FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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

RAIN PUTS DAMPER ON DAY ONE OF DERBY, OAKS EXCLUSIVE TRAINING

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, April 22, 2017) – Thanks to inclement weather, Janis Whitham’s McCraken and the Albaugh Family Stable’s J Boys Echo were the only two 3-year-olds on the “sloppy” main track Saturday during the first of Churchill Downs’ exclusive Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks training periods from 8:30-8:45 a.m. (all times EDT).

Both colts galloped in the mud in preparation for scheduled starts in the $2 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Grade I) on Saturday, May 6.

Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) and Sam F. Davis (GIII) winner McCraken, who is undefeated in three starts beneath the Twin Spires, galloped 1 ¾ miles with regular exercise rider Yoni Orantes aboard. The 3-year-old son of Ghostzapper – stabled with trainer Ian Wilkes’ string in Barn 26 – is scheduled to breeze Monday at 8:30 a.m. with jockey Brian Hernandez Jr. in the irons.

Gotham (GIII) hero J Boy’s Echo, who finished fourth in the Blue Grass (GII) one position behind McCraken, galloped 1 ½ miles with exercise rider Tammy Fox up. The Mineshaft colt is on target to breeze five furlongs Sunday at 8:30 a.m. J Boys Echo is stabled in trainer Dale Romans’ Barn 4.

Several trainers tried to beat the weather and sent their Derby and Oaks contenders to train between 6-7 a.m.:

- Arkansas Derby (GI) winner Classic Empire jogged one mile Saturday with regular exercise rider Martin Rivera up for trainer Mark Casse. The 2-year-old champion is expected to breeze next weekend.
- Following Friday workouts, Casse’s other Derby contender State of Honor and Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) contender Salty jogged one mile at 6 a.m. Both horses will have the day off Sunday, according to assistant trainer Norm Casse.
- Sunland Derby winner Hence made an appearance during trainer Steve Asmussen’s first set at 6 a.m. Saturday. The 3-year-old son of Street Boss is expected to breeze in the first set Monday morning when training begins.
- Spiral (GIII) winner Fast and Accurate was scheduled to breeze at 6 a.m. Saturday morning at Trackside Louisville but trainer Mike Maker called an audible and decided to wait until Sunday or Monday when the weather dries out.
- Jordan’s Henny, currently No. 16 on the Road to the Kentucky Oaks Leaderboard after a third-place finish in the Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII), breezed an easy half-mile in :50.20 Saturday. The 3-year-old daughter of Henny Hughes splashed through fractions of :12.40 and :37.80 before galloping out five furlongs in 1:03.40.
- Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) winner Farrell visited the track for training Saturday at 6 a.m. The 3-year-old daughter of Malibu Moon is expected to breeze Wednesday or Thursday at Churchill Downs, according to trainer Wayne Catalano.

SHAPING UP: THE KENTUCKY DERBY – Likely starters in the 143rd running of the $2 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (GI) to be run for 3-year-olds at 1 ¼ miles on Saturday, May 6: Always Dreaming (John Velazquez), Battalion Runner (TBA), Battle of Midway (Flavien Prat), Classic Empire (Julien Leparoux), Fast and Accurate (TBA), Girvin (Mike Smith), Gormley (Victor Espinoza), Gunnevera (Javier Castellano), Hence (TBA), Irap (Mario Gutierrez), Irish War Cry (Rajiv Maragh), J Boys Echo (Robby Albarado), McCraken (Brian Hernandez Jr.), Patch (TBA), Practical Joke (Joel Rosario), State of Honor (Jose Lezcano), Tapwrit (Jose Ortiz) and Thunder Snow (Ire) (Christophe Soumillon) and Untrapped (TBA).

Possible starters within the Top 20 on the preference list: Malagacy (TBA).

Next up in order of preference: Lookin At Lee (TBA), Sonneteer (Kent Desormeaux), Royal Mo (Gary Stevens), Local Hero (TBA) and Iliad (TBA).

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SHAPING UP: THE KENTUCKY OAKS – Likely starters in the 143rd running of the $1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) to be run for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/8 miles on Friday, May 5: Abel Tasman (Mike Smith), Daddys Lil Darling (Robby Albarado), Ever So Clever (Luis Contreras), Farrell (Channing Hill), It Tiz Well (Corey Nakatani), Miss Sky Warrior (Paco Lopez), Paradise Woods (Flavien Prat), Sailor's Valentine (Corey Lanerie), Salty (Joel Rosario), Tequilita (Luis Saez), Wicked Lick (Brendan Walsh) and Yorkiepoo Princess (Irad Ortiz Jr.).

Possible starters within the Top 14 on the preference list: Chanel's Legacy (Alex Birzer) and Lockdown (TBA).

Next up in order of preference: Vexatious (Kent Desormeaux), Jordan's Henny (TBA), Benner Island (TBA), Someday Soon (TBA), Mopotism (TBA) and Shane's Girlfriend (TBA).

DOWN THE STRETCH – Wood Memorial (GII) third-place finisher Cloud Computing has been removed from Kentucky Derby contention and will point to the Preakness, according to trainer Chad Brown. The defection of Cloud Computing bumps Rebel Stakes (GII) third-place finisher Untrapped into the field for the first Saturday in May. … Brown’s Blue Grass (GII) runner-up Practical Joke is scheduled to van to Churchill Downs from Keeneland on Monday. … Trainer Todd Pletcher breezed Wood Memorial runner-up Battalion Runner on Saturday morning over Belmont Park’s training track, according to the Daily Racing Form’s Dave Grening. The 3-year-old son of Unbridled’s Song is expected to arrive at Churchill Downs early Monday morning. Pletcher’s Rebel winner Malagacy and Tampa Bay Derby (GII) winner Tapwrit are also expected to arrive on Monday from Keeneland. The second wave of Pletcher’s Kentucky Derby contenders are targeted to arrive Tuesday, which includes Florida Derby (GI) winner Always Dreaming and Louisiana Derby (GII) runner-up Patch. Pletcher will be stabled in Barn 40. … Peacock Racing Stable’s Gunnevera is en route to Churchill Downs from Miami and is expected to arrive late Saturday night or early Sunday morning. … The exclusive training period for Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks contenders at Churchill Downs continues through Thursday, May 4 from 8:30-8:45 a.m. The live stream presented by TwinSpires.com will be available at multiple sources including on Twitter via @KentuckyDerby and kentuckyderby.twitter.com; on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kentuckyderby; and www.kentuckyderby.com/workouts/live. The Twitter stream, available globally to logged-in and logged-out users, will also feature a timeline of Kentucky Derby related tweets alongside the live video itself.

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