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GUN RUNNER, CREATOR ‘IDEAL’ IN MONDAY MORNING BREEZE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, April 25, 2016) – Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Grade I) contenders Creator and Gun Runner’s Monday morning breezes were “ideal” according to trainer Steve Asmussen, who sent both horses out for serious workouts during Churchill Downs’ special 8:30-8:45 a.m. training window, which is exclusive to possible starters in the Kentucky Derby and Longines Kentucky Oaks.

Gun Runner, a 4 ½-length winner of the March 26 Louisiana Derby (GII) at Fair Grounds last time out, worked six furlongs in 1:12.20 with regular rider Florent Geroux in the irons. Working in company with stablemate Gold Hawk, the son of Candy Ride produced fractions of :12.40, :24.60, :36.40, :48.20, and :59.80 before galloping out seven furlongs in 1:25 and one mile in 1:39.

Creator, who put in his first serious workout since a 1 ¼-length triumph in the April 16 Arkansas Derby (GI) at Oaklawn Park, went five furlongs in 1:02.40 with jockey Ricardo Santana Jr. up. Churchill Downs clockers caught the son of Tapit in eighth-mile splits of :12.60, :25, :37.60 and :49.60 before galloping out six furlongs in 1:15.20 and seven furlongs in 1:28.80.

“Their works were ideal for what we think that they need,” Asmussen said. “I’m extremely proud of the shape that both of these horses are in going into the Derby. I think that our team has done wonderful with them; I’m very proud of the guys to get them in this position.”

Asmussen was looking for “more of a blow” with Gun Runner’s work Monday morning, which was his fourth breeze since his Louisiana Derby victory.

“We worked Gun Runner last Monday and me, [assistant trainer] Scott [Blasi] and Florent [Geroux] thought that he needed a little bit more,” Asmussen said. “Saturday they started the Derby break training; I think that the racetrack is not as tight, just freshly harrowed. We thought that we would get a blow out of him today and that’s exactly what we got out of the work.”

Three starts ago, Creator broke his maiden on the sixth attempt. Asmussen believes that the horse is beginning to develop nicely.

“Creator is coming around at the right time,” Asmussen said. “I really like his focus and how professional he’s been the last two to three weeks. We’re just trying to keep him in the rhythm that he was in between the Rebel and the Arkansas Derby. I was extremely pleased for him to maintain his focus as well as he did today with as much as there is to look at here the couple of weeks leading up to the Derby. I definitely think that he is turning into an excellent racehorse.

“I think pedigree wise he is getting good at the right time. He’s always been talented. He did lack some focus and Mr. [Kenny] Trout and Elliott [Walden] had all the patience in the world of letting him come around. Elliott always had the vision of him getting good when it mattered. The first couple of turf starts were his lack of speed early. I felt that talking with Elliott, we thought that it would not deter him from future racing, to just leave there and get covered up with dirt and not really know what happened. He said that they went the same path with Drosselmeyer. His first couple of races were on turf, hopefully it works out as well.

Asmussen discussed how different his Derby duo is in terms on training and running styles.

“They are definitely a compliment to each other,” Asmussen said. “Just speaking with Elliott after [Creator’s] work. As handy as Creator is in the morning and the way he goes to the pole and breaks out, it’s kind of surprising with his lack of speed coming from the gate, but it is very effective for him. We’re comfortable with that. That being said Gun Runner is a quick horse, extremely athletic and capable of being very close to any pace. The key with him is how he gets under the wire the first time. I think over half of the field is eliminated in the first quarter of a mile in the Derby.”
Also on the work tab for Asmussen were his five Kentucky Oaks (GI) hopefuls, all of which breezed five furlongs; **Terra Promessa** (1:02.80), **Taxable** (1:02.80), **Royal Obsession** (1:00), **Nickname** (1:00) and **Adore** (1:01.40).

“They are five very different fillies,” Asmussen said. “Terra Promessa and Taxable are very good company for each other as they had proved so in the [April 9] Fantasy [(GII) at Oaklawn Park]. I thought that they both ran very hard in their last race and did not want much from them. I thought that they handled really well, they were both very relaxed and traveled good, galloped out nice. Nickname and Royal Obsession both needed a little more this morning; they’re both bigger fillies and they’re both very talented. Adore is a very willing workhorse, a very good traveler and always on the bridle in the morning. I think with Songbird (being out) it opens the race to a new favorite so you’re just trying to imagine where everyone will be and that’s a bit of a guess.”

