

Year 25 • No. 7

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

CELEBRATING
25 SEASONS

The *Saratoga*

Special

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Head of State

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Jim Dandy win
to list of feats



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Here&There...at Saratoga

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

Names of the Day

Wednesday

Holey Moley, first race. Nothing to do with his name, but he is trained by Barry Foley and we're not letting Holley Moley Foley go past.

Sunset Sizzle, third race. Starlight Racing and Star Ladies Racing's 3-year-old filly is out of Pacific Heat.

Blanchett, sixth race. Owned by Bridlewood Farm and Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners, the 2-year-old filly is by Oscar Performance. Cate Blanchett received a best supporting actress Oscar in 2004 (*The Aviator*) and a best actress nod in 2013 (*Blue Jasmine*).



Names of the Day

Thursday

Devilish Grin, second race. Brody Racing's 2-year-old filly is by Daredevil out of Casual Smile.

Sassy Shenanigans, third race. The 3-year-old filly is by Maximus Mischief out of Irish Heroine.

Names of the Day

Colonial Downs edition

Power Grid, fourth race. Two-year-old City Of Light colt runs in the \$100,000 Hickory Tree Stakes Saturday. We're fans of The Power Grid handicapping page in The Special so we're on board here. Thanks Sallyellen Hurst for the tip.

By The Numbers

1: Los Angeles Kings hat in the clubhouse Saturday.

112: Miles run by Ramon Dominguez to win the Last Man Standing in Lake Placid Saturday and Sunday.

20.6: Miles run collectively by The Special's Tom Law, Joe Clancy and Sean Clancy Saturday and Sunday. We're not quite ready for the Last Man Standing.

132,232: Dollars in the pick six carryover going into Wednesday's card.

0: Men in the men's room behind the on-track Dunkin' Donuts Sunday afternoon. A record that can only be equaled.

2: Members of a band practicing dance moves inside the Union Avenue gate Sunday.



Samantha Decker

Bike Lane. Harness driver Brett Beckwith (left) overtakes retired flat jockey Trevor McCarthy at Saratoga Harness Saturday night. The event raised \$22,260 for the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation and the Franklin Community Center.

27: Horses living – and working (no treats, please) – at Therapeutic Horses of Saratoga.

16: Years the Temple Gwathmey Steeplechase Foundation young riders' group has made the trip to Saratoga.

1: Hall of Fame jockey chasing after a golf cart Saturday morning.

T-Shirts of the Day

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License Plates of the Day

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The Chief

"When I met Mr. Dreyfus, I said, 'You owners, think it's easy...'. I don't know why I said it, but I said it. I didn't care. He said, 'Wait a minute, how long you been training?' We ate, and I said 'I'll see ya.' I didn't think we hit it off that good. I was leading trainer in New York, it was the first time I ever remember being like that. I was leading trainer, that's why I was half cocky, I didn't give a ****, that's why I didn't care about meeting him. That's the trouble when you get like that, if things go bad you can't get going again. You never, ever want to get like that. I didn't think I'd ever hear from him again. I didn't think we hit it off. I couldn't believe it when he called back and wanted to come to the barn. He said, 'Why don't you just come work for me. I'll give you \$50,000 guaranteed.' I said, 'I would rather have \$30,000 and 10 percent.' Dreyfus looked at me and said, 'You are stupid.' I said, 'If I can't win that much money with these horses, I don't want them and you don't want me.'"

– Trainer Allen Jerkens, 1929-2015

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Here&There...in Saratoga

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

Worth Repeating

"You can have all of them for \$150."

Hat seller on East Avenue at the end of the day Saturday



"Love The Special."

Wally from Saratoga Harness

"You've got a good crew working for you this year."

Rick, the Union Avenue traffic cop, about The Special's interns

"We still have one set and then the downpour started as soon as they walked out."

Trainer Horacio De Paz wrapping up a Stable Tour toward the end of wet training hours Sunday

"Shane, that's for you."

Jockey Kendrick Carmouche after winning the finale Sunday and after Sean Clancy, aka Shane, tried to heckle him in the paddock before the race

"She is my most difficult owner, and I've got many owners. I just want you to know that. My most high-maintenance owner. No owner has yelled at me more than all the others combined."

Miguel Clement, joking to The Special's Alec DiConza in the winner's circle after winning Friday's nightcap with his mother's horse

"Ramon ran 100 miles today."

The Special's Tom Law to Sean Clancy as Clancy neared 100 miles for the year at the same time Hall of Fame jockey Ramon Dominguez finished 112 miles in the Last Man Standing in Lake Placid

"That's crazy."

Jockey Joel Rosario watching a replay of the Palio di Siena horse race

"Isn't fast enough... doesn't care enough. Hard to know. Either way, it's the same end result."

Joe Clancy Sr., analyzing a disappointing effort at Colonial Downs

Congratulations Ramon Dominguez for being the Last Man Standing.



Samantha Decker

Welcome Home. Diversify, who won the 2018 Whitney, checks out his new retirement digs at Old Friends Cabin Creek.

"Sovereignty is having a moment."

New York Times headline Monday morning (we thought the same thing)

"I'd be embarrassed to drive over there from here."

Trainer Brendan Walsh opting to walk to the Oklahoma rather than drive a golf cart Friday morning

"They still count."

Trainer Horacio De Paz on his two winners over the July 4 Racing Festival at Saratoga

"No, no, no. Seven."

Jockey Javier Castellano, correcting his number of Travers wins

"It took me a week to recover after staying up until 11."

Makaia Carpenter about open mic night at Caffe Lena

"Oh, those horses can pull. They get their heads down..."

Hall of Fame flat jockey Angel Cordero Jr., about riding jumpers

"Getting closer."

Trainer John Shirreffs after Baeza finished second to Sovereignty in the Jim Dandy Saturday



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With Horacio De Paz

Horacio De Paz zipped around Clare Court Sunday, training between the rain showers and finishing his morning just before one of the heaviest downpours that washed off all but one of the day's turf races.

"You ready? Let's go," De Paz said, dismounting and heading for the dry comfort of his office in the middle of his regular spot inside Clare Court. Active in the entry box so far at the meet, De Paz has a win and three placings from 12 starts. He won a career-best eight races at last year's meet, to go with eight seconds and 11 thirds for purses of \$788,917. That played a role in his career year overall, when the barn earned \$4,014,981 in purses.

English Castle put the barn on the board for this year's Saratoga meet July 19 and De Paz also sent out two winners – Downtown Channel and Awesome Czech – to victories at the July 4 Racing Festival at Saratoga.

The barn features a usual blend of promising 2-year-olds and veterans and stakes competitors for turf and dirt.

"It's a competitive, solid group," De Paz said. "A lot of turf, but some interesting young horses. Then we got the older horses that we have. We've been a little quieter on the claiming side, and I sent some horses down to Laurel to run at Colonial Downs because the money is good.

"It was great to get a win here last week, and then we had two before the meet started. Our horses are running live up here. Hopefully, the turf will be good to us. The weather will be good. We have a lot of turf horses coming up."

De Paz went through the Saratoga string, including the barn goat, with The Special's Tom Law.

Striker Has Dial: Chief Horse Futures' 4-year-old Dialed In mare finished fifth in the Grade 2 Honorable Miss after a second in the Skipat Stakes on Preakness Day at Pimlico. She's won three of 12 with six placings and earned \$259,172.

"I was hoping for a five-horse field in the Honorable Miss. It was and everybody was very competitive in that race. Her effort wasn't bad, just a hot pace. She probably needed the race off the layoff. Came out of it in good order. I was actually just on her when you pulled up. I'm looking to see maybe they write the allowance, the 3X allowance going three quarters. If not, we'll just see. She's graduated through that 2X condition. So now she's got to face horses that have already gone through all that and won some stakes or are needing some class



Samantha Decker

Red Burgundy looks for a two-other-than allowance coming up at Saratoga.

relief and then go into those spots like Mott's horse (Scylla) and Abreu's horse (Jody's Pride). She's faced some nice horses in her last two starts. Hopefully, she'll continue to mature and graduate to that point."

Sounds Like A Plan: Owned by Club Sixty Five Racing, 3-year-old New York-bred Twirling Candy colt finished third in the Rick Violette Stakes July 17. That came after a seventh in a June 4 allowance during the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival.

"Better effort in the Rick Violette than the allowance effort. Blinkers seemed to help. Same thing, (Ricardo) Santana said, if he can get him to settle that first quarter, it would be tremendous for him. He just seems to be learning how to run. He breaks from the gate a little bit slow, not horrible. And then when we try to put him to establish position, it's like, 'All right, let's go.' And he's on it. In that race, he was on it. He got him to back off down the backside. Then they came at him right away. He had to make another move. Essentially, he made three moves throughout the race, and then he flattened out the last few jumps to the wire. If he ever learns how to run, he's talented enough to face those types of horses and even open horses. I'm chewing on the idea of trying him on the dirt once. He breezes very well on it, or I'll just stay turf. I'm not sure yet."

Yougottahavehope: Barry Schwartz's homebred 3-year-old Twirling Candy won her debut last August at Saratoga then finished third behind Abientot in the Grade 3 Matron Stakes at Aqueduct. Fourth in the Soaring Softly Stakes June 8 at Saratoga, she finished sixth in an allowance here July 20.

"Just ran green. She established the lead on her own. Then down the lane, she was just drifting in and out. Maybe try some blinkers on her. Her effort off the layoff was decent. We ran her on the dirt just to give her the race. Last year, she

gave me a really good race on the turf in the Grade 3. Abientot went on to run in the Breeders' Cup. She's turned out to be a decent little mare. I had a lot of hope for her to continue to move forward. That turf race, a head scratcher there. She needs to return to her form. Hopefully we can get her back into form."

Ty Ty Rose. Another homebred for Schwartz and a half sister to Yougottahavehope, 2-year-old Union Rags filly makes her second start in the sixth race Thursday. She finished sixth in her debut July 17 at Saratoga.

"I ran her on the turf. She's Union Rags out of a No Nay Never mare. This was before Yougottahavehope ran and I was like, 'She ran so good on the turf. Maybe we just go ahead and answer the question if she's going to be turf.' She's probably a distance horse, regardless. I thought I'd give her the race. She can make a run and then we can stretch out from there. Santana said she didn't make a run at all. She didn't like the turf. She's much better on the dirt. We'll see. I wheeled her right back. That race was a workout for her basically. We'll see if it works out."

Twirling Lad: The Three Colleens Stable's 2-year-old Twirling Candy colt makes debut in Thursday's opener, a 1 1/16-mile maiden on the turf for New York-breds.

"He's been training very forwardly, very nice. I seem to be a fan club of Twirling Candy and English Channel. Those are my go-to sires right now. I've got six English Channels. I'm collecting them. Yes. The older the older they get, the better they get. Yeah, the better they get. He's a Twirling Candy and has been training very forwardly. I'm looking forward to getting him started. He's very easy to work with. He's been doing well with everything that he's been breezing with. He looks like he could debut well and perform well."

Continued on Page 8

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Samantha Decker

Awesome Czech comes off a big win here July 4.



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Stable Tour -

Continued from page 6

English Castle: The winner. Chalk Racing's 4-year-old New York-bred English Channel gelding put the barn on the board for the proper Saratoga meet July 19. He improved to 1-1-2 from nine starts with maiden claiming score.

"We got him in a good spot. Blinkers, taking them off, seemed to help him settle. A little bit quirky because he does lean out throughout. In the mornings not so much, but in the afternoon, he does. Changed equipment. Santana said he was able to control him very good. Hopefully next year, he just gets better again. But we'll continue through his little conditions and obviously rest him and then bring him back and maybe he stays healthy."

