Very One winner Future Is Now returned to land the Grade 2 Intercontinental at Saratoga June 7.

Horlacher entered Shoshanah in two stakes last month and she made it as far as the starting gate for Parx Racing’s Power By Far before being scratched. It wasn’t her first run-in with the gate.

“She’s been on the list a few times,” Horlacher said. “We school her all the time. You take her in the morning, she’s perfect. Afternoons, she knows it’s go time. We could operate with

extreme ownership and say, ‘Maybe I could have done more with her, and better with her,’ early, in the gate, but it’s just her.”

Horlacher just wants gate crews to roll with his mare, who left the incident with a scrape over her right eye and lost hairs in her tail. Don’t get too rough with her, load her late if they can, minimize the standing time. The sprinter attitude never really leaves her.

“She’s been back to the gate three or four times since and she’s fine, but she’s always fine,” Horlacher said. “You can just lead her in there in the morning. In the afternoon, she’s a gamer. She knows. She’s ready to go.”

Co-owned by Suanne Hallman, she’ll need to be Thursday, as she takes on seven others topped by stakes winners Lady Milagro, L Street Lady, Sunday Shoes, L J’s Emma and All That Magic plus Group 3-placed French import Lady Mia. The latter and the two-time stakes winner L Street Lady are coupled as the 2-1 favorite on the morning line. At 8-1, Shoshanah breaks from post two for

Continued on Page 29



Maggie Kimmitt

Kyle Horlacher, and barn dog George Bailey, take a break at Fair Hill last week.

Horlacher -

■ Continued from page 28

seven-pound apprentice Francisco Martinez.

“I was looking at a race at Presque Isle, against the boys, but that came up really salty,” Horlacher said. “I knew Saratoga was going to be salty but we’re going to try. I’ve never been. It’s kind of a bucket-list thing for me to go up there. I didn’t want to go until I thought I had a horse that could compete. I hope she doesn’t let me down.”

A trainer since 2021, he has won six races (five with Shoshanah, one with her full-sister Bohemia Babe and all in the Mid-Atlantic).

The 51-year-old flew submarine-hunting S-3 Viking and P-3 Orion airplanes in the Navy while stationed in Pensacola, Fla., Meridian, Miss., San Diego, Cal., Jacksonville, Fla., Meridian again, Jacksonville again, Whidbey Island, Wash., Willow Grove, Pa., Wichita, Kans. “of all places,” Delaware and finally Joint Base Andrews outside Washington D.C. before retiring in December 2020.

“That’s a lot of moves,” Horlacher said of 22 years in the Navy. The family (wife Bridget and kids Joe, Kelly and Abby) is far more settled nowadays with a few broodmares and young horses on the farm and two stalls at Fair Hill. Horlacher grew up watching his grandfather Nate Heyman work with horses while part of King T. Leatherbury’s team and as a trainer, and put Thoroughbred racing on a list of post-retirement goals.

“I wish I would have paid more attention to some of the finer details about being a horseman,” Horlacher said. “As a kid you’re more interested in walking the goat around and having fun. I knew I wanted to do it one day, but I also felt a strong calling to serve in the Navy, to serve our country.”

He did that with distinction, serving on aircraft carriers, taking part in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), handling all those moves to bases around the country and becoming the executive officer of Naval Air Facility Washington at Andrews.

“I loved every day of it,” he said. “It was like being with a big group

of friends. You change friends every three years but you’re all in it together, doing something bigger. The tough work was really on your spouse. You’re doing what you’ve dreamt about doing your whole life, but your spouse is back home wearing every hat possible.”

He was not, he’ll remind you, a fighter pilot. Naval aviation isn’t all Top Gun, but Horlacher flew Vikings off carriers and has the stories to talk about it.

“A really dark night, rough seas, that was hairy,” he said. “You’re so focused, so when you landed, you’d realize . . . there were times where I just took 10 to 15 minutes and sat in the airplane. I didn’t think I was physically going to be able to walk. Day-time stuff on the carrier is fun. The most fun is when you get launched off of it.”

Horlacher compared the feeling to riding a young Thoroughbred, specifically the \$5,000 yearling he bought at the Ocala Breeders’ Sale in 2006.

“I didn’t know how to break a horse but figured it out,” he said of the first horse he owned. “Galloping that 2-year-old was more thrilling than getting shot off of a carrier because that’s just raw, pure horsepower that has its own brain.”

Named Nothing In Common, the Florida-bred daughter of Gulf Storm accompanied the Horlachers to Washington and she won twice at Emerald Downs for another trainer before getting claimed away.

Back on the East Coast in 2016, Horlacher spent \$1,000 on broodmare Get’m Up Pronto at Timonium. Her first foal, Double Fireball, has won four races. Her second, Crabs N Beer, has won five and placed in the Grade 2 Dinner Party Stakes in May.

Horlacher sold those two homebreds, and their dam, cheap – when you do all the work yourself, that’s the way it goes sometimes – but could talk pedigrees all day.

“The breeding side is a lot more laid back than training,” he said. “My goal is I want to have generations. I want to make Shoshanah a broodmare and we have some babies, some nice up and comers now. My intention after retiring from the Navy was to train horses, but I’m only interested in training the ones that I’ve bred. I want to be hands-on.”

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*Above: Algernon M. Talmage (British, 1871-1939)
The Epsom Derby, 1931 (detail)*

SARATOGA ENTRIES

Thursday, July 11.

1ST (1:10PM). \$50,000, CLM \$20,000, 4 YO'S & UP, 11/8M

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

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------|
| 1 |1 | Mason Mania | J. Gomez | P. Quick | 12-1 |
| 2 |2 | Bold Victory | R. Maragh | G. Rodriguez | 20-1 |
| 3 |3 | Horse Be With You | E. Cancel | C. Englehart | 20-1 |
| 4 |4 | Higher Quality | T. Gaffalione | W. Potts | 15-1 |
| 5 |5 | I Am the Law | L. Rivera, Jr. | J. Terranova, II | 3-1 |
| 6 |6 | Accidental Hero | R. Vazquez | M. Maker | 6-1 |
| 7 |7 | Empty Tomb | J. Torres | R. Falcone, Jr. | 9-2 |
| 8 |8 | Rocco Strong | K. Carmouche | M. Giangiulio | 4-1 |
| 9 |9 | People Force | J. Ortiz | C. David | 8-1 |
| 10 |10 | Gut Feeling | D. Davis | G. Rodriguez | 15-1 |
| 11 |11 | Bossmakinbossmoves | F. Prat | T. Morley | 10-1 |

2ND (1:42PM). \$115,000, AOC \$62,500, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1 3/8M (INNER TURF)

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

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|------|
| 1 |2 | No Show Sammy Jo (GB) | F. Prat | H. Motion | 7-2 |
| 1a |7 | Avenue Niel (IRE) | J. Rosario | C. Clement | 7-2 |
| 2 |1 | Rhombique | J. Castellano | R. Ribaud | 6-1 |
| 3 |3 | Be Your Best (IRE) | I. Ortiz, Jr. | H. De Paz | 3-1 |
| 4 |4 | Aspen Grove (IRE) | T. Gaffalione | J. Sisterson | 7-5 |
| 5 |5 | Freydis the Red (FR) | B. Hernandez, Jr. | K. McPeck | 5-1 |
| 6 |6 | Sabalenka | J. Ortiz | D. Beckman | 15-1 |
| 7 |8 | Sweetest Princess | L. Rivera, Jr. | J. Ferraro | 50-1 |
| 8 |AE-MTO | Amanda's Folly | Rider TBA | L. Rice | 2-1 |
| 9 |AE-MTO | Toned Up | M. Franco | M. Kantarmaci | 5-2 |

3RD (2:15PM). \$45,000, MCL \$30,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|------|
| 1 |2 | La Indecente | J. Lejaroux | J. Jimenez | 8-1 |
| 1a |10 | La Decente | J. Castellano | J. Jimenez | 8-1 |
| 2 |1 | Our Reward | A. Bocachica | B. Brown | 15-1 |
| 3 |3 | Neigh Jude | I. Ortiz, Jr. | K. Breen | 7-2 |
| 4 |4 | Miss Maximus | R. Santana, Jr. | N. Casse | 4-1 |
| 5 |5 | Dreaming of Carli | R. Silvera | E. Barker | 6-1 |
| 6 |6 | Mia Nipotina | L. Luzzi | R. Sells | 15-1 |
| 7 |7 | Going for Glory | J. Gomez | D. Donk | 6-1 |
| 8 |8 | Outta the Cloud | O. Hernandez Moreno | P. Quick | 30-1 |
| 9 |9 | Punch the Clock | D. Davis | R. Handal | 8-1 |
| 10 |11 | Needed | J. Lezcano | L. Rice | 5-1 |
| 11 |12 | Widow | F. Martinez | E. Barker | 30-1 |

