FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Kevin Kerstein
Publicity Manager
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(502) 635-4712 (office)
(610) 420-6971 (mobile)
Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com

MCCRAKEN SETTLES IN TO PREPARE FOR KENTUCKY DERBY AT CHURCHILL DOWNS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Tuesday, April 11, 2017) – Janis Whitham’s McCraken arrived at trainer Ian Wilkes’ Barn 26 at Churchill Downs Monday morning following a third-place finish in Saturday’s Blue Grass (Grade II) at Keeneland, and all systems are go for the 3-year-old son of Ghostzapper to move forward for the Grade I, $2 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands on May 6.

“Everything looks good after the race,” Wilkes said Tuesday morning. “He’ll return to the track (Wednesday) morning.”

McCraken was previously unbeaten in four starts prior to the Blue Grass, including a 1 ¼-length win as a juvenile in the Kentucky Jockey Club (GI) at Churchill Downs and a 1 ½-length victory in the Feb. 11 Sam F. Davis (GIII) at Tampa Bay Downs.

McCraken was originally targeted to the March 11 Tampa Bay Derby (GII) but a minor ankle injury rerouted the colt to the Blue Grass.

Jockey Brian Hernandez Jr. is confirmed to ride McCraken in the Kentucky Derby.

In other local Kentucky Derby news:

- Blue Grass fourth-place finisher J Boys Echo returned to trainer Dale Romans’ Barn 4 at Churchill Downs following Saturday’s race. The Gotham (GI) winner is expected to breeze two or three more times prior to the first Saturday in May.

- Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen breezed Sunland Derby (GIII) winner Hence and TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby (GII) third-place finisher Local Hero on Monday at Churchill Downs. Hence, No. 13 on the Road to the Kentucky Derby Leaderboard with 50 points, breezed a half-mile in :47.80 while Local Hero, No. 23 with 30 points, breezed a half-mile in :51.80 according to the Churchill Downs official clockers.

- Florida Derby (GI) runner-up State of Honor settled in to Mark Casse’s Barn 36 Friday afternoon. Casse is scheduled to breeze State of Honor Sunday at 6 a.m.

- Louisiana Derby winner Girvin is on target to breeze Saturday at Churchill Downs’ Trackside Training Facility, according to trainer Joe Sharp. Hall of Fame jockey Mike Smith has picked up the Kentucky Derby mount on Girvin after regular rider Brian Hernandez Jr. opted to ride McCraken.

- Spiral Stakes (GII) upset-winner Fast and Accurate is stabled in Mike Maker’s Barn K at Trackside. The 3-year-old colt is scheduled for a workout Saturday morning.

- Late nominations for the Longines Kentucky Oaks and Woodford Reserve Turf Classic, as well as early nominations to other Kentucky Derby Week stakes races, are expected on Saturday. The stakes races are the April 29: $100,000 William Walker; May 4: $100,000 Kentucky Juvenile; May 5: $150,000 Edgewood (GIII), $200,000 Eight Belles (GII), $400,000 Alysheba (GI), $300,000 La Troienne (GI) and $150,000 Twin Spires Turf Sprint (GIII); May 6: $250,000 Pat Day Mile (GIII), $300,000 American Turf (GII), $500,000 Churchill Downs (GI), $300,000 Distaff Turf Mile (GI) and $300,000 Humana Distaff (GI).

-END-