Can't Fool Me: Roger Cimbara Jr.'s homebred stakes-placed 6-year-old Frost Giant mare finished ninth in July 19 open-company allowance. She won at the meet in 2023 and 2024 and sports a record of 4-4-3 in 21 starts with \$296,855 in earnings.

"Ran in the allowance race, slow pace, :49 for the half. She needs a pace to run at. She gets on the bit. She can get into a rhythm. She can close. I'll probably cut her back in distance a little bit. Kind of playing with the idea of going in the allowance race or waiting for the Yaddo. She finished third in last year's John Hettinger. She fits in New York-bred company. It'll be a small field. She'll have to face Awesome Czech in there. But timing wise, I don't know yet what I'm going to do."

Awesome Czech: Schwartz's stakes-winning homebred 4-year-old Mendelssohn filly won an allowance July 4. She's won four of 15, including last year's Suzie O'Cain Stakes at Saratoga, and earned \$363,490.

"She's doing great. Ran big on July 4. A great effort with blinkers on. She ran big. Another dimension to her. She was able to be placed forwardly. She was hindered by the pace in the stakes prior (third in the Mount Vernon). It worked out. The turf course played to our favor, too. It was very speed favoring. But even then, she got headed and she dug in and came out of it in good order. The spacing from her allowance race to the Yaddo, it's just a lot of time. I don't think the Yaddo is until August 22. The problem is if I run her in the allowance, the 2X, it's a mile and three-sixteenths. I don't know if she wants to go that far. And if I do run there, I won't make the Yaddo. I don't think I would wheel her right back. I'm kind of stuck here a little bit. But she's doing great. Breezed the other day. She's doing fine, just maintenance. I might enter and see what it looks like and scratch. If she could be lone speed in there, the purse is good for the Yaddo. I've got to talk to Andrew (Byrnes, NYRA's stakes coordinator) about it because I know Mark Hennig's filly and Awesome Czech, after that I don't know. It was a small field that one day we ran in it."

Final Denile: Upback Racing's 4-year-old Mendelssohn gelding exits back-to-back thirds in \$30,000 claiming race on the dirt June 19 at Aqueduct and starter-optional on the turf July 17 at Saratoga. He's won two of 14 and earned \$106,165.

"He liked the turf. He ran very honest on the turf. He'd been honest throughout the winter when we claimed him. He wasn't running to how he looked and how he was training. He would make a run, but then kind of flatten out. So, I put him on the turf. He has some breeding to be able to be a turf horse. Great race. He was making a great move and wasn't able to really save a lot of ground in that last

turn. That hurt him a little bit, but he ran honest. I'll just probably go back in that same spot with him. He's been a nice little claim."

Downtown Channel: AGB Equine Racing's 4-year-old English Channel filly owns two wins — both at Saratoga, including July 6 in a starter-optional.

"She runs well fresh. Won here last year, Belmont weekend, and then she ran well here July 4 weekend. I'm going to put her away until next Belmont. Just run her once a year. She's an English Channel. She should get better next year and then bring her back just once a year. But seriously, great effort. Again, the English Channels, they just get better and better. It's just amazing how they, one year to another, they're just a different horse. Mentally, they just seem to fire that way. It's not like you train them toward that. They just do it. It's amazing."

Gena B: Triple B Stable's and John Foster's 2-year-old Brody's Cause filly finished second in debut May 3 at Aqueduct then came back to be second in the \$145,500 Astoria Stakes June 5 at Saratoga.

"She had a minor step back. We had to do a minor surgery on her, but she should be fine. It was either run her or take care of this, so it would have been an issue down the road. She's a quality filly. She was very honest first time out. Second time out, I wanted to get some black type just to get some residual value. It looked like a great spot. Some people tried to buy her. . . . Then she didn't pass (the veterinary exam), and then she had a minor issue. I just said 'let's go ahead and just take care of that.' We can have a nice winter horse. She's a dirt horse. She's a front-running horse. She liked Aqueduct the day that we ran her. She'll be back. Probably when we get back, if I need three months off, then she'll be back. Bummer because we couldn't run her up here. But look, it will thin down in the wintertime. We can find some spots for her there."

Twenty Six Black: One of the big horses of the barn. Cimbara's homebred 5-year-old by War Dancer sports 5-3-1 record in 13 starts and \$359,060 in earnings. He's finished fourth in three straight stakes, including the Elusive Quality May 3 and the Ashley T. Cole June 28, both at Aqueduct. Turned in a :46.40 half-mile breeze July 26, fastest of 167 at the distance.

"He worked really good. I'm going to point him toward the Troy. He gave us a flat effort in the New York-bred stakes. His energy wasn't great. I don't know if the week before when that heatwave came through, it knocked him out a little bit. He just wasn't himself. He's normally a very forward, happy horse. In the paddock, he can be forward. He was just a little bit quiet. Everything came back. We did blood. Everything checked out fine. It wasn't his day. His energy was just low. He worked really good yesterday. Came out of it in good order. He likes Saratoga. He runs well here, too. Maybe the weather and everything will comply and we won't get any rain."

Pie Phi: Chief Horse Futures' 2-year-old Munnings filly makes debut in today's sixth, a 5 1/2-furlong maiden on the turf. She's breezed three times in Saratoga, including bullet 3 furlongs in :35.60 July 20 on the main track.

"She's been training forwardly. Her works on the dirt have just been OK. I'm going to try her on the turf and see. But she's been forward. She's been waking up and she's ready to get started. We'll get a lot of questions answered in her race."

Continued on Page 10

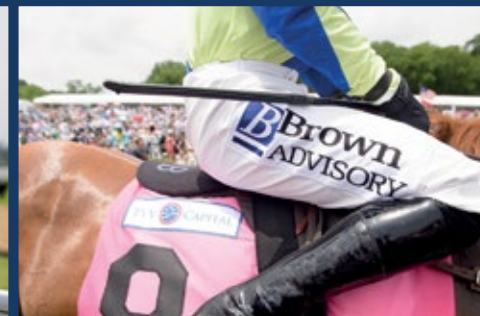


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Above: Lee Townsend (American, 1895-1965)
Going to the Post at Saratoga (detail)

Stable Tour -

■ Continued from page 8

Kigali: New addition to the barn after being claimed for \$30,000 from Rigney Racing and Phil Bauer by Saratoga Dreams Racing out of a third here July 20. Five-year-old Hard Spun gelding runs back on 10 days' rest in today's seventh race, a 1 3/8-mile starter-optional on the turf.

"We just claimed him. He came out of that in good order. He did win going a mile and three-sixteenths. Maybe a little bit of an ambitious spot, but off his last race maybe it places him forwardly. It seems like he's very versatile. He'll run 5 1/2. He runs decent. His best Beyer is going a mile and three-sixteenths on the turf. It's interesting. On paper, you don't know. But he has won the a-other-than going long. At least he's gone a little bit of a route of distance. He's been great since we got him. Sound, happy."

Red Burgundy: Schwartz's homebred 4-year-old Noble Mission filly hasn't been out since winning May 17 allowance at Aqueduct. She's 2-3-2 in 10 starts with \$161,330 earned.

"She's doing well going to a 2X allowance. Came back off the layoff. She won. She's just bitten by rain on the turf. But she's doing very good, looking forward to her. I think the allowance 2X is going a mile, which I think that's going to be a perfect distance for her. Because everybody that's ridden her said she's a little bit limited that last sixteenth. She's got a race coming up. Happy with her."

Tim and Sam: A \$100,000 purchase by Chief Horse Futures out of last year's Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred sale, Mo Town colt finished fifth in debut July 16.

"He debuted here on the turf. He didn't show too much in the morning. Very easy horse to work with. He broke slow, which wasn't a surprise because he hasn't been that fast of a horse from the gate. He made a good run. Going longer, he'll be all right. In the next book, the next race that there is for New York-breds is going long. He should fit that and should be all right. It was an honest effort. Very happy for him."

Just One More: Schwartz's homebred 4-year-old English Channel filly finished second in June 29 maiden on the turf at Aqueduct. She's a full sister to Schwartz's Grade 1 winner Voodoo Song, the winner of eight of 26 starts and nearly \$1 million. He also won four races at the 2017 Saratoga meeting, including the Grade 3 Saranac.

"She was entered (Saturday), but I had to exclude her because I had the other filly in the race. Then the favorite scratched in the paddock. I was like, 'I could go get another horse. She needs to run. Let me go bring her. Don't worry.' Doing well. She's a hard filly on herself, though. Very forward, trains hard. Her race off the layout was a mile and eighth at Aqueduct. Took to the front. They came at her, she dug in. They came at her again, she dug in again and finished second. Obviously got tired. We'll have to get her ready for a mile and eighth. I'm looking forward to getting her started. I might enter her open company on Whitney weekend. She's just a very high-strung filly to take to the paddock. She's a lot of horse. Not a lot of horse physically. She's just really trying to put you out there."

Is she the horse with the goat? Who's with the goat?

"No. The goat was lingering outside, but since it's raining we brought him in. She has been around him. She doesn't need him in the stall, but he hangs out with her. That's Chip. Chip the goat."

Bourbon Milk Punch: Another new addition to the barn after Chalk Racing claimed her for \$50,000 out of a third June 21 at Aqueduct. She finished second for \$100,000 going 1 mile on the turf here July 25.

"Beautiful filly. I claimed her from Tom Proctor and Glen Hill. They bred her. It was a nice effort on her part. She's out of a nice mare (Grade 2-placed War Front mare Compelled). It seems like she likes to stretch out in distance. Very happy. First time off the claim and she ran pretty honest. Looking forward to her continuing on."

A Little At First: Cimbor's homebred 2-year-old New York-bred War Dancer colt turned in his third work and first at Saratoga, 3 furlongs on the main track in :38.23, July 26.

"He's a full brother to Twenty Six Black. He's been training forwardly. Not sure if we'll make this meet, but he looks like he's going to be precocious. He should run pretty well for the first time out. The family continues. He's a full to Twenty Six and a half to Can't Fool Me. That mare has been very honest as far as the runners she's thrown."

Stonewall Star: The big mare. Schwartz's 5-year-old homebred by Flatter is 6-2-4 in 18 starts for \$467,398 in earnings. A stakes winner at 2, 3 and 4, she's readying for her 2025 debut. Off since winning the Bay Ridge Stakes in late December at Aqueduct.

"She's back. She might start picking it up next week. I'm not sure if she'll make the meet because she needs some works to get back. She's doing very well. Very nice mare."

Palace Boss: Dragon Slayer Stable's 4-year-old homebred New York-bred Laoban gelding has two wins in 10 starts with four placings and \$142,188 in earnings. A winner two back, he finished third in 9-furlong allowance-optional on the dirt June 20 at Aqueduct.

"He's been a pretty honest allowance horse. Probably run in the next book, but ever since we stretched him out to a mile and eighth, that's really been his gig. That 2X condition is tough. It's a tough condition. But he ran third in there last time, so I just was freshening him up and hopefully in the next book he'll be able to run. He's been very honest."

Sultan Hassan: A familiar pedigree to the barn, colt by Cairo Prince is the first foal of the De Paz-trained stakes-placed Tale Of The Cat mare Light In The Sky. Schwartz bred and raced Light In The Sky and Sultan Hassan, who breezed eight times on the training track at Belmont Park before shipping north.

"The first foal for Light in the Sky. She won for me here at Saratoga. He seems to be forward. I'm looking forward to getting him started. Possibly at the end of the meet. Maybe. He's by Cairo Prince, so he's probably turf."



Samantha Decker

Chip the goat is an important member of the team.



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Dave Harmon

Sovereignty outruns Baeza late in Saturday's Jim Dandy.

Punch the Ticket

BY SEAN CLANCY

"I'm glad that's over," Tina Mott said as she walked down the stairs to the winner's circle.