4TH (2:48PM). \$120,000, AOC \$80,000, 4 YO'S & UP, F & M, 5 1/2F (TURF)

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

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|------|
| 1 |4 | L Street Lady | M. Franco | B. Russell | 5-1 |
| 1a |6 | Lady Mia (FR) | I. Ortiz, Jr. | C. Clement | 5-1 |
| 2 |1 | Lady Milagro | L. Rivera, Jr. | C. Martin | 8-1 |
| 3 |2 | Shoshanah | F. Martinez | K. Horlacher | 8-1 |
| 4 |3 | Run for the Hills | J. Ortiz | M. Casse | 2-1 |
| 5 |5 | Sunday Shoes | F. Prat | W. Ward | 10-1 |
| 6 |7 | L J's Emma | T. Gaffalione | E. Kenneally | 6-1 |
| 7 |8 | Shootouttheights | J. Velazquez | W. Ward | 4-1 |
| 8 |9 | All That Magic | L. Saez | K. Demasi | 8-1 |
| 9 |AE-MTO | Bustin Bay | K. Carmouche | L. Rice | 7-2 |

5TH (3:21PM). \$90,000, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, 6F

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

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|------|
| 1 |1 | New York Scrappy | F. Prat | M. Casse | 3-1 |
| 2 |2 | Stormy's Dreaming | D. Davis | C. Baker | 10-1 |
| 3 |3 | Tomacon | T. Gaffalione | D. Duggan | 8-1 |
| 4 |4 | Romantic Charmer | D. Grisales Rave | J. Ferraro | 12-1 |
| 5 |5 | Crescendo's Rein | J. Rosario | C. Baker | 6-1 |
| 6 |6 | Clancy Fancy | L. Luzzi | C. Englehart | 20-1 |
| 7 |7 | Brown Eyed Cat | J. Castellano | B. Levine | 9-2 |
| 8 |8 | Call Bob | J. Torres | E. Caramori | 6-1 |
| 9 |9 | Concorde Spirit | J. Alvarado | W. Mott | 6-1 |
| 10 |10 | D C Boy's | R. Vazquez | B. Levine | 10-1 |

6TH (3:53PM). \$80,000, MSW, 2 YO, F, 5 1/2F

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

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|------|
| 1 |1 | Strong State | I. Ortiz, Jr. | A. Stall, Jr. | 5-2 |
| 2 |2 | Will Not Be Swayed | F. Prat | B. Cox | 7-2 |
| 3 |3 | Selectively Sweet | D. Grisales Rave | A. Chichakly | 20-1 |
| 4 |4 | Episode | J. Ortiz | J. D'Angelo | 8-1 |
| 5 |5 | Flaming Glory | D. Davis | I. Correas, IV | 6-1 |
| 6 |6 | My Vanilla | L. Luzzi | J. Ryerson | 20-1 |
| 7 |7 | My Lady Bae | R. Santana, Jr. | R. Atras | 12-1 |
| 8 |8 | Mean Eileen | L. Saez | J. Sharp | 8-1 |
| 9 |9 | Teca | J. Lezcano | L. Rice | 5-1 |
| 10 |10 | Honestly | J. Castellano | K. Brion | 15-1 |
| 11 |AE | Mezcalifornia | B. Hernandez, Jr. | K. McPeck | 12-1 |
| 12 |AE | Bisa | J. Torres | E. Caramori | 20-1 |
| 13 |AE | Dare to Breeze | T. Gaffalione | M. Casse | 3-1 |
| 14 |AE | Mischief Maxey | K. Carmouche | J. Servis | 12-1 |
| 15 |AE | Amore Sofia | R. Silvera | R. Rodriguez | 12-1 |
| 16 |AE | Katerina Ristova | O. Hernandez Moreno | A. Chichakly | 30-1 |

7TH (4:28PM). \$100,000, AOC \$45,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 5 1/2F (TURF)

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

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|------|
| 1 |1 | Im Just Kiddin | I. Ortiz, Jr. | J. Kimmel | 5-2 |
| 2 |2 | Concerti | L. Saez | J. Sharp | 15-1 |
| 3 |3 | Solib | J. Castellano | T. Morley | 4-1 |
| 4 |4 | Mz Big Bucks | K. Carmouche | M. Nevin | 5-1 |
| 5 |5 | Queens Dancer | J. Davis | L. Dixon | 30-1 |
| 6 |6 | Weekend Rags | F. Prat | J. Abreu | 6-1 |
| 7 |7 | Marco T | M. Franco | C. Clement | 3-1 |
| 8 |8 | Patria | R. Santana, Jr. | M. Salazar | 20-1 |
| 9 |9 | Latest Edition | J. Velazquez | T. Morley | 10-1 |
| 10 |AE-MTO | Sunday Girl | F. Prat | D. Duggan | 6-1 |
| 11 |AE-MTO | Speightful Lily | J. Alvarado | H. Bond | 8-5 |
| 12 |AE-MTO | Bank On Anna | M. Franco | M. Kantarmaci | 12-1 |
| 13 |AE-MTO | Mosienko | R. Vazquez | D. Jacobson | 2-1 |

8TH (5:05PM). \$70,000, SOC \$35,000-\$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

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

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1 |1 | Diamond Status | J. Gomez | C. Martin | 15-1 |
| 2 |2 | Kannon Fire | J. Rosario | O. Noda | 8-1 |
| 3 |3 | More Than Glory | L. Dettori | J. Lawrence, II | 8-1 |
| 4 |4 | Lakeside Getaway | J. Lezcano | M. Trombetta | 5-1 |
| 5 |5 | Silent Melody | F. Prat | J. Abreu | 6-1 |
| 6 |6 | Grab the Glory | J. Ortiz | L. Rice | 15-1 |
| 7 |7 | Spring Magic | I. Ortiz, Jr. | W. Morey | 4-1 |
| 8 |8 | More Mango | D. Grisales Rave | J. Ferraro | 15-1 |
| 9 |9 | Elle Est Forte | D. Davis | R. Handal | 7-2 |
| 10 |10 | Sizzle | T. Gaffalione | L. Lewis | 6-1 |
| 11 |AE-MTO | Just Music | J. Lezcano | L. Rice | 2-1 |
| 12 |AE-MTO | Miss Fashionista | I. Ortiz, Jr. | T. Pletcher | 5-2 |
| 13 |AE-MTO | Crushed Ice | J. Lejaroux | A. Quartarolo | 6-1 |
| 14 |AE-MTO | Shigeko | M. Franco | M. Kantarmaci | 8-1 |

9TH (5:42PM). \$120,000, AOC \$80,000, 4 YO'S & UP, 11/8M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------|
| 1 |5 | Laughing Boy | S. Camacho, Jr. | D. Jacobson | 15-1 |
| 1a |6 | Quality Chic | R. Vazquez | D. Jacobson | 15-1 |
| 2 |1 | Salute the Stars | I. Ortiz, Jr. | B. Cox | 6-1 |
| 3 |2 | Film Star | J. Ortiz | L. Rice | 5-1 |
| 4 |3 | Artorius | F. Prat | C. Brown | 8-1 |
| 5 |4 | Warrior Johny | J. Rosario | P. Bauer | 10-1 |
| 6 |7 | Rocket Can | J. Alvarado | W. Mott | 9-2 |
| 7 |8 | Blazing Sevens | M. Franco | C. Brown | 7-2 |
| 8 |9 | Signator | J. Castellano | C. McGaughey III | 12-1 |
| 9 |10 | Classic Catch | J. Velazquez | T. Pletcher | 6-1 |
| 10 |11 | Untreated | L. Saez | T. Pletcher | 12-1 |

