News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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McCRAKEN, FAST AND ACCURATE WORK FOR DERBY 143;
THUNDER SNOW ARRIVES FROM DUBAI
EVER SO CLEVER BREEZES HALF-MILE FOR OAKS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, April 30, 2017) – Two Kentucky Derby likely entrants and two Kentucky Oaks hopefuls worked Sunday morning over a fast track at Churchill Downs.

Whitham Thoroughbreds’ McCraken worked five furlongs in 1:00.80 and Kendall Hansen, Skychai Racing and Bode Miller’s Fast and Accurate worked five furlongs in 1:01.20 in company for the Derby after the morning renovation break.

Before those two worked, Godolphin Racing’s Thunder Snow (IRE) arrived at Churchill Downs at 7:10 from Dubai via England and was housed in Barn 17.

Two fillies worked toward Friday’s $1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I): Clearview Stable’s Ever So Clever, who breezed a half-mile in :49.80 before the renovation break, and Westrock Stables’ Torrent, who worked a half-mile after the break in :47.60.

OTHER KENTUCKY DERBY NOTES

ALWAYS DREAMING/PATCH/TAPWRIT – A pair of Derby-bound colts were out early for exercise and another had a day off Sunday out of the Todd Pletcher barn on a cloudy but mild morning at Churchill Downs.

The trio of 3-year-olds -- Always Dreaming, Patch and Tapwrit -- were the “chosen ones” who had made the cut from a once-substantial roster of potential hopefuls pointing for America’s most famous race. This past week that lineup had shrunk further from a possible six down to the current three, bringing focus to the trainer’s 17th crack at winning the Derby.

Always Dreaming (with Adele Bellenger in the tack) and Tapwrit (Silvio Pioli up) both went trackside just after 5:45.

Tapwrit, hero of the Tampa Derby (GII), simply jogged around the big oval, nice and easy does it. Always Dreaming, the star of the Florida Derby (GI), was -- as has proven his wont -- more serious with his efforts, galloping very strongly and proving full of himself during about a mile and a quarter tour of the strip.

“He’s a good-feeling colt and his energy level is off the charts,” Pletcher said after the exercise. “The trick for us is to keep him focused.”

The third Pletcher charge, Louisiana Derby (GII) runner-up Patch, simply walked the shedrow.

“Nothing special there,” Pletcher said. “Just a day off.”

The bay son of Union Rags, owned and bred by the historic Calumet Farm, was handled for the first time in his Louisiana effort by young rider Tyler Gaffalione, who has done most of his work so far out of Miami. Pletcher confirmed that he’s been signed back on and will make his Kentucky Derby debut on Saturday.

The trio of Pletcher charges who were recent candidates to try Derby 143 also -- Battalion Runner, Malagacy and Master Plan -- are being pointed for other efforts.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY – WinStar Farm and Don Alberto Stable’s Santa Anita Derby (GI) runner-up Battle of Midway tested the Churchill Downs main track for the first time as soon as it opened for training at 5:45 a.m. The Smart Strike colt arrived Saturday afternoon along with the other Southern California-based Derby Week contenders.

“He was on his toes, feeling frisky and settled right in,” said Christina Jelm, the East Coast assistant to Hall of Fame trainer Jerry Hollendorfer. “This morning he had a one-mile jog and a walk through the paddock. Everything’s on schedule and going as planned. He’s a big, sleek, great animal, and he’s been perfect since he’s been here.”

Regular exercise rider Edgar Rodriguez traveled with Battle of Midway and was aboard for the exercise.
CLASSIC EMPIRE/STATE OF HONOR – Likely Kentucky Derby favorite Classic Empire and Florida Derby (GI) runner-up State of Honor jogged Sunday morning for trainer Mark Casse.

“Everyone is doing well following their breezes,” Casse said.

Classic Empire could become the richest horse to make a start in the Kentucky Derby with $2,120,220 in earnings after winning the April 15 Arkansas Derby (GI).