"Survive and advance," Dan Pride said as he put his arm around Tina's husband Bill in front of the winner's circle.

"I wasn't this nervous for the Derby or the Belmont," Bill Mott said. "It's a little bit like when Cigar won. It's a relief that it's over. You know what I mean?"

Yes, all of Saratoga knows what you mean. Sovereignty and Junior Alvarado provided a steadfast win in the Grade 2 Jim Dandy at Saratoga Race Course Saturday. And the biggest exhale.

Sent off the 1-2 favorite in the field of five, the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes winner broke sharply from the outside, set up outside and close, slid back for a moment leaving the backside and

Sovereignty turns aside Baeza in Travers prep

JIM DANDY STAKES RECAP

then filled in the blanks from there. The son of Into Mischief scored by a length over second-choice Baeza. It was 9 1/4 lengths back to longshot Hill Road in third. Fourth choice Mo Plex finished fourth. Third-choice Sandman wound up fifth.

Owned and bred by Godolphin, Sovereignty completed 1 1/8 miles in 1:49.52 over the fast main track and increased his win streak to three. Cigar's reached 16.

It was certainly more work than wow but that was always the plan as the Grade 1 Travers looms in a month.

"It was probably more nerve-wracking than the

Derby. When you're 1-2 or whatever he was, and you're expected to win in a short field. Honestly, the Derby and the Belmont, I wasn't nervous at all," Mott said. "You get into a race like this, I had a horse run bad earlier in the day that's a nice horse (Arthur's Ride). That probably had me a little upset. Once we got to the paddock and I saw him and I felt him, I felt a lot better. But it's just the waiting is tough."

That's about the only tough part when it comes to the leader of the 3-year-old division. The Jim Dandy penalty kick improved the bay colt's record to five wins and two seconds from eight starts for \$5,147,800.

Continued on Page 14



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 SPENDTHRIFT

Jim Dandy -

■ Continued from page 12

Mo Plex buckled for a stride at the start but quickly recovered and Manny Franco cued the Ohio Derby winner to clear Sovereignty to his right and Baeza to his left into the first turn. Preakness third Sandman tracked those three, closer than usual. Belmont fifth Hill Road settled in fifth, 5 lengths from the front. Mo Plex led through the first quarter-mile in :24.54 as Sovereignty, a one-time one-run closer who has morphed into a close-up stalker, set up easily in second on the outside. Baeza, third in the Derby and the Belmont, matched Sovereignty on the inside.

After a half in :48.49, the deck shuffled. Mo Plex continued to pull on the lead. California-based Hector Berrios, reunited with Baeza after finishing second in the Santa Anita Derby in April, made the first move, sliding inside and passing Sovereignty. That move triggered counter moves by Irad Ortiz Jr. on Hill Road and Jose Ortiz aboard Sandman, who shot to the inside of Sovereignty and Baeza. In a flash, the race stacked one, three, one. The last one being Sovereignty.

“Did I give you a heart attack?” Alvarado asked Tina Mott afterward.

“A mini one,” she said.



Samantha Decker

Continued on Page 16

Neil Poznansky (center) leads the Sovereignty team to the test barn, along with Baeza's trainer John Shirreffs, Saturday.

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2025 September & Fall Meet Stakes Schedules

September Meet

SEPTEMBER 11 – 28

IROQUOIS (GIII)

"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 13
Closes August 27
\$300,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Two-Year-Olds
One Mile, Dirt

POCAHONTAS (GIII)

"Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen"

Runs Saturday, September 13
Closes August 27
\$300,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Two-Year-Olds
One Mile, Dirt

LOCUST GROVE (GII)

Runs Saturday, September 13
Closes August 27
\$400,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

LOUISVILLE THOROUGHBRED SOCIETY (Listed)

Runs Saturday, September 13
Closes August 27
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
Six Furlongs, Dirt

OPEN MIND (Listed)

Runs Saturday, September 13
Closes August 27
\$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 20
Closes September 3
\$175,000
Includes \$65,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

BOURBON FLIGHT

Runs Saturday, September 20
Closes September 3
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
One Mile and Three Sixteenths, Dirt

HARRODS CREEK

Runs Saturday, September 20
Closes September 3
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
Seven Furlongs, Dirt

DOGWOOD (GIII)

Runs Saturday, September 20
Closes September 3
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds
Seven Furlongs, Dirt

ACK ACK (GIII)

Runs Saturday, September 27
Closes September 10
\$400,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile, Dirt

LUKAS CLASSIC (GII)

Runs Saturday, September 27
Closes September 10
\$500,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Eighth, Dirt

Fall Meet

OCTOBER 26 – NOVEMBER 30

RAGS TO RICHES (Listed)

Runs Sunday, October 26
Closes October 8
\$200,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Two-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

STREET SENSE (GIII)

Runs Sunday, October 26
Closes October 8
\$200,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Two-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

BET ON SUNSHINE (Listed)

Runs Saturday, November 1
Closes October 15
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
Six Furlongs, Dirt

DREAM SUPREME (Listed)

Runs Saturday, November 8
Closes October 22
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
Six Furlongs, Dirt

RIVER CITY (GIII)

Runs Saturday, November 8
Closes October 22
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Eighth, Turf

CHILUKKI (GIII)

Runs Saturday, November 15
Closes October 29
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile, Dirt

COMMONWEALTH TURF (GIII)

Runs Saturday, November 22
Closes November 5
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Turf

CARDINAL (Listed)

Runs Thursday, November 27
Closes November 12
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Eighth, Turf

FALLS CITY (GIII)

Runs Thursday, November 27
Closes November 12
\$400,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Fillies & Mares, Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Eighth, Dirt

MRS. REVERE (GII)

Runs Friday, November 28
Closes November 12
\$300,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Three-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Turf

CLARK (GII)

Runs Friday, November 28
Closes November 12
\$600,000
Includes \$100,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile and One Eighth, Dirt

KENTUCKY JOCKEY CLUB (GII)

2026 Kentucky Derby Points Race
Runs Saturday, November 29
Closes November 12
\$400,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Two-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

GOLDEN ROD (GII)

2026 Kentucky Oaks Points Race

Runs Saturday, November 29
Closes November 12
\$400,000
Includes \$75,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Two-Year-Olds
One Mile and One Sixteenth, Dirt

ED BROWN

Runs Saturday, November 29
Closes November 12
\$225,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Two-Year-Olds
Six and One Half Furlongs, Dirt

FERN CREEK

Runs Saturday, November 29
Closes November 12
\$225,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Fillies, Two-Year-Olds
Six and One Half Furlongs, Dirt

CHEROKEE MILE

Runs Sunday, November 30
Closes November 12
\$250,000
Includes \$50,000 from KTDF
Three-Year-Olds & Up
One Mile, Dirt



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Jim Dandy -

■ Continued from page 14

Alvarado's heart rate didn't budge.

"Everyone was making a middle move. I thought, 'This is too early for me. I don't want to move this early.' Everybody was using and I'm still just playing around here, in a gallop," Alvarado said. "If I wanted to, if I kept my hands right here, where I had them at the beginning, Baeza would never get out. All I had to do was give it to Sovereignty and he would have laid right next to him. I just didn't think I needed to get into the hassle because I see that Baeza is trying so hard. I'm riding the best horse. I know what I've got. If I was worried, I would have done it. It's good when you have the horse."

Sovereignty swung five wide after three quarters of a mile in 1:12.42. Passing the quarter pole, Mo Plex clung to the lead, Baeza switched out to try to match the oncoming Sovereignty and Hill Road and Sandman caved. Sovereignty and Baeza matched strides, brushing for a



Dave Harmon

Sovereignty (5) breaks with the field in the Jim Dandy.

moment, but Sovereignty gradually pulled away.

"Once he started picking it up, I said, 'OK. Let's just wait a second.' Turn for home, switch lead and you ask him just enough to clear. That's it," Alvarado said. "He's smart. Very smart. He makes it so easy."

the last 10 days galloping. I see the difference," Mott said. "I'm like, 'This is OK.' But any time you see a change, it's like, 'oooh.' You wonder if it is a good thing or a bad thing. But he showed up."

As always.

Alvarado flicked Sovereignty twice before wrapping up in another dominant performance. Baeza ran hard and ran long like he's done in each of his three clashes with Sovereignty. A standup running against a stand-out.

"Very proud of the horse," Godolphin's Michael Banahan said. "Bill obviously has done a great job with him, getting him to peak at the Derby and again for the Belmont, and then ease him off and come back and get him to a pretty good percentage of fitness to get the job done today, and still leave a little bit to work on for the next day. We're looking forward to the rest of the year with him. This is the start of the second half of the season."

The Jim Dandy proved to be nothing more than a \$275,000 toll booth on the way.

"He's actually more relaxed

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winner] Dornoch was second, so
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these horses get started."**

- David Grening,
Daily Racing Form Reporter



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- Bob Baffert,
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In Time

Daisy Flyer surges late for Gr. 3 victory

BY TOM LAW

Rusty Arnold dispatched an assistant and a small, select string from his base at Keeneland to Saratoga Race Course for the first time since the 2022 season and for at least one filly, a reason.

“Mainly so we could get her on the grass,” Arnold’s assistant Lyndsay Delello said of Calumet Farm’s homebred Mshawish filly Daisy Flyer. “We can work her on the grass and she’s really been traveling well over the Oklahoma. I find a lot of horses do. And she just seems really happy here. Loves training. You got the walks to go on in the morning. She’s just really settled in. She’s comfortable. She rewarded us today.”

That reward came in the waning strides of Saturday’s Grade 3, \$175,000 Lake George Stakes for 3-year-old fillies on the inner turf course, where Daisy Flyer and jockey Jose Lezcano picked off rivals in the stretch to win a three-way photo. Daisy Flyer edged front-running 7-5 favorite Classic Q by a neck with the 13-1 Reining Flowers a nose back in third.

Daisy Flyer, the 7-1 fourth choice in the field of seven, returned in the 1 1/16-mile Lake George off an almost five-month layoff.

“Rusty loves this filly; he’s believed in her since Day 1,” Delello said. “This was a lot to ask of her coming off the layoff. Her last race was a great race, too, but this was tough. But again, Rusty had the utmost confidence in her.”

Daisy Flyer came with the other members of Ar-



Dave Harmon

Daisy Flyer (3) rallies to get past Classic Q (5) and Reining Flowers in Saturday’s Lake George.

nold’s small string bedded down inside Horse Haven on the Oklahoma Training Track, a group that includes Saturday’s Grade 1 Test Stakes contenders Echo Sound and Kilwin. The group came before the July 4 Racing Festival – where Echo Sound won the Grade 3 Victory Ride to earn her spot in the Test.

Daisy Flyer breezed three times, twice on the grass on the Oklahoma, and gave her connections all the signs she would produce a similar run to her third in the Grade 3 Herecomesthebride Stakes March 1 at Gulfstream Park.

“I really like her,” Delello said, walking with the filly to the test barn after the Lake George. “She’s easy to train. She’s very smart. She’s very classy. She obviously belonged in the field. But going into it,

I was like, I know she belongs in here, but I think maybe she’ll need a race. She has the talent to pull it off, but I just wasn’t sure.

“It was a tall order, but she proved it was no problem. It was a very exciting finish there. That’s her. That’s her running style. She comes late. We told Jose not to get into a rush with her. He rode her beautifully and was patient and gave her a gorgeous ride. I’m still processing all of this. That was a lot.”

Classic Q took the initiative from post four just to the outside of Lavender Disaster past the finish the first time with Good Long Cry and Pookie giving chase. Lezcano allowed Daisy Flyer to settle

Continued on Page 20



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JOE HIRSCH TURF CLASSIC (2)
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Lake George -

■ Continued from page 18

into fifth on the hedge through the opening quarter-mile in :23.13.