SARATOGA ENTRIES

10TH (6:16PM). \$175,000, STK - THE SCHUYLerville (LISTED), 2 YO, F, 6F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Aoraki |J. Rosario |S. Asmussen |8-1 |
| 2 |2 |West Memorial |M. Franco |G. Weaver |20-1 |
| 3 |3 |Sherbini |F. Geroux |M. Casse |9-2 |
| 4 |4 |Slang |R. Santana, Jr. |N. Casse |10-1 |
| 5 |5 |Complexion |J. Velazquez |D. Gargan |7-2 |
| 6 |6 |Carmen's Candy Jar |I. Ortiz, Jr. |T. Pletcher |6-1 |
| 7 |7 |Dreamgirl |L. Saez |M. Maker |15-1 |
| 8 |8 |WhatintheLiteral |J. Castellano |J. Antonucci |10-1 |
| 9 |9 |Long Neck Paula |F. Prat |W. Ward |8-1 |
| 10 |10 |Viggiedal |T. Gaffalione |S. Asmussen |9-2 |
| 11 |11 |The Queens M G |D. Davis |S. Joseph, Jr. |30-1 |

11TH (6:49PM). \$55,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 11/16M (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Ghost Prince |J. Leparoux |A. Quartarolo |50-1 |
| 2 |2 |Get It to Matthew |D. Davis |R. Handal |20-1 |
| 3 |3 |Vincita |B. Hernandez, Jr. |K. McPeck |12-1 |
| 4 |4 |Bourbon Outlaw |J. Velazquez |M. Hennig |12-1 |
| 5 |5 |Sugar Hook |T. Gaffalione |T. Amoss |8-1 |
| 6 |6 |El Alacran |J. Castellano |T. Morley |15-1 |
| 7 |7 |Il Siciliano |J. Alvarado |A. Sano |8-1 |
| 8 |8 |Parkway |I. Ortiz, Jr. |W. Mott |4-1 |
| 9 |9 |Kick a Buck |M. Franco |C. Brown |9-5 |
| 10 |10 |Battlefield Park |J. Ortiz |J. Toner |8-1 |
| 11 |11 |Bolt d'Plata |L. Saez |J. Terranova, II |15-1 |
| 12 |12 |Caesar's Ghost |J. Torres |E. Caramori |20-1 |
| 13 |AE |Bookworm |R. Vazquez |M. Giddings |50-1 |
| 14 |AE |Comanche Peak (GB) |J. Gomez |J. Bernardini |15-1 |
| 15 |AE-MTO |Houlton |Rider TBA |W. Mott |5-2 |
| 16 |AE-MTO |Always Be Smart |J. Ortiz |N. Zito |9-2 |

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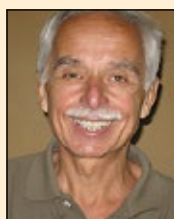
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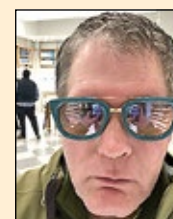
John Shapazian



Charles Bedard



Tom Law



Rob Whitlock



Jessica Paquette

| Race | John Shapazian | Charles Bedard | Tom Law | Rob Whitlock | Jessica Paquette |
|---------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| 1 | Bold Victory Empty Tomb Rocco Strong | Horse Be With You People Force Rocco Strong | Accidental Hero I Am The Law People Force | Horse Be With You People Force Rocco Strong | Higher Quality People Force Accidental Hero |
| 2 | Amanda's Folly Aspen Grove Madaket entry | Aspen Grove Be Your Best Amanda's Folly | Amanda's Folly Rhombique Aspen Grove | Sweetest Princess Amanda's Folly Madaket entry | No Show Sammy Jo Avenue Niel Aspen Grove |
| 3 | Needed Miss Maximus Neigh Jude | Dreaming Of Carli Needed Punch The Clock | Needed Neigh Jude Miss Maximus | Needed Going For Glory Neigh Jude | Going For Glory Needed Miss Maximus |
| 4 | Bustin Bay Madaket entry Run For The Hills | Lady Milagro Sunday Shoes Madaket entry | Bustin Bay Shootoutthelights Run For The Hills | Bustin Bay Run For The Hills Madaket entry | All That Magic Lady Mia Shoshanah |
| 5 | Crescendo's Rein Call Bob Concorde Spirit | Tomacon New York Scrappy Clancy Fancy | New York Scrappy Concorde Spirit Brown Eyed Cat | Brown Eyed Cat Tomacon New York Scrappy | Concorde Spirit New York Scrappy Clancy Fancy |
| 6 | Will Not Be Swayed Dare To Breeze Teca | Strong State Mischieff Maxey Mean Eileen | Strong State Dare To Breeze Will Now Be Swayed | Strong Late Mean Eileen Will Not Be Swayed | Honestly Mean Eileen Teca |
| 7 | Speightful Lily Im Just Kiddin Solib | Mosienko Solib Im Just Kiddin | Speightful Lily Mosienko Marco T. | Speightful Lily Concerti Im Just Kiddin | Latest Edition Concerti Im Just Kidding |
| 8 | Spring Magic Just Music Lakeside Getaway | Elle Est Forte Lakeside Getaway Diamond Status | Miss Fashionista Just Music Lakeside Getaway | Just Music Lakeside Getaway More Than Glory | Lakeside Getaway More Than Glory Silent Melody |
| 9 | Film Star Salute The Stars Rocket Can | Blazing Sevens Signator Classic Catch | Rocket Can Classic Catch Warrior Johny | Warrior Johnny Rocket Can Salute The Stars | Rocket Can Classic Catch Salute The Stars |
| 10 | Carmen's Candy Jar Long Neck Paula Sherbini | Sherbini Long Neck Paula Slang | Carmen's Candy Jar Complexion Sherbini | Complexion Viggiedal Carmen's Candy Jar | Carmen's Candy Jar Aoraki Complexion |
| 11 | Houlton Kick A Buck Parkway | Battlefield Park Sugar Hook Kick A Buck | Kick A Buck Houlton Bolt d'Plata | Houlton Battlefield Park Parkway | Kick A Buck Il Siciliano Get It To Matthew |
| 2023 Records | 128/411 | 120/411 | 115/411 | 99/411 | 75/411 |



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Percentages

Kentucky-based trainer Davis shoots for another Saratoga win

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Chris Davis may be saddling the longshot in Friday's Wilton Stakes, but when your career winning percentage at Saratoga Race Course is 50, why not take a shot.

OK, the 50-percent mark comes on the strength of one win in two starts – both in stakes races – but that also tells you that Davis doesn't ship up here from Kentucky for the fried chicken at Hattie's and cold beer at the Henry Street Taproom.

"We try to ship when we're live," said Davis, who runs Windy Walk in the mile stakes for 3-year-old fillies who haven't won a stakes other than state-bred. "Saratoga is far enough and costly enough that if you don't run well, you're losing money."

Davis is hoping it's worth the 12-hour trip from his Turfway base for the Richard Perkins homebred.

"We're 15-1," Davis said. "We're running against horses who have won maiden specials and (non) 1x. It's competitive, but I don't think it's impossible."

Davis may be running a filly who has raced for a claiming price in eight starts, but she enters off two straight wins by a combined 7 lengths at Churchill Downs, both at a one-turn mile. She has won three of four since Davis added blinkers and jockey Jose Ortiz.

FRIDAY STAKES PREVIEW

"I like the fact that she's gone a mile twice. In those two races she showed a huge turn of foot," Davis said. "I'm confident that she's versatile and we have Jose on her."

Ortiz had the mount on Moonlit Garden when Davis won his first stakes race, the Summer Colony at Saratoga in 2018, a year after he ran fifth in the Grade 2 Prioress with Student Body. The Wilton will be the first start at Saratoga for Davis in six years.

The timing may be right. Davis, who worked for Richard Hazelton, Wayne Catalano, Michael Stidham and Phil D'Amato before going out on his own in 2016, is on pace to have his best year. He is winning at 21 percent in 2024, with 21 wins and \$1,011,694 in earnings. His best years in those categories were 2020 for winning percentage (18), and 2021 for wins (37) and earnings (\$1,332,566).

"This year has been fantastic," said Davis, who has won 11 maiden races and two stakes in a week, the Bashford Manor at Churchill June 30 and the Pea Patch at Ellis on Sunday. "When Arlington Park closed in 2021, we were winning races all over the country and had two Breeders'



Tod Marks

Jockey Jose Ortiz and trainer Chris Davis hope to team up for another Saratoga stakes win Friday.

Cup starters (American Sanctuary and Tough to Tame, both in the Juvenile). When I decided to try to make it in Kentucky, the purse structure exploded and it became super competitive. You have to go up against the best of the best."

Davis struggled the last two years, winning at about 11 percent combined, but he has hit his stride this year, using Turfway Park as his year-round base.

"The transition to Turfway has been a huge dealmaker for me," he said. "It took me back to my roots on the synthetic at Arlington. It got me back the confidence to train on a surface I know is safe and I know where we can go with them. It keeps everything under one roof."