“He’s special in many ways,” Casse said. “(Assistant trainer) Norman (Casse) and our entire crew have gotten so many accolades for the job we did to get him to the Arkansas Derby after three months off. Honestly, the only way that was possible is because of how special he is.”

“There was no way he was 100 percent fit before that,” Casse continued. “With three months between races, there was a long time we didn’t get to do a lot because of his foot and back injuries. Within that time, he probably missed four to five weeks of training, not all at that time but in different spans.”

The Casse Derby hopefuls are scheduled to jog again Monday morning.

FAST AND ACCURATE – Kendall Hansen, Skychai Racing and Bode Miller’s multiple stakes winner Fast and Accurate vanned from Trackside Louisville Sunday morning and had his final work for the Kentucky Derby (GI) when logging five furlongs in 1:01.20.

Working in tandem with GI-placed stablemate Adventist, third in last year’s Wood Memorial (GII), the son of Hansen was piloted by jockey Channing Hill. The Spiral (GIII) winner will attempt to capture his third consecutive stakes with his third different rider when Hill takes the reins on May 6. Hill was aboard for his graduation in December at Turfway Park in maiden claiming company. This will be his first Kentucky Derby mount.

“Everything went smoothly,” trainer Mike Maker said. “It was nothing out of the ordinary with him. I thought he handled the dirt well.”

A winner on turf and synthetic, Pennsylvania-bred Fast and Accurate was off the board in his lone dirt try last fall at Parx Racing. Sunday’s work was his fourth consecutive dirt drill since taking the Spiral over Turfway’s Polytrack by three-quarters of a length. Three works back on April 15, he drilled a bullet five furlongs in :59.60 at Trackside Louisville.

GIRVIN – Brad Grady’s Louisiana Derby (GII) and Risen Star (GII) winner Girvin walked the shedrow at trainer Joe Sharp’s Keeneland barn on Sunday morning one day after his final work for the Kentucky Derby (GI).

“He came out great,” Sharp said. “Everything is going well and I couldn’t be happier.”

Sharp, who will be saddling his first Kentucky Derby (GI) starter, confirmed that Girvin will ship to Churchill Downs Tuesday evening.

GORMLEY/ROYAL MO – The California-based colts Gormley and Royal Mo are bound for Kentucky Monday morning on a flight filled with West Coast runners with Derby Week designs following their Saturday works.

Trainer John Shirreffs’ pair had drilled separately at Santa Anita Saturday under exercise rider Francisco Alvarado, Gormley covering seven furlongs in 1:26.20 and his stablemate going six panels in 1:13.

Sunday morning their conditioner chose to merely walk Royal Mo, but put Gormley back on the track for a gallop.

“How far did you gallop him?” Shirreffs was asked.

“Far enough,” he said with a laugh.

Gormley, who’ll be handled next Saturday by three-time Kentucky Derby winner Victor Espinoza, is guaranteed a spot in the Kentucky Derby starting gate. Royal Mo, who has Gary Stevens -- also a three-time Derby winner -- assigned as his rider, needs just a bit more help to run. The Santa Anita Derby (GI) third-place finisher is one position away from a start. Should any of the current 20 assigned spots in the gate withdraw before this Friday’s 9 a.m. Derby scratch time, Royal Mo will be one of the ones who gets “his chance of a lifetime in a lifetime of chance.”

GUNNEVERA – Peacock Racing Stables’ Gunnevera galloped a leisurely mile and a quarter Sunday under exercise rider Victor O’Farrel for trainer Antonio Sano.

Gunnevera will be Sano’s first starter at Churchill Downs.

“I have 34 horses between two barns at Gulfstream Park and Gulfstream Park West,” said Sano, who brought only Gunnevera to Kentucky. “This is like a vacation; a nice vacation.”

HENCE/LOOKIN AT LEE/UNTRAPPED – Trainer Steve Asmussen now officially has three Kentucky Derby starters with Lookin At Lee joining the 20-horse field after trainer Todd Pletcher withdrew Malagacy from the race Saturday. Asmussen also was able to finalize riding assignments with Florent Geroux getting the mount on Hence, Corey Lanerie picking up the mount on Lookin at Lee and Ricardo Santana Jr. being named on Untrapped.