Daisy Flyer continued to lope along in fifth up the backstretch, 8 lengths behind Classic Q through the first half in :46.55.

“My filly broke pretty good,” Lezcano said. “She does not have much speed early on. I kind of kept her in a place I wanted to be.”

Lezcano started to encourage his filly heading into the far turn and inched up to within 6 lengths through 6 furlongs in 1:10.02 with Classic Q still on an open lead over the tandem of Good Long Cry and Lavender Disaster. Daisy Flyer passed a tiring Pookie on the inside, came off the inside just enough to allow Reining Flowers to run through a hole.

Daisy Flower stayed three paths off the inside, Reining Flowers stayed on the rail and they both passed Lavender Disaster at the sixteenth pole. Classic Q started to tire late, needing the finish while the late-running tandem surged again while still needing to make up 3 1/2 lengths. They did, with Daisy Flyer doing it that much faster to win on the wire in 1:40.19.

Arnold, who will be in town to saddle Echo Sound and Kilwin in the Test, watched from Lexington and applauded his rider, Daisy Flyer and the



Samantha Decker

Daisy Flyer (right) spots the field some lengths early in Saturday's Lake George.

Saratoga string.

“He had actually worked her three times and was very happy with her,” he said. “He and I have been very lucky together over the years, so it was very nice. ... They’ve run well so far. They’ve been hand-picked, the ones we brought up there, and a couple of them have worked out.”

Daisy Flyer improved to 2-for-5 and picked up \$96,250 for the win, boosting her bankroll to \$218,902.

She’s likely headed out of town for her next start, to Kentucky Downs for the \$2 million Dueling Grounds Oaks Invitational going 1 5/16 miles Sept. 10.

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Yes Sir

Soldier N Diplomat impresses in debut

St. Elias Stable's Soldier N Diplomat made a winning debut in Saturday's second race at Saratoga Race Course, taking the \$100,000 maiden special weight at 6 furlongs by a neck over the late-running Accost.

The 2-year-old son of Army Mule gave trainer Steve Asmussen back-to-back wins following Otto The Conqueror's victory in the opener.

"I didn't think he'd lose," Asmussen said of Soldier N Diplomat. "Didn't break ideally, but that's what these races are for. Jose (Ortiz) mentioned that he handled it nicely, that he relaxed for him off of those two and responded when he needed to. He'll get a lot out of the race and move forward."

Soldier N Diplomat was purchased by Vinnie Viola's St. Elias Stable for \$950,000 at the OBS March



Olivia Witkowski

Soldier N Diplomat (right) scores in Saturday's second race.

sale. Viola, who also owns the two-time Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers, said watching his horses race isn't much different than watching his hockey team face off in the playoffs.

"(The) physical sensation is a little different," Viola said. "When you win a horse race you kind

of get to exhale, when the hockey game is over you inhale. ...That is the kind of way I worked it out for myself, I was holding my breath the whole way down."

- Julia Reedy

Continued on Page 26

YEARLING OF THE DAY

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08.02

HALL OF FAME POSTER SIGNING
11 a.m. at Saratoga Race Course- Jockey Silks Room - Complimentary

08.02

HALL OF FAME MEET AND GREET
9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at The National Museum of Racing - Complimentary Admission

08.09

PARTNERSHIP AND SYNDICATE MEET AND GREET
9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at The National Museum of Racing- Complimentary Admission

08.09

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11 a.m. at The National Museum of Racing- Complimentary Admission

08.16

25TH ANNIVARSARY OF SARATOGA SPECIAL
9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the National Museum of Racing - Complimentary Admission

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Saturday -

■ Continued from page 22

• Ronald Stewart's Film Star upset last year's Grade 1 Whitney winner Arthur's Ride in the fourth, a 9-furlong allowance-optional on the main track. The 6-year-old son of Flatter took the field from gate to wire in 1:50.48 to give trainer Linda Rice her ninth win of the meet. She sat third in the trainer standings, two victories behind Chad Brown, after Saturday's card.

"We're just hoping to have a good meet," Rice said. "The title is a tough thing to win and it's a long meet. It's very early, but we're just happy to get it off to a good start."

Under Jose Ortiz, Film Star broke sharp and made his way to the rail with a 1-length lead going into the clubhouse turn. Arthur's Ride, the 1-2 favorite, rated in third. After setting honest fractions of :23.70 and :47.43, Film Star turned for home and had plenty left in the tank. He opened his lead through the lane to win by 3 3/4 lengths. Arthur's Ride finished third while coming off an eight-month lay-off.



Hannah Bonczkowski

Film Star heads to victory in Wednesday's fourth race

"I told Jose in the paddock that this horse likes to be forward," Rice said about Film Star. "He gets brave on the front end. We talked about how the favorite had some speed, but I didn't think he was that good a gate horse. Jose got him to the lead, and that was important. He ran great."

Before Film Star's victory, Rice also won the third with Brave Buck.

The 4-year-old gelding won the 7-furlong \$17,500 claiming event by 2 1/2 lengths.

- Alec DiConza

• North End Lady took the sixth, an allowance going 1 1/16 miles on the turf for New York-bred fillies and mares, for trainer Barclay Tagg's first win of the meet.

"It feels pretty good, I can tell you that," said Tagg's assistant Robin Smullen. "Anytime you can win at Saratoga is good, and especially on Jim Dandy Day."

The daughter of Violence raced midpack early, three-wide into the turn and along the backside. Dylan Davis brought the mare six-wide as they entered the stretch and cut her loose. She charged down the center to overtake frontrunners Bertrille, Sail With The Wind and Second Chance to cross the wire a length ahead of runner-up Sail With The Wind, for a final time of 1:41.68.

"We thought she was coming into the race well," Smullen said. "Dylan rode her so well last time, and we got the ride back with him. We were feeling pretty good."

Bred by Fred Hertrich III and John Fielding, the 5-year-old mare is owned by Frank Bertolino's My Monarch Stable.

North End Lady improved to 2-for-14 with two seconds and three thirds for \$178,821 in earnings. She broke her maiden last August at Saratoga in a 1 1/16-mile maiden special

Continued on Page 27

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Saturday -

■ Continued from page 26

weight on the turf, but went five starts before she returned for her second win at her apparent preferred track. As for what's next for the mare, Tagg and his team aren't quite sure but remain excited.

"You go to the next condition, and we'll see what happens there," Smullen said.

- Darby O'Brien

- Spendthrift Farm's homebred Info Mischief filly Tommy Jo impressed with her debut victory in the seventh. The filly gave her team confidence going into the 6-furlong maiden on the main track.

"She has been training very professionally," winning trainer Todd Pletcher said. "Into Mischief is a very good debut stallion, so we were expecting her to run well, but that was as good as we hoped for and then some."

Tommy Jo overcame a hard bump from Come On Get Happy, triggered by an outward break from Belarosa.



Dave Harmon

Tommy Jo wins her debut Saturday.

John Velazquez settled Tommy Jo in mid-pack down the backstretch as 8-5 favorite Vajra set the pace. Tommy Jo overtook her rivals when asked around the far turn, opening up on the way to a 3 3/4-length win.

"Once she started to put that move in going around the turn, I felt good," Pletcher said.

Tommy Jo won in 1:11.24. Tennessee Belle finished second, 3 1/4 lengths ahead of another daughter of Into Mischief, Academia.

"She could be," Pletcher said when asked if Tommy Jo could be a future star. "We are going to aim for the Spinaway stakes at the end of the meet."

- Hillary Robertson

- Mike Maker earned his second victory of the meet in the fifth with Side Eye, a 2-length winner of the 5 1/2-furlong turf sprint. The 5-year-old son of Jimmy Creed raced second behind Korrongo before pouncing at the top of the stretch and scoring in 1:02.10.

With a nose victory in the eighth, Stewie gave trainer James Begg his first win of the meet. Under Irad Ortiz Jr., the son of Exaggerator took the lead four strides from the wire to finish the 6-furlong allowance for New York-breds in 1:11.37.

Chad Brown swept the late double, with Nonna Lynne and Hedge The Risk winning the 11th and 12th, respectively. Both horses won Saturday going 1 1/16 miles on the turf. Manny Franco rode Nonna Lynne to a half-length score before Dylan Davis rode the rail with Hedge The Risk to win the nightcap by 2 1/2 lengths.

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Top Two

La Mehana sparks 1-2 finish for Clement in Grade 2 turf stakes

BY ALEC DICONZA

Until Sunday, Miguel Clement definitively planned to encourage the sale of 6-year-old mare La Mehana at this fall's Keeneland November breeding stock sale. While that could still happen, the plans may not be set in stone after the French-bred owned by Randy Sarf's LSU Stable crushed the field in the Grade 2, \$250,000 Glens Falls Stakes at Saratoga Race Course by 8 3/4 lengths.

"We're going to need to speak to the connections," Clement said. "Originally, that was the plan. But, does the plan change because she's been so impressive the last two starts? I don't know. We'll see where it takes us."

With his 18-month-old nephew Hugo by his side, Clement watched the Glens Falls from his usual spot at the big television next to the Jim Dandy Bar. He watched La Mehana get off to an uneventful beginning from the inside post and settle in third, rounding the first of three turns behind Long Ago and stablemate Sacaya. The other member of Clement's Glens Falls trio, Bellezza, raced in sixth early.

Under Flavien Prat, La Mehana remained in her comfortable tracking position along the rail through the first two thirds of the 12-furlong journey. With a half-mile to go, Sacaya began to fade, giving La Mehana a spot to run. Prat took a quick peek over his left shoulder as Bellezza and Joel Rosario made an early move to challenge La Mehana on the inside, but the reigning Eclipse Award-winning jockey felt comfortable enough to remain motionless on the daughter of Al Wukair entering the far turn. La Mehana overtook Long Ago to grab the lead with a quarter-mile to go and, under urging from Prat, kicked clear of her competition to win over the yielding turf in 2:30.54.

Once La Mehana took command, Clement's eyes turned to the oncoming Bellezza.

"Come on, Joel," he shouted, stomping his foot. "Come on, Joel."

Bellezza put in a strong enough rally



Olivia Witkowski

La Mehana cruises to victory in Sunday's Glens Falls.

to finish second, 3 1/4 lengths ahead of Long Ago.

After watching a replay of the stretch run, Clement walked toward the winner's circle to celebrate his seventh victory of the meet.

"It's gone great," Clement said about his summer in Saratoga, which comes just months after the death of his father, Christophe Clement. "The horses are running well, which makes my life a lot easier.

Personally, it's been very tough, but professionally, the horses are running great and the whole team is there and backing up. We've been very lucky."

Prat said moisture in the turf course, affected by rainfall early Sunday morning and afternoon, played a role.

"The ground was actually quite soft," he said.

"She was handling it well. She jumped well out of there and I was able to get a good position into the first turn. Always on the bridle the whole way. I didn't want to move too soon, but in the meantime, everybody was kind of falling apart in front of me and it was time to go. She made a good run."

Christophe Clement bought La Mehana from her French connections for \$430,503 at the 2023 Arqana December breeding stock sale. She's won four of her 12 starts since for Sarf and the Clement team.

"Dad secured her in France two years ago at the Deauville sale," Miguel Clement said. "He's been very successful purchasing horses abroad and bringing them back to the states. The stable has done well with them. They have talent, that's the most important part."



Olivia Witkowski

La Mehana heads to the winner's circle.

Continued on Page 29

Glens Falls -

■ Continued from page 28

La Mehana ended last season by winning the Via Borghese at Gulfstream Park before three straight thirds started her 2025 campaign. She then finished fourth in the Grade 3 Sheepshead Bay at Aqueduct before using a 1-length win in an allowance-optional at the same track as a springboard to the Glens Falls.