His roof at home includes his fiancé, Sophie Doyle, who has em-

barked on a riding comeback after taking time off to have their daughter Emelie, who turned 2 Monday. Through Wednesday, Sophie, whose birthday is Friday, had eight wins in 45 starts, riding in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky.

As for Emelie, she got a pony for her birthday and Davis said her horse-woman skills belie her age.

"She's probably more gifted on a horse than Sophie or me," he said. "I was hoping she'd be allergic to them, but she is horse crazy."

With her pedigree, you could have bet on that.

Trainer Horacio De Paz entered Chief Horse Futures' Striker Has Dial in the Wilton. The 3-year-old filly makes her third start and first since

Continued On Page 35

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Friday -

■ Continued from page 34

June at Belmont at Aqueduct, where she was a distant second to Grade 2-placed Ways And Means in an allowance. Kendrick Carmouche will be in the irons.

"I thought she would fit the race and do well," De Paz said, referring to her last race. "Then I saw the overnight and saw Ways And Means, and I was like Jesus Christ, but I told the owners we should still run...give us a good gauge on where she's at. She ran good, and she tried. The other horse was just superior. She came out in good order."

Striker Has Dial is the 3-1 second choice from post position four.

"She ran well here last time," De Paz said. "It's kind of an open race but she has as good a chance as any."

*Additional reporting
by Fin Maroney.*

- The Coronation Cup, the ninth race Friday, boasts 10 runners and three main track only entries over 5 ½ furlongs on the turf. Star Of Mystery leads those entries as the 9-5 favorite. Owned by Godolphin and trained by Charlie Appleby, the 3-year-old filly notched two wins and two seconds in Dubai this winter before venturing here to finish third behind world-record setter Cogburn in the Grade 1 Jaipur June 8. Flavien Prat keeps the mount.

Second choice is up for grabs with five horses between 5-1 and 8-1. The group is led by Irish-bred Ever So Sweet. The Brad Cox trainee makes her second start of the year after winning an allowance by 4 lengths in May.

Cloudwalker, trained by Brendan Walsh, finished a close third behind Coronation Cup starters Twirling Queen and Toupie two starts ago, before earning a win in her most recent start at Churchill Downs June 15.

Irish-bred Pipsy faded to eighth in the Tepin in her most recent start, but was victorious over Kairyu in the Grade 3 Soaring Softly in May. Trained by Will Walden, the daughter of Kodiak won two of three starts in



Tod Marks

Trainer Charlie Appleby.

Ireland last season.

Toupie finds herself in familiar company. Two races back, she was a close second to Twirling Queen, finishing just ahead of Cloudwalker. Trained by Graham Motion, the daughter of Uncle Mo earned a stakes win in the Stewart Manor in November and another one in the Stormy Blues in June.

Twirling Queen rides a three-race win streak into the Coronation Cup for trainer Jose D'Angelo. The daughter of Twirling Candy is undefeated, with two stakes wins, since joining D'Angelo's barn this year.

Baraye aims at three in a row for trainer Wesley Ward. The daughter of Midshipman won on the turf at Keeneland and over a sloppy track at Churchill Downs.

Irish-bred Kairyu returns from a second behind Pipsy in the Soaring Softly. She won two of three races, including the Group 3 Anglesey at the Curragh, last season before joining Cherie DeVaux's barn.

Dancing Duchess heads into the race after a win in the Alywow Stakes at Woodbine in June. Trained by Mark Casse, the \$400,000 yearling makes her 10th start in the Coronation Cup.

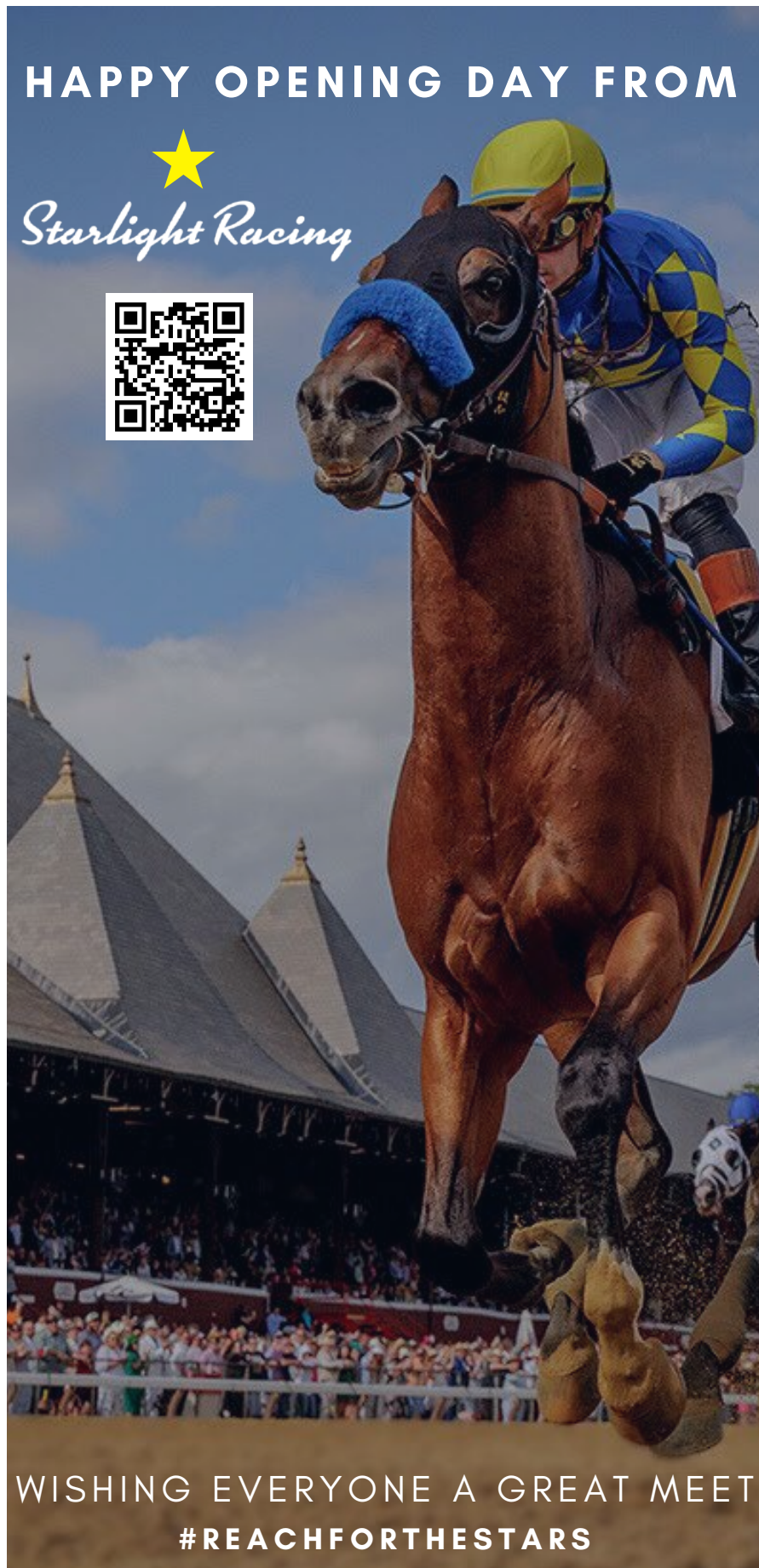
In Our Time, at 30-1, makes her third start after a win and a second for owner/trainer Jack Sistonson.

Value Area,, Do Gooder and Golden Degree were entered as main-track only.

- Fin Maroney and Julia Reedy

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SARATOGA ENTRIES

Friday, July 12.