On the outside looking in, Adore sits at No. 20 on the Kentucky Oaks Leaderboard with 20 points.

“I think that we will evaluate her work today with the connections and how we come out of it, and if not allowed to run in the Oaks, we will come up with a plan that is suitable,” Asmussen said.

Overall, Asmussen is soaking in the Derby experience.

“Right now it’s a very proud time,” Asmussen said. “I’m watching the fillies and the colts train in their colored towels and looking at the physical shape that they’re in and how they’re travelling I’m extremely proud of the horses and the team that has got them in this condition.”

**OTHER KENTUCKY DERBY NOTES**

**BRODY’S CAUSE/CHERRY WINE** – The Albaugh Family Stable’s **Brody’s Cause**, winner of the Toyota Blue Grass Stakes (GI) in his most recent start, jogged two miles after the morning renovation break under exercise rider Miguel Garcia for trainer Dale Romans.

Fifth on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, Brody’s Cause returned to the track for the first time since working five furlongs in 1:01.80 on Saturday.

Also jogging the same distance for Romans was William Pacella, Frank Jones Jr. and Frank Shoop’s **Cherry Wine**. Faustino Aguilar was aboard Cherry Wine, 25th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard.

**DAZZLING GEM** – Steve Landers Racing’s **Dazzling Gem**, 24th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, galloped after the renovation break under exercise rider Fernando Espinoza for trainer Brad Cox.

**DESTIN/OUTWORK** – Twin Creeks Racing Stable’s **Destin**, winner of the Tampa Bay Derby (GII) in his most recent start, was expected to arrive at Churchill Downs Monday afternoon from Palm Beach Downs, according to Jack Heissenbuttel, assistant to trainer Todd Pletcher.

Destin is eighth on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard.

Another Pletcher Derby hopeful, Repole Stable’s **Outwork**, arrived at Churchill Downs early Monday morning from Belmont Park. Outwork is fourth on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard.

**DISCREETNESS** – Xpress Thoroughbreds’ **Discreetness**, 26th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, galloped after the break with jockey Jon Court aboard.

“He will work this weekend, but he will probably wind up in the ($250,000) Pat Day Mile (GIII, on May 7),” trainer Jinks Fires said. “We are going to need a lot of defections (to get in the Derby).”

**FELLOWSHIP** – Jacks or Better Farm’s **Fellowship**, 21st on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, jogged in trainer Mark Casse’s first set Monday morning under exercise rider Brian O’Leary.

“He’ll gallop tomorrow and work Friday or Saturday, depending on the weather,” said Norman Casse, assistant to his father. Fellowship had worked five furlongs in 1:00.40 on Saturday.

**LANI** – Koji Maeda’s UAE Derby (GII) winner **Lani** jogged a half-mile and then galloped two miles under exercise rider Eishu Maruuchi after the renovation break.

Keita Tanaka, agent for the owner, said that Lani would work Wednesday morning and that jockey Yutaka Take would be in for the work.

Take rode in the 1995 Derby, finishing 14th on **Ski Captain**.

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MAJESTO – Grupo 7C Racing Stable’s Majesto galloped after the renovation break with exercise rider J.J. Delgado aboard. Trained by Gustavo Delgado (no relation), Majesto arrived at Churchill Downs on Friday after working a mile in 1:44.40 at Gulfstream Park West on Thursday. Gustavo Delgado said Majesto would work Friday. No rider has been confirmed for the Derby on Majesto, who is 18th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard.

MOHAYMEN – Shadwell Stable’s Mohaymen galloped after the renovation break with exercise rider Miguel Jaime aboard. Ninth on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, Mohaymen worked a half-mile in :46.80 last Wednesday with his next work slated for Friday, weather permitting, according to Neal McLaughlin, assistant to his brother, trainer Kiaran McLaughlin.

MOR SPIRIT – Michael Petersen’s Mor Spirit, never worse than second in seven career starts, galloped after the renovation break with exercise rider George Alvarez aboard. Trained by Bob Baffert, Mor Spirit arrived at Churchill Downs last Friday, a day after working five furlongs in 1:01.60 at Santa Anita. Mor Spirit, eighth on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, jogged here Saturday and galloped Sunday. Assistant Jimmy Barnes is overseeing the Baffert string that numbers 10 and will grow by five in the days ahead. Jockey Gary Stevens stopped by the barn to look in on his Derby mount. Stevens has won the Derby three times, first with Winning Colors in 1988, then Thunder Gulch in 1995 and Silver Charm in 1997. Silver Charm represented the first of Baffert’s four Derby victories with others coming in 1998 with Real Quiet, 2002 with War Emblem and last year with Triple Crown winner American Pharoah. Baffert is the most recent trainer to win back-to-back Derbys with the 1997-98 sweep.