"Even though she won the (Via Borghese), she was very unlucky in her next three starts in Florida," Clement said. "Tough luck, but she always ran well. She always showed up. It's funny, she's a 6-year-old, but her last two races might be her best two races to date. Maybe she's like French wine

where she's getting better with age, but it's rare to have a horse hitting their top form as a 6-year-old."

La Mehana's performance in the Glens Falls impressed Sarf, who said the mare will head to the Grade 2 Flower Bowl August 30.

"Unbelievable, just like she ran the last time," Sarf said. "That wasn't a fluke. She's a great horse. When Christophe bought her for us at the end of 2023, he told us, 'This is a special horse. You're going to do really well with her.' We've had lots of fun with her. This is our (fourth) win with her. She's come in third sometimes. She's a great horse. She tries hard all the time. She got a perfect trip again today. Flavien did a great job, the Clement team did a great job and we're winning."



Hannah Bonczkowski

Owner Randy Sarf greets Flavien Prat after the stakes win.

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Longtime racing fan celebrates milestone day at Saratoga track

The stubborn rain sprinkled over Saratoga Race Course's winner's circle shortly after the fourth race Sunday, but that didn't stop Carmen Sanchez from celebrating her birthday alongside her beloved family.

"I'm 100 years old today," Sanchez said, a longtime racing fan thanks to her brother, who always loved horses, and her son-in-law, who works at the track. She grinned through the gloomy weather as she spoke about the privilege of getting her picture

Continued on Page 31



Georgia Magic pulls away to win Sunday's fourth race.

Dave Harmon

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Sunday -

■ Continued from page 30

taken in the winner's circle.

"It's wonderful," she said. "It's overwhelming. I never thought I would see the day I would be so appreciated, and just for being 100."

Sanchez shared the winner's circle with Georgia Magic, who notched trainer Ray Handal's first win of the meet in the 1-mile claiming event on a sloppy main track.

"It's always good," Handal said. "As long as you get to this winner's circle, you're doing good. The first one is always the hardest, so it's a good feeling."

Owned by West Paces Racing, Pavilion Racing, Brown Road Racing, Twin Sports Racing and Cypresshead Racing, the 3-year-old son of Good Magic settled just off the pace after an even break. He raced outside of frontrunner Joey Muscles as they came around the turn and issued a determined challenge as they barreled down the stretch. Joey Muscles fought stubbornly, but Georgia Magic prevailed to take command in the final furlong and finished 1 3/4 lengths ahead of runner-up Bestfriend Rocket.

"I was cautiously optimistic," Handal said of the 3-year-old gelding, who broke his maiden on debut at Aqueduct in November. "He's always been a really nice horse in the morning and trained good. He's just never

really put it together. I feel like mentally he was just delayed. We castrated him and he took a big step forward last time. He finally got it all together today. He got a great ride, a great trip and it all worked out."

Handal hopes for a strong summer at Saratoga, after a successful meet in 2024 when the barn won eight races.

The 100-year-old Sanchez plans to celebrate regardless. Joined Sunday by her daughter Tina, her son-in-law Richard, her son Michael and her grandson Matthew, Carmen offered advice everyone can appreciate.

"This is why I get to be 100," she said. "I have all of this family support."

- Darby O'Brien

- Charlie Baker secured his first win of the meet with Crescendo's Rein in the sixth, a maiden special weight going 7 furlongs on the dirt, then added a second when Spun Size drew in off the main track only list to take the eighth.

Crescendo's Rein, a 4-year-old first-time starter by Not This Time ridden by Joel Rosario, won by three-quarters of a length over Solo Jim in 1:24.73.

"We felt confident," Baker said about the debut. "But we were worried about the rain...it's something you never know a horse will handle. We were very, very concerned about the rain. But the horse himself was coming into the race great."

Continued on Page 32




Hannah Bonczkowski

Crescendo's Rein (right) pulls away to win Sunday's sixth race.

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Samantha Decker

Friends and family of Dominick Ruggerio gather in the winner's circle after Sunday's second.

Sunday -

■ Continued from page 31

The New York-bred owned by Happy Face Racing Stable eased his trainer's concerns as he shook off his rivals in the stretch and held on gameily under strong urging.

"I just wanted him to hold on," Baker said. "Seven furlongs is always a tough journey for a first-time starter, but he was very competitive. They came close to him, and he pulled off a little bit. It was great."

Baker would soon double his win tally in the eighth with Spun Size – a feat he hadn't accomplished since September 2021. But after the sixth, all Baker could feel was relief.

"It feels great," Baker said. "It's always good to get it out of the way and to go forward and try to get some more. But it's always good to get the first one."

- Julia Reedy

• Dominick Ruggerio lived a busy life, working as an elected official for decades.

"My dad was a Laborers' Union official and he was a state senator for 40 years," his son, Charles Ruggerio said. "He was the senate president of the state of Rhode Island for the last 10 years, or so. He enjoyed that. He did that for virtually the entirety of his professional career. He really liked helping people."

Dominick Ruggerio still found time in his schedule to make an annual trip to Saratoga throughout his life. Sunday's second race was named the "Donny Always Loved Saratoga" in honor of Ruggerio, who died this year at the age of 76 after battling cancer. His friends and family gathered in the winner's circle to celebrate his life and passion for horse racing.

"My father loved Saratoga," Charles Ruggerio said. "He came here every year. A major horse aficionado. It was probably his favorite place. Amongst everything he did in his life, it was probably one of his favorite places for him to come to."

In the second, Backstretch Rose settled toward the back of the field early and made steady headway to put herself in contention at the quarter pole. The daughter of Army Mule made the lead with three-sixteenths to go and widened her margin through the wire to win by 4 1/4 lengths, completing the 9-furlong contest in 1:52.88. At 6-5, she won the \$17,500 claiming event for owner Flying P Stable, trainer Jorge Abreu and jockey Ricardo Santana Jr.

- Alec DiConza

• TEC Racing's Our Liberty Belle got the job done in the opener for trainer Wayne Potts. The victory marked her third win in eight starts this year.

Todd Pletcher earned his fifth win

Continued on Page 33

Sunday -

■ Continued from page 32

with a 2-year-old at the meet so far when Tapit's Legacy easily won an off-the-turf maiden special weight by 5 lengths. Going into the fourth week of the meet, Pletcher and Chad Brown are tied in the trainer standings with 11 wins each.

Jena Antonucci sent out her third winner of the meet in the fifth, a 1-mile \$50,000 maiden claiming event on the main track. Oath Of Omerta defeated his three rivals by 7 3/4 lengths.

One day after Bill Mott's Jim Dandy victory with Sovereignty, a pair of 4-year-olds trained by Mott finished 1-2 in the ninth. Paul Woosley's Capital Idea came off an eight-month layoff to win the 1-mile allowance-optional over stablemate Pass The Hat in 1:36.68. The Mott exacta paid \$73.75 for \$1.

Ennis Town won the nightcap in wire-to-wire fashion. The son of Echo Town broke sharply from the rail out of the Wilson Chute and never let any of his seven competitors come within striking distance. Ridden by Kendrick Carmouche, Ennis Town won by 2 1/2 lengths for trainer Mike Trombetta.



The mascot race turned into an easy win by Gunnar of the Adirondack Thunder (third from right).

Dave Harmon

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Samantha Decker

My Mane Squeeze runs in Wednesday's Johnstone Stakes.

The Champ

NY-bred Horse of the Year My Mane Squeeze faces big field

BY ALEC DICONZA

JOHNSTONE STAKES PREVIEW

William "Buck" Butler didn't bring high expectations into this spring's New York Thoroughbred Breeders' Annual Awards dinner, but he walked away with a load of hardware.

The owner and breeder won six awards, including three in honor of Mike Maker trainee My Mane Squeeze, a daughter of Audible who Butler bred and now co-owns with WinStar Farm. My Mane Squeeze won New York-bred Horse of the Year, champion 3-year-old filly and champion female sprinter. Butler also took home New York's Broodmare of the Year honor for In Spite Of Mama, the dam of My Mane Squeeze; champion male sprinter honors for Rotknee and the New York Breeder of the Year award.

"As far as the breeder and as far

as Rotknee were concerned, I had no expectations," Butler said. "As far as My Mane Squeeze, she deserved everything she got."

Voters for the New York-Bred Divisional Awards elected My Mane Squeeze based on her two graded stakes victories last year in the Grade 2 Eight Belles and Grade 3 Dogwood at Churchill Downs. Butler had never won a graded stakes race before last year, making the ride through his filly's campaign – which also included three other placings in graded company and two wins in state-bred stakes – all the more special.

"Looking at it on paper, it wasn't an overall surprise, but those are my

Continued On Page 35

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Johnstone -

■ Continued from page 34

first two graded wins,” Butler said. “It was overly exciting for me.”

My Mane Squeeze will look for her first win of 2025 in today’s \$150,000 Johnstone Stakes, a 7-furlong sprint on the main track for New York-bred fillies and mares. My Mane Squeeze finished third in the Grade 1 Madison in her 4-year-old debut in April at Keeneland. She then finished third again in the Grade 2 Ruffian at Aqueduct and fifth in the Grade 2 Chicago at Churchill. She steps back into state-bred company today for the first time since she won the Maddie May in February 2024 at Aqueduct.

“We’ve been up in graded company with her,” Butler said. “She held her own her first back, and it was less than stellar the last two. I’m expecting big things from her.”

Luis Saez will ride My Mane Squeeze in the Johnstone from post five. The filly sits as the 3-1 second choice on the morning line. The Johnstone drew an 11-horse field and will go as the eighth race today with post time of 5:14 p.m.

Saratoga fans may remember Mark Stanley’s Tricky Temper from last year, when she ran in four races throughout the 40-day meet. The daughter of Into Mischief won an allow-

ance-optional before scoring by 3 lengths in the Union Avenue against older fillies and mares for trainer Jeremiah Englehart.

“Last year, we felt like she was doing very well throughout the summer,” Englehart said. “It always seemed like this was a place where she ran well. When I ran her in the a-other-than up here, she was sixth and Irad actually told me after the race, ‘Don’t be afraid to run her right back. This is kind of like a work for her, but she’s doing really good. She feels good.’ So, we did that and she ran well twice. We kind of went to the well one too many times, probably, at the end of the meet. She’s a filly that has been training super. We’re just hoping she can get back to that form.”

Tricky Temper came off a six-month layoff in June and ran sixth in her 2025 debut, an allowance-optional at Aqueduct. Englehart hopes Tricky Temper simply needed the race.

“The whole idea was to try to get her ready to point toward this race,” he said. “The race off the layoff didn’t really go as I thought it would because she’s been training super. Hopefully, she’s in good form and can find that form again.”

Tricky Temper breaks from post 11 with Jose Ortiz riding the filly for the first time.

Bernietakescharge enters off a win in the Critical Eye in June. The Dominick Schettino



Olivia Witkowski

Continued on Page 36

Landed is part of the Johnstone field.

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Johnstone -

■ Continued from page 35

trainee will break from post nine under Romero Maragh for the eighth consecutive time and is 10-1 on the morning line.

“She came out of the race in excellent shape,” Schettino said. “She’s been training very well up to this race. She worked last week, five-eighths, very well. We’re confident with her. She’s training forwardly. She’s doing everything right. She’s really sharp, bright and alert. It’s a decent field of fillies and mares, and there’s a lot of speed in that race. One thing she might have going for her is the speed inside of her. She’s the type of filly that likes to be close.”

Lael Stable’s Landed is 2-for-2 at Saratoga with wins in last year’s Bouwerie and Fleet Indian. The 4-year-old daughter of Omaha Beach won her 2025 debut in the Broadway at Aqueduct, an effort followed by a third in an allowance-optional at Keeneland for trainer Wesley Ward. She’ll be ridden today by John Velazquez from post six.