1ST (1:10PM). \$100,000, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 7F

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

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Lord I Wonder |I. Ortiz, Jr. |A. Stall, Jr. |2-1 |
| 2 |2 |Chanteuse |F. Prat |T. Pletcher |6-5 |
| 3 |3 |Reliable Lady |J. Castellano |F. Abreu |7-2 |
| 4 |4 |Corona Princess |E. Cancel |D. Seyler |30-1 |
| 5 |5 |Martingale |M. Franco |C. Brown |9-2 |
| 6 |6 |Ascension |J. Rosario |C. Martin |15-1 |

2ND (1:45PM). \$45,000, CLM \$25,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 6 1/2F

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

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Muazarah |A. Bocachica |W. Potts |12-1 |
| 2 |2 |Solo in Paris |E. Cancel |R. Persaud |15-1 |
| 3 |3 |Paschal Moon |L. Rivera, Jr. |J. Ferraro |4-1 |
| 4 |4 |Giant's Fire |L. Luzzi |J. Terranova, II |4-1 |
| 5 |5 |Stormquist |K. Carmouche |L. Rice |5-2 |
| 6 |6 |Unclecharliesgift |T. Gaffalione |N. Zito |8-1 |
| 7 |7 |Dillinger |I. Ortiz, Jr. |B. Russell |2-1 |

3RD (2:20PM). \$100,000, MSW, 3 YO'S & UP, 11/16M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 |4 |Steadfast Resolve |J. Ortiz |G. Weaver |6-5 |
| 1a |5 |Storm Ready |L. Saez |T. Pletcher |6-5 |
| 2 |1 |Daily Grind |J. Torres |D. Lukas |15-1 |
| 3 |2 |Tiz Wicked Strong |M. Franco |P. Antonacci |10-1 |
| 4 |3 |Passive Management (GB) |I. Ortiz, Jr. |C. Brown |3-1 |
| 5 |6 |Tom Collins |J. Rosario |C. McGaughey III |5-1 |
| 6 |7 |Clever Mischieff |F. Prat |C. Brown |8-1 |
| 7 |8 |Inherent Promise |T. Gaffalione |L. Lewis |6-1 |
| 8 |AE-MTO |Prairie Dunes |Rider TBA |W. Mott |8-1 |
| 9 |AE-MTO |Salacious |L. Saez |J. D'Angelo |12-1 |
| 10 |AE-MTO |Military Road |M. Franco |C. Clement |1-1 |
| 11 |AE-MTO |Commander of Truth |I. Ortiz, Jr. |C. Brown |2-1 |

4TH (2:56PM). \$110,000, ALW, 3 YO'S & UP, 5 1/2F (TURF)

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

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Inflation Nation (IRE) |I. Ortiz, Jr. |M. Maker |6-1 |
| 2 |2 |Aleah Aleah |K. Carmouche |J. Ryerson |20-1 |
| 3 |3 |Sesame Seed Bagel |T. Gaffalione |L. Rice |8-1 |
| 4 |4 |Twenty Six Black |M. Franco |H. De Paz |3-1 |
| 5 |5 |Cigarette Boat |L. Saez |M. Maker |6-1 |
| 6 |6 |Yarrow |J. Rosario |C. Clement |3-1 |
| 7 |7 |Tunisian Spring |J. Ortiz |W. Ward |2-1 |
| 8 |AE-MTO |What's Up Bro |K. Carmouche |L. Rice |5-2 |
| 9 |AE-MTO |Super Chief |R. Vazquez |M. Maker |6-1 |

5TH (3:32PM). \$50,000, CLM \$20,000, 4 YO'S & UP, 6F

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

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Jake Rocks |M. Franco |D. Jacobson |8-1 |
| 1a |6 |Kant Beat the Rock |R. Vazquez |D. Jacobson |8-1 |
| 2 |2 |Ribbons and Medals |A. Bocachica |W. Potts |20-1 |
| 3 |3 |Charging Aero |R. Santana, Jr. |M. Simone |20-1 |
| 4 |4 |Gangly |J. Velazquez |P. Walder |7-2 |
| 5 |5 |Funny Joke |F. Prat |R. Falcone, Jr. |8-1 |
| 6 |7 |Chateau |I. Ortiz, Jr. |R. Rodriguez |5-1 |
| 7 |8 |Joking Way |R. Maragh |J. Romero |15-1 |
| 8 |9 |Cold as Hell |L. Saez |D. Lukas |12-1 |
| 9 |10 |Sack's Day |T. Gaffalione |T. Amoss |5-2 |
| 10 |11 |Rock the Weekend |J. Gomez |L. Shivmangal |30-1 |
| 11 |12 |Disco Deano |L. Perez |M. Ferraro |30-1 |
| 12 |13 |Motorcade |K. Carmouche |B. Levine |10-1 |

6TH (4:05PM). \$80,000, MSW, 2 YO, 5 1/2F

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

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Corvus |J. Torres |J. Jimenez |20-1 |
| 2 |2 |Reteko |J. Castellano |T. Morley |9-2 |
| 3 |3 |Concrete Cruiser |T. Gaffalione |J. Sharp |6-1 |
| 4 |4 |Tapwrits Temper |A. Bocachica |W. Potts |20-1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 5 |5 |Storm the Streets |L. Saez |J. Sharp |10-1 |
| 6 |6 |King's Leap |L. Perez |M. Ferraro |10-1 |
| 7 |7 |Pacific Highway |L. Rivera, Jr. |P. Reynolds |15-1 |
| 8 |8 |Strengthnguidance |J. Alvarado |A. Sano |3-1 |
| 9 |9 |Replevin |D. Davis |J. Ryerson |12-1 |
| 10 |10 |Classic Time |J. Ortiz |M. Casse |5-2 |
| 11 |AE |America's Honor |J. Velazquez |G. Sacco |12-1 |
| 12 |AE |Fire Pit |L. Saez |G. Preciado |4-1 |
| 13 |AE |Brink |D. Davis |E. Davis |30-1 |

7TH (4:38PM). \$70,000, SOC \$35,000-\$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

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

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Sinful Dancer |J. Leparoux |D. Figueroa |50-1 |
| 2 |2 |Gilded Craken |L. Saez |J. Sharp |10-1 |
| 3 |3 |Devil's Cay |L. Dettori |T. Morley |10-1 |
| 4 |4 |Classic Creation |F. Prat |J. Terranova, II |6-1 |
| 5 |5 |Palace View (IRE) |I. Ortiz, Jr. |M. Casse |9-2 |
| 6 |6 |Addicted to You |R. Santana, Jr. |H. De Paz |15-1 |
| 7 |7 |Mauritius |J. Castellano |T. Morley |4-1 |
| 8 |8 |Leftembehind |J. Velazquez |B. Tagg |6-1 |
| 9 |9 |Heathguard |E. Cancel |R. Lerman |15-1 |
| 10 |10 |Drunk On Sake |D. Davis |M. Kantarmaci |12-1 |
| 11 |11 |Our Country |J. Rosario |M. Hennig |8-1 |
| 12 |12 |Front Man |J. Alvarado |M. Kantarmaci |10-1 |
| 13 |AE |Just for Luck |J. Ortiz |M. Maker |8-1 |
| 14 |AE-MTO |Strapped |D. Davis |L. Rice |5-2 |
| 15 |AE-MTO |Gun Maestro |Rider TBA |E. Jones |9-2 |
| 16 |AE-MTO |Ski Country |M. Franco |O. Noda |8-1 |

8TH (5:12PM). \$135,000, STK - THE WILTON, 3 YO, F, 1M

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Miss Justify |F. Prat |T. Pletcher |3-1 |
| 2 |2 |Windy Walk |J. Ortiz |C. Davis |15-1 |
| 3 |3 |Courbe |L. Saez |T. Pletcher |6-1 |
| 4 |4 |Striker Has Dial |K. Carmouche |H. De Paz |3-1 |
| 5 |5 |Lady Moscato |T. Gaffalione |D. Lukas |10-1 |
| 6 |6 |Bells Beach |I. Ortiz, Jr. |C. Brown |5-2 |
| 7 |7 |Dazzling Move |J. Rosario |M. Trombetta |9-2 |

9TH (5:47PM). \$150,000, STK - THE CORONATION CUP (LISTED), 3 YO, F, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Toupie |J. Ruiz |H. Motion |8-1 |
| 2 |2 |In Our Time |J. Rosario |J. Sinsterson |30-1 |
| 3 |3 |Dancing Duchess |J. Castellano |M. Casse |15-1 |
| 4 |4 |Pipsy (IRE) |L. Dettori |W. Walden |6-1 |
| 5 |5 |Twirling Queen |L. Saez |J. D'Angelo |8-1 |
| 6 |6 |Ever So Sweet (IRE) |I. Ortiz, Jr. |B. Cox |5-1 |
| 7 |7 |Kairyu (IRE) |J. Ortiz |C. DeVaux |15-1 |
| 8 |8 |Baraye |G. Corrales |W. Ward |10-1 |
| 9 |9 |Cloudwalker |T. Gaffalione |B. Walsh |6-1 |
| 10 |10 |Star of Mystery (GB) |F. Prat |C. Appleby |9-5 |
| 11 |AE-MTO |Value Area |Rider TBA |T. Pletcher |4-1 |
| 12 |AE-MTO |Do Gooder |J. Castellano |J. Antonucci |9-2 |
| 13 |AE-MTO |Golden Degree |J. Lezcano |L. Rice |7-2 |