MO TOM – G M B Racing’s Mo Tom galloped after the renovation break under exercise rider Mario Garcia for trainer Tom Amoss. Mo Tom, 20th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, is scheduled to work Wednesday or Thursday, depending on weather, according to Amoss. Amoss said the Uncle Mo colt would work at 7 o’clock on the chosen day. Corey Lanerie has the Derby mount.

MY MAN SAM/SHAGAF – Trainer Chad Brown’s two Kentucky Derby hopefuls, My Man Sam and Shagaf, walked the shedrow Monday morning, a day after posting half-mile works. Shadwell Stable’s Shagaf, 14th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, covered his half-mile in :48.40 and will be ridden in the Derby by Joel Rosario. Sheep Pond Partners, Newport Stables and Jay Bligh’s My Man Sam, 17th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, worked his half-mile in :50.60 and will be ridden in the Derby by Irad Ortiz Jr. Brown plans to remain in Louisville through the Derby. “I will probably stay,” said Brown, whose main string has shipped north to Belmont Park. “I have 10 horses here now and more coming in.”

OSCAR NOMINATED – Ken and Sarah Ramsey’s Oscar Nominated, 13th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, jogged 1 ½ miles at the nearby Trackside Training Center under exercise rider Joel Cano. Trainer Mike Maker plans to bring the son of Kitten’s Joy to Churchill Downs Friday and work Saturday. Oscar Nominated worked five furlongs in 1:00.20 at Trackside this past Saturday.

SUDDENBREAKINGNEWS – Samuel Henderson’s Arkansas Derby (GI) runner-up Suddenbreakingnews galloped after the renovation break with exercise rider Ramiro Gorostieta aboard. Trainer Donnie Von Hemel said Suddenbreakingnews, 12th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, would work this coming weekend with weather holding the key to the day. Luis Quinonez, who has been aboard Suddenbreakingnews in all eight of his starts, has the Derby mount.

TOM’S READY – G M B Racing’s Tom’s Ready jogged shortly after the track opened under exercise rider Emerson Chavez. Trained by Dallas Stewart, Tom’s Ready had worked five furlongs in 1:01 on Saturday and Monday’s exercise was his first on the track since the breeze.

WHITMORE – Robert LaPenta, Harry Rosenblum and Southern Springs Stable’s Whitmore had a regularly scheduled walk day at trainer Ron Moquett’s barn. Whitmore will be ridden in Derby 142 by Victor Espinoza. Espinoza will be attempting to become the first jockey to win three consecutive runnings of the race. Espinoza won in 2014 on California Chrome and last year with American Pharoah.
KENTUCKY OAKS NOTES

CARINA MIA – Three Chimneys Farm’s Carina Mia, winner of the Golden Rod (GII) here last fall and 17th on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, worked five furlongs in :58.80 in company after the renovation break.

With Penny Gardiner up and working company with Black Eagle, a 4-year-old maiden, Carina Mia posted fractions of :11.80, :34.40, :58.80 and out six furlongs in 1:13. The move was the fastest of 34 at the distance.

“She worked very well,” trainer Bill Mott said of the breeze that involved going around Kentucky Derby hopeful Lani who was galloping near the rail around the three-eighths pole.

DREAM DANCE – Stoneway Farm’s Dream Dance, 12th on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, galloped before the renovation break under exercise rider Joel Dominguez.

“She will have go a two-minute lick tomorrow and she’ll breeze Saturday,” trainer Neil Howard said.

Brian Hernandez Jr. has the mount for the Oaks.

GO MAGGIE GO – Mike Tarp’s Go Maggie Go, winner of the Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII) in her most recent start, walked the shedrow at trainer Dale Romans’ barn. Go Maggie Go, fifth on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, had worked five furlongs in 1:00.80 on Saturday.

LEWIS BAY – Alpha Delta Stables’ Lewis Bay, winner of the Gazelle (GII) in her most recent start and second on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, jogged at 6:45 with exercise rider Gian Cueva aboard.

Trained by Chad Brown, Lewis Bay had worked a half-mile here in :50.20 on Saturday.

MO D’AMOUR/RACHEL’S VALENTINA – Trainer Todd Pletcher’s two Kentucky Oaks hopefuls arrived at Churchill Downs Monday morning.