“She loves it here, so we’re hoping she puts in a nice effort for us,” said Lauren Arias, assistant to Ward. “She’s saying she’s feeling great, she’s training great. She had her final work at Keeneland, the final touches there, and she’s come in here as good as she could be. We’re happy with that.”

Bill Mott sends out 5-2 morning line favorite and defending Johnstone winner Sterling Silver. The daughter of Cupid came in second to Bernietakescharge June 4 in the Critical Eye and breaks from post eight under Junior Alvarado.

Dolomite breaks from post two for trainer Chad Brown. The daughter of Unified comes in on a three-win streak against allowance company at Aqueduct. An Alpha Delta Stable homebred, the filly will be ridden by

Saratoga Leaderboard

Through Sunday

Trainers.....	1st
Todd Pletcher	11
Chad Brown.....	11
Linda Rice	9
Miguel Clement.....	7
Steve Asmussen	6
Joe Sharp	6
Bill Mott.....	5
George Weaver.....	5
Mark Casse.....	4
Jorge Abreu.....	3
Tom Amoss.....	3
Jena Antonucci.....	3
Melanie Giddings.....	3
Ilkay Kantarmaci.....	3
Wesley Ward.....	3

Jockeys	1st
Irad Ortiz Jr.....	28
Jose Ortiz	20
Ricardo Santana Jr.....	12
Joel Rosario.....	11
Flavien Prat.....	10
Kendrick Carmouche.....	9
Luis Saez.....	9
Manny Franco.....	8
Dylan Davis.....	6
Jose Lezcano.....	6

Manny Franco at 5-1 on the morning line.

Caldwell Luvs Gold enters for trainer Brad Cox at 10-1 on the morning line. The Goldencents filly comes to Saratoga off a third at Churchill Downs with Irad Ortiz Jr. aboard for the Johnstone. Bruce Levine trainee Cupid’s Heart breaks from the seven-hole under Flavien Prat. Another daughter of Cupid, she comes off a second to Dolomite June 26 and sits at odds of 8-1. Majestic Return, Cara’s Time and Maggy’s Palace complete the field.

– Additional reporting by
Darby O’Brien and Julia Reedy.



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SARATOGA ENTRIES

Wednesday, July 30.

1ST (1:10PM). \$70,000, ALW, 4 YO'S & UP, 2 3/8M (HURDLE)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	.....1	.....Holey Moley	.....V. Korrell	.....B. Foley	.....6-1
1a	.....8	.....St James the Great	.....S. Mulqueen	.....K. Brion	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....Brie's Mission	.....G. Galligan	.....K. Neilson	.....6-1
3	.....3	.....Awesome Strike	.....D. Nevin	.....M. Beecher	.....8-1
4	.....4	.....Sa'ad (FR)	.....E. Dwan	.....T. Wyatt	.....10-1
5	.....5	.....Hidden Path	.....C. Tierney	.....R. Hendriks	.....3-1
6	.....6	.....St. John's	.....G. Watters	.....J. Fisher	.....2-1
7	.....7	.....Memento (FR)	.....F. Procter	.....A. Kingsley, Jr.	.....4-1

2ND (1:48PM). \$100,000, AOC \$45,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 7F

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

1	.....1	.....Stone Smuggler	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....J. Abreu	.....7-5
2	.....2	.....Mitole's Girl	.....K. Carmouche	.....M. Giangiulio	.....6-1
3	.....3	.....True Empress	.....L. Perez	.....M. Ferraro	.....8-1
4	.....4	.....Embraceable Gal	.....D. Davis	.....R. Atras	.....3-1
5	.....5	.....Army Gal	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Rice	.....5-2
6	.....6	.....Racing Colors	.....J. Gomez	.....N. Follett	.....12-1

3RD (2:23PM). \$38,000, MCL \$20,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 6F

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

1	.....1	.....Contract Law	.....J. Gomez	.....L. Bartkowski	.....15-1
2	.....2	.....Laughing Lady	.....J. Castellano	.....A. Dutrow	.....5-2
3	.....3	.....Chocolatechocolate	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....A. Green	.....5-2
4	.....4	.....Stirred Up	.....J. Lezcano	.....L. Rice	.....9-2
5	.....5	.....Tizallmine	.....C. Hartsmar	.....R. Metivier	.....30-1
6	.....6	.....Sunset Sizzle	.....J. Ortiz	.....L. Schultz	.....2-1
7	.....7	.....Snide	.....K. Carmouche	.....L. Rice	.....10-1

4TH (2:58PM). \$120,000, AOC \$100,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1 3/8M (INNER TURF)

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

1	.....1	.....Otello	.....D. Davis	.....M. Clement	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....Fuerteventura	.....K. Carmouche	.....R. Atras	.....12-1
3	.....3	.....Bourbon Day	.....M. Franco	.....M. Maker	.....8-1
4	.....4	.....Summer Cause	.....J. Rosario	.....M. Clement	.....8-1
5	.....5	.....Hush of a Storm	.....F. Prat	.....B. Cox	.....3-1
6	.....6	.....Corruption	.....J. Ortiz	.....M. Casse	.....7-5
7	.....7	.....Master Piece (CHI)	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....R. Dutrow, Jr.	.....5-1

5TH (3:32PM). \$72,000, MCL \$100,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 6F

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

1	.....1	.....Career Risk	.....F. Prat	.....C. Brown	.....9-2
2	.....2	.....Noguchi	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....C. Brown	.....4-1
3	.....3	.....V Cruiser	.....K. Carmouche	.....L. Rice	.....10-1
4	.....4	.....Fleeting Free	.....S. Bridgmohan	.....M. Giddings	.....12-1
5	.....5	.....White Whale	.....L. Saez	.....G. Arnold II	.....3-1

6	.....6	.....Fiddling Felix	.....J. Ortiz	.....F. Abreu	.....5-2
7	.....7	.....Discotheque	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....M. Maker	.....6-1
8	.....8	.....Red Sea	.....L. Luzzi	.....A. Dutrow	.....20-1

6TH (4:06PM). \$100,000, MSW, 2 YO, F, 5 1/2F (TURF)

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

1	.....1	.....Santina	.....V. Espinoza	.....W. Ward	.....4-1
2	.....2	.....Mackinac	.....L. Saez	.....G. Arnold II	.....5-1
3	.....3	.....Blanchett	.....M. Franco	.....H. Motion	.....8-1
4	.....4	.....Snow Face Princess	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....T. Pletcher	.....6-1
5	.....5	.....Actis	.....D. Davis	.....T. Amoss	.....15-1
6	.....6	.....Pisces Moon	.....S. Bridgmohan	.....D. Seyler	.....30-1
7	.....7	.....Pie Phi	.....K. Carmouche	.....H. De Paz	.....12-1
8	.....8	.....Lima Lima	.....J. Lezcano	.....T. Procter	.....12-1
9	.....9	.....Street Sue	.....C. Elliott	.....M. Giddings	.....6-1
10	.....10	.....Sharp Mindset	.....J. Ortiz	.....J. Sharp	.....7-2
11	.....AE	.....Keto Drink	.....J. Alvarado	.....C. McGaughey III	.....2-1
12	.....AE-MTO	.....Bet the Gray	.....Rider TBA	.....T. Amoss	.....4-1
13	.....AE-MTO	.....Whatarewedoing	.....M. Franco	.....B. Russell	.....6-1

7TH (4:40PM). \$75,000, SOC \$40,000-\$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, 1 3/8M (INNER TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Pic 3, Daily Double

1	.....1	.....Brigade Commander	.....M. Franco	.....R. Handal	.....5-2
2	.....2	.....Salted Carmel	.....F. Prat	.....K. Brion	.....8-1
3	.....3	.....Ottawaterbury	.....J. Velazquez	.....D. Donk	.....8-1
4	.....4	.....Kigali	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....H. De Paz	.....15-1
5	.....5	.....The Paddock Pastor	.....J. Ortiz	.....A. Green	.....9-2
6	.....6	.....Cognoscenti	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....M. Clement	.....4-1
7	.....7	.....War Officer	.....L. Saez	.....T. Pletcher	.....7-2
8	.....8	.....Dillinger	.....K. Carmouche	.....M. Giangiulio	.....15-1
9	.....9	.....Arctic Outbreak	.....D. Davis	.....J. Lawrence II	.....30-1
10	.....AE-MTO	.....Swaggish	.....C. Elliott	.....W. Potts	.....5-2
11	.....AE-MTO	.....Hero's Medal	.....D. Davis	.....I. Kantarmaci	.....2-1
12	.....AE-MTO	.....Golden Purchase	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....B. Levine	.....7-2
13	.....AE-MTO	.....Eric From Miami	.....Rider TBA	.....W. Potts	.....8-1

8TH (5:14PM). \$150,000, STK - THE JOHNSTONE, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 7F

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta, Daily Double

1	.....1	.....Majestic Return	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....I. Kantarmaci	.....30-1
2	.....2	.....Dolomite	.....M. Franco	.....C. Brown	.....5-1
3	.....3	.....Car's Time	.....D. Davis	.....M. Friedman	.....30-1
4	.....4	.....Caldwell Luvs Gold	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....B. Cox	.....10-1
5	.....5	.....My Mane Squeeze	.....L. Saez	.....M. Maker	.....3-1
6	.....6	.....Landed	.....J. Velazquez	.....W. Ward	.....8-1
7	.....7	.....Cupid's Heart	.....F. Prat	.....B. Levine	.....8-1
8	.....8	.....Sterling Silver	.....J. Alvarado	.....W. Mott	.....5-2
9	.....9	.....Bernietakescharge	.....R. Maragh	.....D. Schettino	.....10-1
10	.....10	.....Maggy's Palace	.....J. Lezcano	.....J. Ryerson	.....20-1
11	.....11	.....Tricky Temper	.....J. Ortiz	.....J. Englehart	.....15-1

9TH (5:48PM). \$50,000, MCL \$50,000, 3 YO'S & UP, F & M, 5 1/2F (TURF)

Exacta, Trifecta, Superfecta

1	.....1	.....Ipsus	.....K. Davis	.....K. Bond	.....6-1
1a	.....5	.....Gattatiz	.....J. Ortiz	.....H. Bond	.....6-1
1x	.....AE-MTO	.....Nittardi	.....K. Davis	.....K. Bond	.....6-1
2	.....2	.....Kyla's Kause	.....J. Velazquez	.....T. Morley	.....8-5
3	.....3	.....My Gorgeous	.....E. Ellingwood	.....R. Keithan	.....50-1
4	.....4	.....Froghollowsummer	.....L. Luzzi	.....C. Martin	.....10-1
5	.....6	.....Fifi La Fume	.....I. Ortiz, Jr.	.....R. Rodriguez	.....6-1
6	.....7	.....Gracie Girl	.....L. Rivera, Jr.	.....B. Levine	.....30-1
7	.....8	.....Miss Uproar	.....R. Santana, Jr.	.....F. Abreu	.....5-1
8	.....9	.....Good Mission	.....M. Franco	.....R. Atras	.....7-2
910Hattie CarrollK. CarmoucheJ. Kimmel12-1
10AE-MTORare SocietyI. Ortiz, Jr.L. Rice8-1

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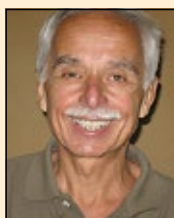
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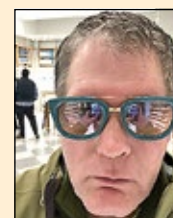
John Shapazian