10TH (6:20PM). \$55,000, MCL \$40,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1 1/16M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 |1 |Torpedo Run |F. Prat |C. Brown |4-1 |
| 2 |2 |Bookworm |R. Vazquez |M. Giddings |30-1 |
| 3 |3 |Smooth an Easy |E. Cancel |D. Seyler |20-1 |
| 4 |4 |Pujol |D. Davis |E. Ibrahim |15-1 |
| 5 |5 |Beach Blanket |J. Lezcano |L. Rice |15-1 |
| 6 |6 |Comanche Peak (GB) |J. Gomez |J. Bernardini |6-1 |
| 7 |7 |Over and Ollie |L. Dettori |A. Stall, Jr. |6-1 |
| 8 |8 |Adventurous Spirit |I. Ortiz, Jr. |T. Pletcher |5-2 |
| 9 |9 |Remember the Chief |J. Ortiz |C. Martin |8-1 |
| 10 |10 |Fire Baron |J. Leparoux |J. Paragallo |20-1 |
| 11 |11 |Guile |R. Maragh |R. Ribaud |12-1 |
| 12 |12 |Dangerous Driver |J. Castellano |J. Jimenez |15-1 |
| 13 |AE-MTO |Always Be Smart |J. Ortiz |N. Zito |7-2 |
| 14 |AE-MTO |Mano E Mano |A. Bocachica |W. Potts |20-1 |

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Making History

D. Wayne Lukas rode the Triple Crown Trail yet again this year, upsetting the Preakness with Seize The Grey. Ridden by Jaime Torres, the son of Arrogate came back to finish seventh in the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga.

The Special's Sean Clancy chatted with the 88-year-old Hall of Famer a few days before the Belmont Stakes in June. They talked about horses, life and the long road from teaching school and coaching basketball to the top of Thoroughbred racing.

Parts one and part two appeared in The Special at the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival, which you can find at thisishorseracing.com/saratoga-special.

Enjoy.

Were you always OK with risk?

"Here I am a schoolteacher. Got a teacher retirement. Very secure. Going to get an offer to be the head assistant at Michigan, which would have ended up being the head coach at Michigan. My wife wasn't for the horse part at all. I decided to quit teaching. If you're married to a schoolteacher and all of a sudden, he says he's going to be a horse trainer . . . we got a divorce. I'll share with you. I'm at Ruidoso Mexico. I gave her everything. My teacher retirement. Credit cards up to date. Brand new Buick Station Wagon. House. Everything. I remember her driving out the gate and I took my money clip out and I had \$142. I turned to this one kid who was working for me at the time, and I said, 'You're not going to get paid for a while. I've got \$142 here.'"

What did you do next?

"I called a friend of mine who was a banker in Lubbock, Texas. I said, 'Joe, I need to borrow \$10,000.' He said, 'What do you have for collateral?' I said, 'Nothing. I've got a bad pickup that you wouldn't want and a horse trailer. That's it. You really don't want to put them down, why don't just lend it to me knowing that I'll pay you.' He thought a minute and said, 'I know you'll pay me. I'll bring it by. I'll see you next weekend.'"



Samantha Decker

D. Wayne Lukas (still on the pony) talks shop with fellow trainer Kenny McPeck. Sonny the Labrador was unimpressed.

And then what?

"I decided to go to California because they had year-round racing. Los Alamitos, Bay Meadows and back. I've got six horses. Two of them I owned and four of them for clients. They tell me San Luis Rey is a new facility, it's going to open. Fuzzy is running the place. I walk in and I say, 'Fuzzy, I can't pay stall rent and I really can't pay the feed bill either.' He had the feed store there too. I said, 'If you'll carry me until Los Alamitos opens, I'll guarantee you I'll be OK and I'll pay you, I've got good horses.' He said, 'You can't pay anything?' I said, 'No. I've got to keep the money for my payroll. And the motel, when we drove up in the pickup and all that in it, they got suspicious, I've got to pay them cash every day.' Every day, we went in there and gave them \$39 to sleep in the hotel. He said, 'Well, I believe you. I'm going to take a chance on you.' He carried me. I ran the tab on the feed, on the stall rent and he had a kitchen open there and I even used that."

How long did it take to pay him back?

"We went into Los Alamitos, and I said to this young Mexican kid with me, I said, 'If we have one good horse, one good superstar, we can really make some noise here.' I didn't know it but I had her in the barn. I had a filly named Native Empress. She

won the Inaugural, then another stake and another stake and she ended up horse of the meet. We go to Bay Meadows, and we had 10 horses, we came back and we had 36. Pretty soon we had 56. And then it went right along."

Why did you take the risk of giving up teaching to train horses?

"I knew we would make a living. What the hell, a single guy, all you've got to do is eat. I've got a master's degree to fall back on. The biggest decision career-wise was the Michigan deal. I was on the staff at Wisconsin with a guy named Johnny Orr. Johnny Orr got the Michigan job and he called me, I'd only been with the Quarter Horses for two years, he called me and said I want you to come up to Michigan and be my number one guy. He said, 'We'll kill em. Recruiting.' The pay was really nothing, I think it was \$28,000. The thing that happened was he only coached there two years, he left and went to Iowa State. I was good friends with Bo Schembechler, I would have been head coach at Michigan, I know that. If I had taken that opportunity, I would have gotten the head coaching job at Michigan, which, you know you'd have been fired by now. I just felt like the horses were just starting to roll. That was where my passion was. I loved

Continued on Page 40

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Lukas -

■ Continued from page 38

the coaching, I loved the camaraderie, but the pay wasn't really good. Who could foresee you could make a million dollars coaching a basketball team? Those are the risks you take. I turned down that job cold. I had a master's degree. I had a resume that probably would have let me to go to Michigan or anyplace I wanted. I took care of myself."

Were you good at basketball?

"The thing about it, I was not a player. I studied the game because I knew I wasn't very good. You get out there and a couple of those guys ram that ball down your head and you think, 'Jeez, this is a different game.' I was short and slow. I studied it. I could go to the blackboard and tell everybody what the hell they were supposed to be doing."

Did you like coaching basketball?

"As soon as I graduated, I took a little job at a little, bitty school in northern Wisconsin and then they asked me if I would be interested in the freshmen team and I came back. That's when I got my master's, coach the freshmen team, it was a bird nest on the ground. It was a big deal. I was training Quarter Horses all the time, running them everywhere. All summer long. That was the other thing,

they wanted me to recruit a lot, that was starting to get in the way of the horses. They wanted me to go here and there, and I was trying to get them fit in the spring. If there was an awards banquet in the spring that they didn't pay for, I got that. If it was paid banquet, one of the other coaches took it. I was always the low man on the totem pool. If it was in the basement, they'd say, 'Lukas, get down there.' "

Did you always have a passion for what you were doing?

"I haven't done as many lately but when I do those corporate speeches, I don't talk about horses, I talk about what we're talking about right there. I tell people if you have a passion for anything, you eliminate all the excuses. You'll go without lunch, you'll drive all night, you'll go without sleep, you eliminate any excuse if you've got the passion. That's what drives you but need to get it and you need to find it. The biggest decision you're ever going to make in your life is your attitude. You've got to make it early in the morning and make the right one. That's the biggest one you'll ever make."

Did you like the corporate speeches?

"I did Microsoft for Bill Gates. The national convention. There's 1,700 executives in the Omni Hotel in Atlanta. I'm sitting there and thinking, 'Damn.' I could tell that was going to be a tough,

tough audience. I said to the woman running it, 'I think this is going to be a little tough for me.' They said, 'Don't worry about a thing, we heard you do the American Express convention. You'll be just fine.' I go to the podium and these guys are (slouching, arms crossed, looking down). She's introducing me and I can see it going through their heads, 'What the ---- is this horse trainer going to do?' I go to the podium, and I said, 'Straighten up and sit up straight. Get your feet on the floor. Because what I've got to tell you you're going to need.' Those were my first words. I didn't say good morning, nothing. And they did. Bill Gates was sitting next to me smiling."

You always had confidence?

"You either have it or you don't. Just like those young guys I interviewed before I hired them. I never hired one guy that I thought was going to stay with me. If I thought he was going to stay with me, I didn't want him. Now, Sebastian (Bas Nicholl) has been with me 22 years, but I think he's waiting for me to keel over because he knows he'll get the keys to the kingdom. He's going to get more than the pony and a client. I'm getting my leg over that saddle every morning, he can see that, he's saying this guy's going to die off . . ."