King of Prussia Stable’s Mo d’Amour, seventh on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, arrived early Monday morning from Belmont Park along with Repole Stable’s Outwork.

Stonestreet Stables’ Rachel’s Valentina arrived at Churchill Downs shortly after noon from Keeneland where she had been training since a runner-up finish in the Central Bank Ashland Stakes (GI).

NORTHWEST TALE – Trainer Dallas Stewart said that Charles Fipke’s Northwest Tale, who was 21st on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, was no longer under consideration for the race.

PAOLA QUEEN – Grupo 7C Racing Stable’s Paola Queen galloped before the renovation break with exercise rider J.J. Delgado aboard.

Trained by Gustavo Delgado (no relation), Paola Queen stands 15th on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard. She arrived here Friday following a five-furlong work last Wednesday at Gulfstream Park West in 1:02.

Runner-up in the Gulfstream Park Oaks in her most recent start, Paola Queen is scheduled to work Friday. No rider has been confirmed for Paola Queen, who needs one defection from the prospective Oaks field to make the 14-horse starting gate.

VENUS VALENTINE – Rosemont Farm’s Venus Valentine galloped after the renovation break with Maurice Sanchez aboard.

Eighth on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, Venus Valentine will be ridden by Shaun Bridgmohan in the Oaks. Venus Valentine is scheduled to work Wednesday or Thursday depending on the weather according to trainer Tom Amoss.

WEEP NO MORE – Ashbrook Farm’s Weep No More, fourth on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, jogged after the renovation break. It was her first day back on the track after a half-mile work in :49.20 on Saturday.

Jack Bohannan, assistant to trainer Rusty Arnold, said the filly would work Sunday.

Corey Lanerie has the mount in the Oaks.

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PROBABLE FIELDS FOR UPCOMING STAKES

$100,000 WILLIAM WALKER (Entries taken Wednesday, race Saturday) – Probable: Patton Proud, Toews On Ice, Will Munnings. Possible: Dan the Go to Man.

$100,000 KENTUCKY JUVENILE (Entries taken Saturday, race Thursday, May 5) – Probable: Classic Empire, Hey Mike, Lawton, Polar City, Rapa Iti.

$400,000 ALYSHEBA (GII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 3, race Friday, May 6) – Probable: Coin Broker, La Macchina, Looks to Spare, Majestic Affair, Natchez, Regally Ready. Possible: Blue Tone, Eagle.

$300,000 LA TROIENNE (GI) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 3, race Friday, May 6) – Probable: Curalina, Penwith, Sheer Drama.

$200,000 EIGHT BELLES (GII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 3, race Friday, May 6) – Probable: Blast, Blip n’ Th Bye, Durango, Stageplay. Possible: Cash Back.

$150,000 EDGEWOOD (GIII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 3, race Friday, May 6) – Probable: Adore, Believe in Bertie, Catch a Glimpse, Harmonize, Nodiac (IRE), Outsider Art, Sky My Sky. Possible: Ava’s Kitten.

$150,000 TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (GIII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 3, race Friday, May 6) – Probable: Billy Two Hars, Latent Revenge, Mongol Bull, Power Alert (AUS), Something Extra, Speightsong. Possible: Alsvid.

$500,000 WOODFORD RESERVE TURF CLASSIC (GI) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 4, race Saturday, May 7) – Probable: Big Blue Kitten, Bolo, Chocolate Ride, Danish Dynaformer, Divisidero, Finnegans Wake, Grand Arch, Reporting Star, Roman Approval, Tourist, World Approval.

$300,000 HUMANA DISTAFF (GI) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 4, race Saturday, May 7) – Probable: Dancing House, Sarah Sis, Spelling Again, Stonetastic, Taris, Wavell Avenue.

$300,000 CHURCHILL DISTAFF TURF MILE (GII) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 4, race Saturday, May 7) – Probable: Bureau de Change, Cash Control, Celestine, Rainha Da Bateria, Super Saks. Possible: Tepin.

$300,000 AMERICAN TURF (GII) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 4, race Saturday, May 7) – Probable: Airoforce, Azar, Camelot Kitten, Converge, Dressed In Hermes, J R’s Holiday, Surgical Strike.

$250,000 PAT DAY MILE (GIII) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 4, race Saturday, May 7) – Probable: Dazzling Gem, Discreetness, Forevamo, Imperial Hint, Sea Wizard, Star Hill.

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