Tom Law



Charles Bedard



Rob Whitlock



Jessica Paquette

Race

1	St. John's Hidden Path Memento	St. John's Hidden Path St James The Great	Willis entry St. John's Hidden Path	St. John's Memento Hidden Path	St. John's Holey Moley Memento
2	Stone Smuggler Army Gal Mitole's Girl	Stone Smuggler Army Gal Mitole's Girl	Stone Smuggler Mitole's Girl Army Gal	Army Gal Stone Smuggler Embraceable Gal	Embraceable Gal Army Gal Stone Smuggler
3	Sunset Sizzle Chocolatechocolate Stirred Up	Chocolatechocolate Laughing Lady Stirred Up	Sunset Sizzle Stirred Up Laughing Lady	Contract Law Sunset Sizzle Stirred Up	Sunset Sizzle Chocolatechocolate Stirred Up
4	Corruption Otello Hush Of A Storm	Corruption Hush Of A Storm Bourbon Day	Master Piece Otello Corruption	Master Piece Corruption Summer Cause	Hush Of A Storm Corruption Otello
5	Noguchi White Whale Fiddling Felix	White Whale Discotheque Fiddling Felix	Discotheque Fiddling Felix V Cruiser	Noguchi White Whale Fiddling Felix	Noguchi White Whale Red Sea
6	Keto Drink Santina Sharp Mindset	Keto Drink Blanchett Mackinac	Whatarewedoing Blanchett Lima Lima	Snow Face Princess Mackinac Blanchett	Blanchett Actis Snow Face Princess
7	Hero's Medal Brigade Commander Cognoscenti	War Officer Brigade Commander Cognoscenti	Hero's Medal Brigade Commander Cognoscenti	Salted Carmel War Officer Cognoscenti	Outtawaterbury War Officer Salted Carmel
8	My Mane Squeeze Sterling Silver Landed	My Mane Squeeze Sterling Silver Tricky Temper	Dolomite Cupid's Heart My Mane Squeeze	Caldwell Luvs Gold Sterling Silver Bernietakescharge	Sterling Silver Landed Caldwell Luvs Gold
9	Kyla's Kause Good Mission Fifi La Fume	Kyla's Kause Good Mission Miss Uproar	Bond entry Good Mission Froghollowsummer	Kyla's Kause Bond entry Miss Uproar	Froghollowsummer Good Mission Kyla's Kause
2025 Records	39/141 (-\$76.70)	46/141 (-\$6.20)	35/140 (-\$58.90)	24/142 (-\$106.10)	24/142 (-\$118.10)

Figure in parentheses is the total return on a \$2 win bet on each top selection. Race totals vary if all three selections scratch.

Local Favorite

Caldo Candy returns 'home' for Thursday New York-bred test

BY DARBY O'BRIEN

Caldo Candy loves Saratoga.

Bred and owned by Mario and Dawn Martinez's Avanti Stable, the 5-year-old Candy Ride gelding was born a mere 15 minutes from Saratoga Race Course at the Bond family's Song Hill Thoroughbreds in Mechanicville. He enters Thursday's \$150,000 John Morrissey Stakes, a 7-furlong event on the dirt, for Avanti and trainer James Bond.

"The horse is doing probably the best I've ever seen him, personally," Bond said Tuesday. "He was born and raised at our farm, and he loves Saratoga. You can tell by his races. His numbers are really good at the Saratoga track."

Caldo Candy debuted at Aqueduct and broke his maiden there in his

JOHN MORRISSEY STAKES PREVIEW

fourth start, a 6-furlong maiden race on a sloppy track, in January 2024. He finished second in his next effort before returning home to Saratoga – and to the winner's circle.

The New York-bred endured a series of defeats through the winter back in Queens, but once again returned to winning form upon arriving back in Saratoga this spring. The proven homebody most recently won here during the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival in a 6 1/2-furlong allowance event on the dirt June 8.

"He's just so well-balanced. He always tries, always shows up," Bond said. "I've always wanted to take him

Continued On Page 41



Olivia Witkowski

Caldo Candy tackles Thursday's John Morrissey Stakes.

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Morrissey -

■ Continued from page 40

back. Last time, Joel Rosario rode him, and he rode a perfect race on him. He took him back and relaxed on him. The horse is very easy to rate, and he'll do anything you want to do with him. I think most riders would love to ride a horse like this, because he does exactly what you want him to do. He'll turn it off and he'll turn it on for you."

Ricardo Santana Jr. rides Caldo Candy for the first time Thursday, when the gelding makes his stakes debut from post four against fellow New York-breds. Santana's friend Benjamin Hernandez, Caldo Candy's exercise rider and former jockey, speaks positively of the local product who breezed a half-mile in :48.92 July 22.

"He has been bringing this horse up to Ricardo," Bond said. "He says, 'because the horse is just telling us he's going to run his A-race.' I'm excited to lead him over, but my expectations are cautious because it is a tough race."

The Morrissey, the ninth race with post time at 5:44 p.m., attracted a field of 13 including 2-1 morning-line favorite Whatchatalkinabout and 3-1 second choice Bank Frenzy.

Ice Wine Stable's Whatchatalkinabout, a 4-year-old son of Dialed In trained by Wesley Ward, looks for his third straight victory. Whatchatalkinabout kicked off his 2025 season with an 8-length win in an allowance-optional against state-breds before stepping up in class and winning the Grade 3 John A. Nerud by a head. Both starts came at Aqueduct. Whatchatalkinabout will be ridden Thursday by Irad Ortiz Jr.

"He's in great shape," said Lauren Arias, assistant to Ward. "He's such a wonderful horse because he's the perfect horse to have in your barn. He eats well, he trains well, he's just a happy horse and easy to be around. He's doing great, he's feeling good out there and couldn't be happier with him. ...He's 2-for-2 this year and from seven lifetime starts, he's won four. He's been a great horse for a great owner and hopefully he can make it back-to-back wins again Thursday."

Bank Frenzy enters the Morrissey off a 1 1/4-length score in last month's Commentator at Saratoga. A nine-time winner in 18 starts, the 5-year-old son of Central Banker looks for his sixth stakes victory for trainer Rudy Rodriguez. Regular rider Manny Franco returns from post two for owner LSU Stable.

Tristar Farm's Doc Sullivan makes his first start for trainer John Ortiz in the Morrissey. The 4-year-old son of Solomini comes off a four-month layoff Thursday, having last run at Aqueduct in March for trainer Michael Miceli.

"From the moment we got him at Keeneland, we knew we were going to come up here to Saratoga with him and run the stakes," said Daniel Ortiz, assistant to his brother. "He has not missed a single beat, which is absolutely perfect. He's been training really well. He's been putting (in) a lot of good works, and one really good one with Joel (Rosario) on."



Olivia Witkowski

Doc Sullivan gets cleaned up for the Morrissey.

Since shipping to Saratoga, last year's Mike Lee winner and Albany runner-up has turned in three works on the dirt, most recently breezing 5 furlongs in 1:01.90. He's also come to enjoy his new digs, if not command them.

"He's an alpha," Ortiz said. "That's what we call him. He has a stall, and that's his place. We respect his spot. We don't go in there if he doesn't want us in there. We'll respect his place. But once we get him on the track, he's a 100 percent professional."

Wynstock also makes his first start for new connections in the Morrissey. Trainer Fernando Abreu claimed the 4-year-old Solomini colt for \$45,000 out of a June 14 win for owners Playingthefield Racing, Final Turn Racing Stable and Acqua Nova Stable.

Wynstock started his career in California with Bob Bafert, triumphing in the Grade 2 Los Alamitos Futurity at 2 and the Los Alamitos Derby at 3. His former owners sent him east to trainer Linda Rice and he finished sixth in the April 25 Haynesfield Stakes at Aqueduct after a 6-month layoff. Abreu claimed him two starts later.

"He showed last time when I claimed him that he's got another dimension," he said. "The confidence is there. He's training great. We didn't expect the field to be as tough, we expected it to be a little bit lighter like last year. There's nothing else for him around. If you want to run him, you either run him for a tag where you could lose him, or you run him where he's going to face much tougher horses."

The Wine Steward, the 6-1 third choice for trainer Mike Maker, would make his first start in New York-bred company for the first time since he won the 2023 Funny Cide at Saratoga. He's cross-entered in Sunday's \$200,000 West Virginia Governor's Stakes at Mountaineer Park. Others in the field are Light Man, who came off a seven-month layoff last time and finished third in an allowance-optional against open company for trainer Bruce Levine; Sheriff Bianco, who earned his first stakes win in the Say Florida Sandy this winter at Aqueduct for Linda Rice; along with the Ilkay Kantarmaci-trained uncoupled entry of Dr. Kraft and three-time Saratoga winner Jackson Heights. Ciccibello, Shadow Dragon and Quick To Accuse complete the field.

— Additional reporting by Alec DiConza and Julia Reedy



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NY-BRED

SPOTLIGHT AT THE SPA

Strong Influence

Breeder Mort enjoys ride with Rhetorical

BY ALEC DICONZA

Are you a fan of Rhetorical? If so, thank Karen Mort.

The wife of longtime farm manager at Gallagher's Stud, Mallory Mort, persuaded her husband to purchase a mare at the 2015 Keeneland November breeding stock sale. He returned with Sheet Humor, an unraced daughter of Distorted Humor who sold for just \$14,000 while in foal to Midnight Lute. She later became the dam of Rhetorical, a rising star in the New York-bred turf division.

"I hadn't owned a mare in a few years, so my wife was really after me to buy a mare," Mallory Mort said. "I was down at Keeneland and Denali (Stud) had this filly come up. ...It was getting toward the end of the day, and she had either aborted or didn't give foal the year before when they tried to breed her. She was kind of fat and stale looking. She wasn't incredibly appealing as you looked at her. But, she was a \$300,000 RNA as a yearling, and I saw some pictures of her as a yearling. She was a really good-looking yearling. Her mother was a graded stakes winner, so I knew it was a page I could sell at a sale. She was correct, and even then, Distorted Humor was looking to be a good broodmare sire. He certainly has been coming on to be even more outstanding."

Out of Sheets, the winner of the 2007 Grade 3 Azalea Breeders' Cup Stakes, Sheet Humor gave birth to five foals at Gallagher's Stud in Ghent. She only delivered one winner in her first three foals, but her luck changed in 2019 when she produced Sterling Silver, a nine-time winner, including five stakes, in 31 starts and an earner of \$1,086,051. Sheet Humor didn't produce a foal in 2020, but after Mort bred the mare to Not This Time, he felt hopeful that the pair would produce a runner.



Dave Harmon

Rhetorical scores at Saratoga July 19.

"I loved that horse," Mort said about Not This Time. "I really liked his performance in the Breeders' Cup and when I saw him at Taylor Made, I just really fell in love with him. ...I didn't breed to him right away, it was a little more than I wanted to pay. I bred to him in the third or fourth year (of his stallion career). The price was down and I got a pretty good deal on a season."

Mort nearly sold Sheet Humor after breeding her to Not This Time, but he kept her for one more year in order to see the foal drop on his farm. Seven months after Rhetorical was born, Sheet Humor sold for \$3,000 to K.O.I.D. at the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga fall mixed sale. If Mort had waited longer to sell the mare, her value would have likely skyrocketed.

"That was before Sterling Silver had ever run or a race or anything," Mort said. "She had aborted the year before, between Sterling Silver and Rhetorical. When he (Rhetorical) was born, she went over 12 months, way overdue. He just looked like

a drowned rat when he was born. It was what the vets call 'dismature.' It took a lot of doing to get him to what he looked like as a yearling. I probably should've done a little more in-depth research about what Sterling Silver was doing. At that point, she hadn't even had a published work yet. ...I just kept her (Sheet Humor) in New York and bred her to Central Banker and sold her. Do I wish I'd kept the mare? Sure, but I kind of felt I had a little ace up my sleeve with the Not This Time colt, or at least I was hoping I did. It turned out well."

Despite being an ugly duckling of sorts, Rhetorical always gave Mort the impression that he could be successful on the racetrack.