Continued on Page 42

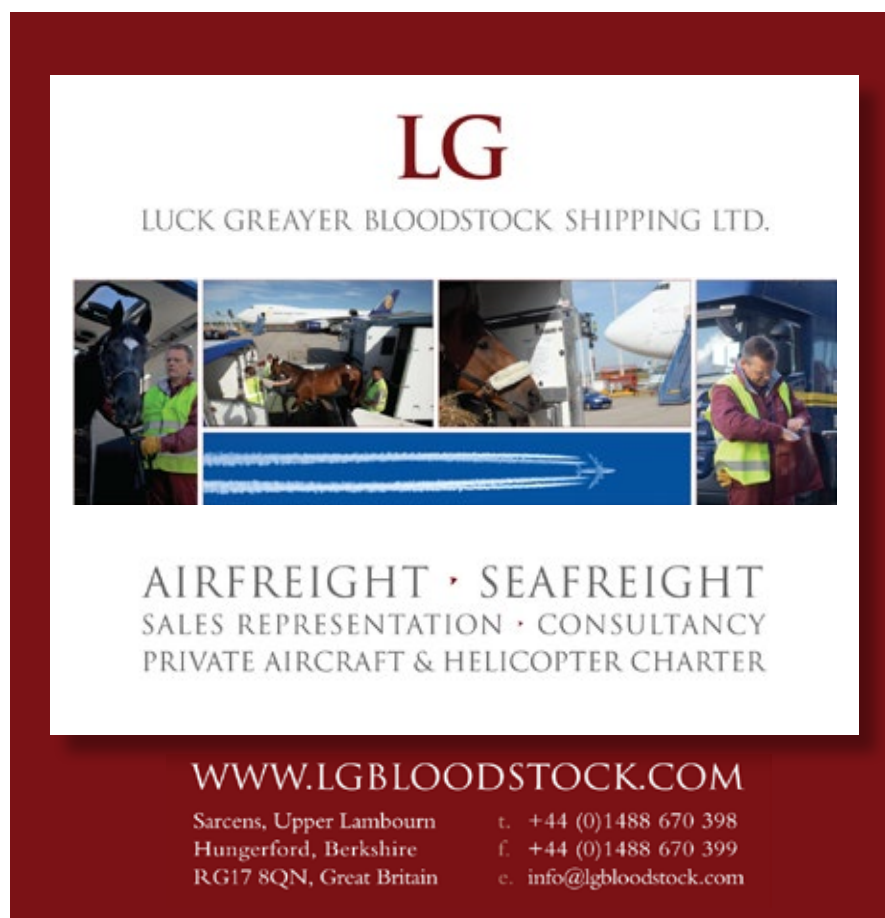


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Lukas -

■ Continued from page 40

You've always been dedicated to your work?

"You've got to have something that really gets a hold of you. You shouldn't have to work, by that I mean it never should be a job. If it's a job, you're going to be 9 to 5 and you're going to go home. These guys I could say, 'Look, jump in the truck and drive to Churchill and pick up a horse and come back tomorrow.' They'd say, 'OK, boss,' and jump in that truck.

"I was so intense and focused, I went through those marriages, I blame myself. Hell, I didn't see my wife awake for a month. The barn is so dominant, and the racing is so dominant. What happens is you marry a young gal and she's fascinated by the romance of the grandstand and the racing but that only lasts a little while. Then they're going to be like, 'Are we going to do the same thing? Drive all night to go to Hot Springs.' It takes a toll."

But things change...

"I'm married to a gal (Laurie) now who's unbelievable. She's a horsewoman. She's a world-class judge . . . Show horses. Jumpers. Everything. And she's good at it. We have that little ranch in Colorado and she goes up there and teaches once a month. She loves teaching. She loves this part too."

What's your motivation at this age?

"You've got to be careful because when you get to where I am that recliner will pull you in, it's like a magnet. At 3 a.m., it's hard to walk past it. You think, 'What the hell? I'm financially OK. I've got great assistants, I've got Todd Pletcher (the equivalent of) at the barn who is going to look after things. Why am I fighting this? I'm tired. That sofa will suck you in. That sofa makes you old. You sit on that sofa and watch television . . . everybody that I know who has retired from a profession of one kind or another, the next time I see them, they've really aged.

"The secret is I don't hang around people my age. I don't want to be around them. They're OK to say hi to on the phone. Go to dinner with somebody who's 75 or in that age group, you sit down I'll bet you in five minutes, they start talking about their health . . . always some problem. I'd like to interrupt, 'Are we going to die here or eat lunch?' I go with all the young people that are 25, 30. They never talk about their health, and they'd be mortified if I brought it up. I make sure I don't hang out with anybody my age and I know some good ones. I visit once a week with Bill Parcells and I enjoy it. We exchange insults. It's attitude. I tell my wife, whatever you do, don't bring up my broken ribs . . . to hell with that, I'm here."

And you're still coaching, teaching...

"I've got a young guy who's a hotwalker. There's a CIA guy who parked his car in my extra garage where I live. The other day, they brought some supplies, and this kid is in awe of this car. I said to him, 'You like that car?' He said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'Nobody is going to give it to you, but

I'll show you how to get it. If you're really ready, I'll show you how you're going to get it. If you do what I tell you.' He told his dad and he said he's not ready for what I'm about to do him.

"I told Jaime Torres, 'I'm going to ride you but I'm going to make you better than you want to be.' He said, 'What?' I said, 'I'm going to make you better than you want to be. You will be better than you ever thought you could be if you listen . . .' And he's buying into it. Bill Parcells wrote a foreword for a magazine and he said we were out of the same mold. His last line was, 'Thank God he's not in football or we'd all be in trouble.' "

A coach is always a coach...

"We went down to Saratoga Golf Course. He was hitting some balls and I'm just sitting there; my back won't let me hit them. There's a guy down there, about 24, 25. Bill's hitting and he's watching him, he's hitting and he's watching him. All of a sudden, Bill lays down his clubs and goes down and he starts telling this kid to bring his hips through and this and that. He's standing there coaching this kid. He comes back and I say, 'Do you know that kid?' He says, 'No, I've never seen him before in my life.' I said, 'You couldn't help yourself, could you? You absolutely couldn't help yourself.' He said, 'Well, I could help him...' I said, 'You had to go down there, you couldn't just enjoy hitting balls.' He said, 'I never thought about it that way.' He had to go down there and tell him. I'm a little that way, too."

Yeah, you can't help teaching...

"Dale Romans and I went to Mountaineer Park. We ran our horses, we had a station wagon waiting, and Dale said, 'I want to go back to the barn and see how my horse pulled up.' I said, 'Come on, let's catch the airplane and go home.' He said, 'No, I want to go to the barn.' We pull up to the barn and there's a trailer and a truck there. There's a young couple trying to load a filly. Now literally, she's wringing wet. She's washed out completely. She's doing everything but flopping down . . . Dale comes back out and says, 'Let's go.' I said, 'You know what, wait a minute. I'm going to help this couple.' I'm in a full suit and tie. He said, 'What?' I said, 'Let me help them.'

"There's this young kid standing there, he's worn out himself. I said, 'Do you mind if I help you load this filly?' He said, 'Would I ever? I'd love to have you help me.' So, I said, 'Well, there's some things I want to do here.' I took the lip chain and everything off and I took her and made a couple of turns of the barn with her and came back out. Made a couple of turns to the trailer and I told him, 'She's going to walk right in, but I don't want to let her this time.' He said, 'What?' I loaded her halfway and backed her out. He said, 'Oh, ****.' I back her out and turn her a couple of more times and load her. Dale calls him over to the car and says, 'Do you know who helped you?' He said, 'No, but I'm really thankful.' Dale says, 'You won't believe it...' Dale tells the story, 'It's pouring down rain and he's got a \$4,000 suit on and he's loading this filly.' I told Dale, 'I can't watch it any longer.' "

Wayne, thanks for the conversation.

"Oh, hell, I rambled on. Brought up a lot of memories."

Saratoga Bulletin Board

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Miller: Time to bet better

BY PAUL HALLORAN

What does movie-theater popcorn have to do with betting horses?

If your answer is, “Nothing,” you might want to pick up a copy of “A Better Way of Thinking,” a recently released book by Matt Miller, who knows a lot about both.

In his first book, Miller, a horse player and retired corporate attorney from Chicago and winner of the 2021 Breeders’ Cup Betting Challenge, provides advice on everything from contest strategy to beating the lines at Disney World.

