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FLORIDA DERBY RUNNER-UP STATE OF HONOR BREEZES AT CHURCHILL DOWNS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, April 16, 2017) – Florida Derby (Grade I) runner-up State of Honor breezed a half-mile in :49.80 over a fast track on Easter Sunday at Churchill Downs in preparation for a start in the $2 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (GI) on Saturday, May 6.

The Ontario-bred son of To Honor and Serve, trained by Mark Casse, was put through eighth-mile splits of :12 and :24.40 by exercise E.J. Bowler and galloped out five furlongs past the wire in 1:02.

“We really just wanted to get a solid maintenance-work in him before something more serious next week,” assistant trainer Norm Casse said. “State of Honor is a tremendous work horse so we will probably keep breezing him by himself.”

Throughout his six-race 2-year-old season, State of Honor trained and raced exclusively over Woodbine’s synthetic Tapeta surface with the exception of one turf race. But his future engagements changed after Casse breezed the colt on dirt at Palm Meadows in South Florida this winter.

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KENTUCKY OAKS CONTENDER SALTY BREEZES AT CHURCHILL DOWNS – Salty, a top contender for the $1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I) after winning the Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII), breezed a half-mile in :48 Sunday in preparation for the Friday, May 5 race.

The 3-year-old daughter of Quality Road went to the track at 6 a.m. with exercise rider Janelle Castonguay and breezed in company with multiple graded stakes-placed mare Mississippi Delta (:48) through fractions of :12.20 and :24.40 before galloping out five furlongs in 1:01.

“We have always been very high on Salty,” assistant trainer Norm Casse said. “She’s extremely talented and could not have gone better over the Churchill surface. We knew she liked the surface as a 2-year-old but it gives you confidence to see her enjoying it even more as we prep for the Oaks.”

Salty is 3-2-1-0 lifetime with earnings of $180,370.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Arkansas Derby (GI) winner Classic Empire is scheduled return to Mark Casse’s Churchill Downs Barn 36 on Monday afternoon. The juvenile champion could resume training Thursday or Friday. … Santa Anita Derby (GI) winner Gormley breezed three furlongs in :37.80 Saturday at Santa Anita Park. The colt is not expected to arrive at Churchill Downs until Derby week. … Gotham (GIII) winner and Blue Grass (GII) fourth-place finisher J Boys Echo is expected to breeze after the break around 10:30 a.m. Monday at Churchill Downs. The 3-year-old son of Mineshaft is stabled in trainer Dale Romans’ Barn 4. … Blue Grass winner Irap is scheduled to breeze the next two Fridays at Keeneland before arriving at Churchill Downs. … Sunday marked 20 days until Kentucky Derby 143. … Happy Easter from the team at Churchill Downs.

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