"I always liked the way he was made," Mort said. "When he was born, he looked like a drowned rat, there just wasn't much to him. He had a decent amount of frame, but there just wasn't much to him. It took him a long time to come around."

Continued on Page 43

NY-bred -

■ Continued from page 42

He always had a great, great walk. He just pushed off his hind legs so nicely and just moved really, really well. That was the biggest thing I always liked about him.”

Mort had Rhetorical ready to be sold at the 2022 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York-bred yearling sale. He went to Elliott Walden of WinStar Farm for \$320,000. Not bad, considering Not This Time's stud fee stood at just \$12,500 in 2020 when Rhetorical was conceived.

“I just loved his balance and athleticism,” Walden said about Rhetorical. “A nice type of Not This Time, not too big. ... We got him home, and just couldn't really get him there at 2. He had little problems. We decided to geld him. Sometimes we've had good luck with horses getting over those little problems, and it actually worked on him. We did that with Diversify, we did it with Fearless and now Rhetorical.”

Rhetorical finally made his debut as a 3-year-old last summer at Saratoga Race Course, going 1 mile on the inner turf. He dusted his nine rivals by 5 lengths as the 2-1 favorite for trainer Will Walden. The son of Elliott Walden, Will Walden felt confident in the gelding's ability and wasn't surprised while watching his explosive debut.

“As soon as the Saratoga book came online, I got Irad for the call,” Walden reminisced this week. “I called Steve (Rushing, Ortiz's agent) the second the book came online. As soon as there was a date for the race, I called Steve and got Irad.”

After finishing a closing third in his subsequent start, Rhetorical took nine months off and returned to the races with another 5-length victory in an allowance against New York-breds. Following that effort, Adam Wachtel, Everett Dobson's Cheyenne Stable and Gary Barber privately purchased the gelding before running him in a July 19 allowance-optional against open company. He earned the third

victory of his four-start career when he won the 1 1/16-mile turf event by an easy 2 1/2 lengths, increasing his earnings to \$168,700.

“I thought it was very impressive,” Wachtel said. “We ran two conditions above what we needed to, but we were supposed to have run in the New York-bred two-other-than. When it got rained off, we didn't want to risk him on the dirt even though he trains well on the dirt. You go into an open company two-other-than, they don't give those races away. They're always tough at Saratoga and he just looked like a man amongst boys there, I thought. He kind of dominated the race and he was geared down at the end.”

Wachtel had his eye on Rhetorical from the beginning of his career and now looks forward to the future of the lightly raced New York-bred's career.

“I went down to the paddock with Everett Dobson just to take a look at him, and Everett was really impressed with him before the race,” Wachtel said. “Then, of course, he ran very impressively when breaking his maiden. It's very exciting. We've all had our share of good horses, and it's always exciting when you see one like this with so much potential. If he stays healthy, he's going to be an awfully nice stakes horse.”

Will Walden said Rhetorical could be headed to the August 24 West Point or another allowance before possibly tackling open company stakes races in the fall.

After breeding two top New York-breds out of the same mare, Mort is proud to see both Sterling Silver and Rhetorical thrive on the racetrack and plans to continue enjoying the ride.

“I really can't even explain it,” said Mort, who will watch Sterling Silver run in today's \$150,000 Johnstone Stakes at 7 furlongs. “It's such a great feeling. We're just so proud to have bred two horses like that, it's amazing. ... We realized at some point he (Rhetorical) is not going to be running just in New York, he'll be running in other places, but we're going to enjoy it while he's running in New York and we're going to enjoy the breeder awards.”



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Aftercare Hero

New York Fund honors Seidman for work with retired racehorses

BY HILLARY ROBERTSON

New York breeder and owner Maggie Seidman received the 2025 New York-bred Aftercare Champion honor from the New York Thoroughbred Breeding and Development Fund last week at the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame. Presented by the Fund's executive director, Tracy Egan, the honor commends Seidman's tireless devotion and aid in placing Thoroughbreds in homes after their racing careers come to a close.

Seidman's story traces back to her childhood years, where she first found her love of horses and their care. She continued to show her passion in car-



Olivia Witkowski

Maggie Seidman.

ing for others – horses and humans alike – throughout her nursing career, frequent donations in aftercare programs and ensuring the aftercare of her own homebreds. Events in 2014 sparked pivotal moments in her life. After the passing of her husband, Seidman made a choice between selling her one remaining horse or continuing to fulfill her passion for Thoroughbreds.

Seidman said the choice was easy. She bought a filly, Steve's Philly, in remembrance of her late husband, and continued to buy more horses. Then she came across a problem.

"I kept thinking, where do they go?" Seidman said. "I kept thinking there are these great programs. There weren't. So, I asked a trainer named Rick Violette to help me. He spent time with me going over a plan for aftercare. One of the things he said is when you buy a horse you are all excited and you could go to these races, and you'll get dressed up and you'll get a winning picture. And he said that is not what it is about: put the word aftercare somewhere on top, with plan A, B, C and D because anything can happen in a horse's life."

In order to ensure the lifetime care of her horses, Seidman created a living trust that covers the care of her horses throughout their lives, even if she passes away. Another crucial element to her plan is retiring her horses



Olivia Witkowski

Among those who turned out to honor Maggie Seidman (second from right) were (from left) Jane and John McMahon, Rose and Mark Hennig.

from the track earlier than most.

"I stop earlier on my horses, and that is why I have a trainer like Mark (Hennig) because he understands that I am not going to push or drop in a claimer," Seidman said. "I want to make sure that they are still sound and happy."

Beyond caring for her own horses, Seidman is a member of the board of Bourbon Lane Aftercare. She also works closely with other aftercare programs to assist in the adoption process, notably New Vocations. She also helps save horses from the slaughter pen, and helps horses who have been injured following their racing careers.

Egan highlighted another significant accomplishment for the Breeding and Development Fund during last week's presentation: a \$1.3 million check representing the Fund's expenditures with aftercare facilities in the past decade.

"We use promotional money to do it because we believe that it is very important that before people breed a horse that they think about what its future is going to be," Egan said. "It

must be respected at every stage of life. It's cute and adorable in the stall when it's born. It's fantastic when it's in the winner's circle. But, if its propensity and its talents don't line up at the racetrack, it needs to be respected thereafter with a good retirement, good training and a good transition to a second career.

"We appreciate the fact that the aftercare facilities promote us, the New York Breeding and Development Fund, in exchange for the support that we give them and they in turn use to support the horses and demonstrate respect for horses at every stage of life."

Seidman encouraged people to talk more about the fight to ensure Thoroughbreds remain respected throughout their lives.

"People don't even know about the aftercare organizations," she said. "I'd like the sales companies to do more. We need young people getting involved, putting it on social media or creating an app. We need new people in racing, and we need families in racing."

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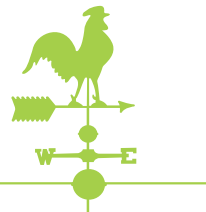
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Are you going to be jockeys?

“Yes. Yes. Maybe.”

That’s how the three young riders answered the first question Tuesday morning.

I can’t remember which one said maybe. Doesn’t matter.

Cassie Lively, Eric Vergara and Sofia Villacres arrived in Saratoga Monday night. Part of the annual young riders’ trip sponsored by the Temple Gwathmey Steeplechase Foundation, the trio toured the backstretch Tuesday morning. They were heading to the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame by afternoon, the harness track by night. And the races Wednesday.

On the last leg of a whirlwind tour that started in Middleburg and ended in Saratoga, the trio had galloped horses at training centers and steeplechase farms. They learned about swimming horses, bandaging horses, vetting horses. They schooled over hurdles, Villacres, for the first time. Her 15-year-old eyes still told the thrill.

They were allowed to sleep in Tuesday morning.

We met at The Special office at 7. Sharp.

Matching shirts and matching enthusiasm, we clambered on board The Special’s golf cart and went on a tour I’ve told a thousand times. Regina Welsh, the muscle behind the endeavor, and her 7-year-old daughter Imogen along for the ride.

We landed at Bill Mott’s barn and waited. He strolled over and introduced himself. Shook hands. Asked questions. “All of you are riders?” We asked about Sovereignty. Erma Scott invited us to see the Derby, Belmont and Jim Dandy winner. We didn’t get close enough to get Erma in trouble.

Taylor Kingsley, a graduate of the program and an exercise rider for Mott bounded over and the students and the alumni compared notes on horses they had been galloping on their trip.

“I saw the list, some of those horses are tough,” Kingsley said.

The trio nodded. The shared thrill of speed and the shared angst over trying to temper that speed.

Lively, 17, gallops for Jack Fisher three days a week. I rode races against her dad, Troy, a thousand years ago. I got the scoop on the Riverdee horses, “Potus is my favorite.” “I love Zabeel.” “Queens Empire would make a good foxhunter.”

The Future

CUP OF COFFEE



By Sean Clancy

Vergara, 16, rides out for Taylor’s dad, Arch, in Camden, S.C. Vergara wants to be an announcer. Will be an announcer – I’ve heard his calls of training flat races at the jump meets. I told him I had set up a meeting with Frank Mirahmadi. His eyes got as big as Villacres’ when she talked about schooling over hurdles. I told him it was good to have a back-up plan.

Villacres, 15, looks like a flat jockey. I asked if she rode pony races. She nodded. I asked how many. She shook her head. “I can’t remember.” “That many?” “Yes, that many.” She and Regina talked about the Shetland Grand National. I looked up her record when I got back to the office. Thirty races, from Quick Draw McGraw to Good Magic.

We watched horses gallop on the Oklahoma. I explained changing leads, keeping your hands down and staying in school, of course. That’s part of the tour, too. All three pointed out Yomar Ortiz Jr. as he galloped past on a bay for Shug McGaughey. Another green-shoot graduate of a grass-roots project.

We met Javier Castellano and Frankie Dettori. Castellano was looking for his eighth Travers winner while Dettori was going to the harness track, something about challenging another flat rider to a harness race. He talked about the last few places on his bucket list. South America. Uruguay. Chile. He

asked Imogen if she liked horses. She nodded. “Me too,” he said as he flitted toward Nelson Avenue.

We rounded the far turn and through the clubhouse, stopped near the outside rail of the main track. “You need to know your poles. The big ones are the eighth poles, the little ones are the sixteenth poles.” A fresh filly dropped a surprised jockey. I walked onto the track and gave the exercise rider a leg up.

“How often does that happen?” One of the students asked.

“Not that often. But often enough.”

The racetrack is a world of riddles.

We circled back across Union Avenue for one more loop and we saw Nick Zito and Angel Cordero Jr. Two Hall of Famers standing under a tree.

“My first year, I lasted three days,” Cordero said. “The second year, a week. I slept in my car. It gets cold at night up here.”

None of these kids had ever slept in a car.

“I would come in the morning and clean all the horses for a guy. He would give me a dollar, ‘Go get some breakfast.’ I would go buy ice, he had a horse I liked, I would put him in ice,” Cordero said. “He got to like me a lot, he was pushing me. I don’t know how I did it, but I was leading rider in ’67. And then I didn’t win any more until ’75.”

Eleven in a row and 14 in all.

“I always tell my friends, ‘One day, I’m going to win the Derby.’ They said, ‘You’re going to win the Kentucky Fried Chicken Derby.’ They would make fun of me,” Cordero said. “But you dream, you have to dream. Life is about the goal that you put on yourself. I would always say, ‘Man, I wish I could win a race.’ And then when you win a race and you say, ‘Man, I wish I could ride in a stake.’ Then you keep wishing more and more. When you get rolling, it’s easy. Like anything, it’s hard to start. It’s like flying a kite, it’s hard to get it up in the air. But when it’s in the air, it’s in the air.”

Cassie, Eric and Sofia, I hope your kite soars.

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