Despite winning more than \$500,000 in the BCBC, the biggest horse racing wagering contest of the year, and being a financial backer of two other winners in the last five years, Miller makes it clear that this is a book about betting, not handicapping.

The book serves as a 255-page tutorial on making good decisions, in gambling and in life. Miller, a self-professed contrarian, asserts that there is no practical advantage to thinking and acting like everyone else. His mantra: Dare to be different, in virtually all circumstances.

“I wanted to explain myself and my thinking in my own words,” said Miller, who made his first trip to Saratoga in 2022 and found himself in a winner’s circle photo with friend Howard Kravets and the Adelphi Racing group last year. “I have an underlying desire to help people.”

Miller’s approach to life and gam-

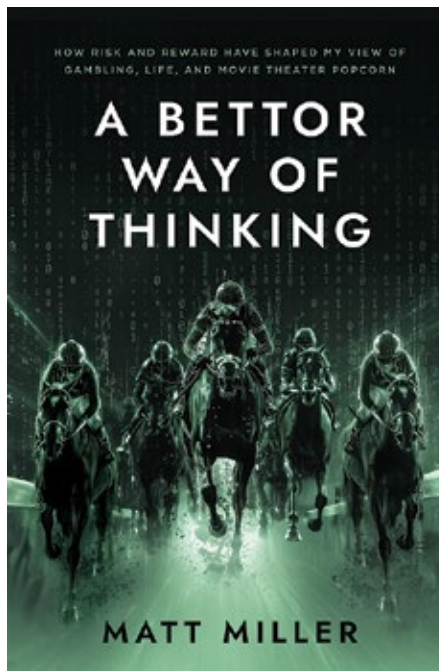
bling is encapsulated early in the book when he writes about his strategy when playing 9-ball. Unlike most billiards players, he has neither the interest nor the patience to try to sink the balls in chronological order, instead trying to sink the 9 on virtually every shot.

Miller went to Arlington Park for the first time in 1985, after a fire had leveled the building. He cut his wagering

teeth at Arlington and Chicago-area harness tracks. He played through college (Illinois) and law school (Northwestern) and was a traditional better – if there is such a thing – playing win, exactas, trifectas and daily doubles.

His first epiphany came when he discovered Pick 6 carryovers and the opportunity to take away money that others had lost in the preceding days. That led to his first major score, a \$55K Pick 6 in 2009 – six years before he completely changed his outlook on how to bet.

Once Miller started playing contests he quickly realized how much



more suited he was to that type of wagering. There are several reasons for that, but at the top is the fact that live-money contests are as much a competition in how to bet as how to handicap. Miller would argue that the betting piece is even more important and provides several examples in the book.

He learned a valuable lesson in the 2017 BCBC, when failing to go all-in on Gun

Runner in the Breeders’ Cup Classic likely cost him a top-five finish. Epiphany No. 2: If you want to win the tournament, you’d better be willing to come home empty-handed. It’s not necessarily an all-or-nothing strategy by design, but it turns out that way more often than not.

“Everything changed,” Miller writes in describing his 2017 experience, and that includes his overall approach to betting horses. He had a moment of clarity that prompted him to shift his focus to winning tourna-

ments and be far less concerned with grinding it out every weekend.

After watching his good friend Brad Anderson win the 2019 BCBC, it was Miller’s turn in 2021. By that point, he had developed a systematic approach to playing the tournaments, starting at the end and working backward.

In 2021, Miller’s goal was to have a \$34,000 bankroll (from a \$7,500 start) heading into the Classic, at which point he would bet it all to win on Knicks Go. He ended up with a \$33,000 bet that returned \$142,000 and made Miller a BCBC champion. The following year, Drew Coatney, another Miller friend, won the tournament with a \$97,000 win bet on Flightline. So there.

In addition to myriad practical advice on how to be a successful horseplayer, “A Better Way of Thinking” provides a crystal-clear look into Miller’s thought process, which is based on an unquenchable desire to compete and win, whether it be taking down the BCBC or beating the rest of the crowd from the airport terminal to the off-site rental car counter.

In Miller’s case, he logs those victories by being willing to go against the grain in all aspects of decision making.

The decision to read “A Better Way of Thinking” is one you won’t regret.

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The Clash

Todd Wyatt was on his way home from the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga. The four-day racing festival in June had come and gone. It was everything that was good in racing. Engaged fans. Competitive racing. At a venue that never disappoints. Wyatt, predominately a steeplechase trainer, had come to town with his wife, Blair, their son, James and their daughter, Paige. A rare vacation, an excursion, a break from an all-consuming game and an all-consuming farm in Monkton, Md.

They stayed with old friends, slept in, went racing, wandered around town. Paddock boots swapped for flip flops. Set lists exchanged for hunch bets. The Parting Glass replaced by Ben & Jerry's. How times change.

Wyatt called another old friend, also on his way home from the Belmont. The going-home thoughts and the Monday-morning blues banging loud on that lonely road.

"You know, it's strange," Wyatt said. "Being there to see that kind of racing, those kinds of horses, that kind of energy for four days. It inspires you and motivates you. But it also frustrates you and grates at you for not being more involved, not being at that level."

Yeah, that's Saratoga.

Wyatt once spun in the eye of the Saratoga storm, running the high-octane barns of Hall of Famers Jonathan Sheppard and Tom Voss. Now, he's on his own, raising a family, winning some races, taking a few shots at Saratoga, making a living. Just.

The Belmont provided a four-day taste of the Saratoga potion, the Saratoga poison. So sweet. And so bitter.

And here we go again for the real thing. Four racing days turn to 40 racing days and the rollicking collision of inspiration and desperation. Eight weeks of racing and eight weeks of pressure. For fans, it's a joy, a release, a playground. For most participants, it's everything that Wyatt talked about



By Sean Clancy

on his long car ride home. Inspired by being here and frustrated by struggling here or even worse, not being here at all.

I say most because in a top-heavy game, there are a few who dominate and the rest patch and claw for a win here or there, at least a moment or two to stave off the frustration. That goes for owners, trainers and jockeys. For the little guys, the lucky little guys, the release of winning their first race at the meet is palpable. Like taking off the lid of the kettle. We've interviewed them for 23 years. As Quint Kessenich said early on at The Special, "We root for chaos." Somewhere, the motto gained a second sentence, expanding to "We root for obscurity." Yeah, we still root for chaos and obscurity. They're the best stories. We root for the little guys, the ones who still tilt at the windmills in a game that's turned into a wind tunnel.

Wednesday morning, with Wyatt still in my head, I toured the backstretch of Saratoga. With a day to go, the place was still coming to life. Carpenters hammered boards into place. Tables were still stacked high near the rec hall. Horses prepped at the gate and schooled in the paddock. Joe Sharp's goat stood watch from an old tree. Kieran McLaughlin hustled rides at Michelle Nevin's barn. Mark Casse scowled at his cell phone. Carl Domino walked his dog. Lane and Mike Luzzi searched for rides, know-

ing the hill they face. The soccer field, primped and painted, waited for evening games. A man on a bike yelled, "Welcome Back." I thanked him.

I took note of new signs, different webbings and moved stables while still hoping to see Jerkens, Toner and Albertrani in their usual spots under the old familiar trees. I still cringe when I see TAP instead of COB in the short, diagonal barn near the maintenance shed.

Bobby Ribaldo and Lisa Lewis share Barn 12. Two of the smaller barns here, two horsemen, who will feel everything that Wyatt talked about on his long road home in June. We chatted for a while, talked about ideas, talked about attitude, talked about pressure. Lewis gave me a barn tour. "This is my big hope..."

I drove back to the office, hoping for her hope.

When I got here this year, I hung a photo of Allen Jerkens and me. We're walking up the muddy track after he won the Prioress, his last Grade 1, my fondest memory of this place. The nail stays in the wall all year. I also taped an article above my desk. It was one of my first stories I wrote for The Blood Horse, way back in 1997. It was about David Hofmans winning the Belmont Stakes with Touch Gold.

The California-based trainer talked about the lows of this game.

"I thought about getting out of the business," he said. "I couldn't get to the barn in the morning. I was depressed; I had raised three children; the stress of the game. I didn't have my priorities straight."

And the highs.

"I'm amazed almost every day at the quality of horses in my barn and how they got there," he said. "I want to get up in the morning. I like the good ones, the bad ones, the giant ones, the small ones. This is what I live for."

With a dwindling stable at age 81, Hofmans took his own life July 3.

I'll be thinking about him this meet.

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