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“The one thing we feel very good about with Lookin at Lee is if you look at the field, you see a lot of truly talented horses, but not a lot of experience,” Asmussen said. “There’s not a lot of experience with some of the talented ones. There’s a lot of variables there. With ‘Lee,’ you’ve eliminated all of that. He’s well-seasoned. He’s at his best right now. His last race in the Arkansas Derby (when third) was his fastest from a numbers standpoint. We’re all excited about running him a mile and a quarter.”

Lookin at Lee galloped Sunday shortly after 7 a.m. with Juan Vargas aboard, while Hence, with Angel Garcia up, and Untrapped, Vargas aboard, each had strong gallops during the special 8:30 a.m. training time reserved for Oaks and Derby horses. All three will have half-mile works at their regular training times Monday.

“We’ll send ‘Lee’ out early,” Asmussen said. “We’ll stay with what we’ve been doing. Since Hence and Untrapped had already been in the Derby field, they’ll continue to go out at the 8:30 time.”

IRAP – The husky Tiznow colt Irap made his Churchill Downs bow Sunday morning, taking advantage of the 8:30-8:45 special training period for Derby and Oaks runners.

Regular exercise rider Tony Romero was in the boot and looking on was trainer Doug O’Neill’s trusted assistant Leandro Mora, who had jetted in from their Southern California headquarters Saturday. Romero allowed the big bay to jog under restraint near the middle of the track with his head cocked and his coat shining.

“We tried jogging him the wrong way outside, but he got too rank with that,” Mora said. “So we just let him go around with the other horses.”

O’Neill, who was scheduled to fly east Monday evening, has built a major racing operation in California solidly based on longevity with his help. Mora, a hands-on horseman with a positive demeanor, has been with the trainer for the past 17 years. Romero, who includes the multi-millionaire and Hall of Famer Lava Man among his gallop charges, has been a member of Team O’Neill for 15.

“I wanted to get him out this morning with lots of people around,” Mora said. “We’re not going to hide him. The more he’s around people and crowds, the better chance he’ll have to deal with the scene we’re going to see here next Saturday.”

Mora is well aware of the Derby “scene.” This will be his fifth go-round with the Run for the Roses, a pair of which ended with “his” horse wearing those roses. In 2012 he was part of the crew rooting home I’ll Have Another. Then last year he again was signed on for the glory when Nyquist proved the best 3-year-old on the first Saturday in May.

“Irap has just been getting better,” Mora said. “We believed he belonged in the Blue Grass (Stakes-GII), even though he was a maiden. He proved us right. We think he belongs here, too.”

IRISH WAR CRY – Isabelle de Tomaso’s homebred Irish War Cry completed his final serious preparations in advance of the Derby with a six-furlong work in 1:13.20 at the Fair Hill Training Center, according to trainer Graham Motion. The move was accomplished in company with Providence Road, a 4-year-old maiden who broke off about two lengths ahead.

“He pretty much did what he wanted,” Motion said. “He sat a couple of lengths off his workmate and did it nicely. I was very happy.”

Jockey Rajiv Maragh traveled to Fair Hill to work the Curlin colt. The 31-year-old rider was aboard for Irish War Cry’s win in the Wood Memorial (G2), the jockey’s first major stakes breakthrough since suffering several broken vertebrae, a broken rib, and a punctured lung in a July 2015 spill at Belmont Park, and has the return call for the Derby.

“I think Rajiv was very comfortable with him,” Motion said. “He had been anxious to see how he’d handle sitting off another horse, which is something we’d done with him before in Florida but Rajiv hadn’t been on him then and wanted to see how he’d be. He handled it very well and was very relaxed about it.”

Motion said he would share video of the work later today from his Twitter account, @GrahamMotion.

J BOYS ECHO – Albaugh Family Stable’s J Boys Echo walked the shedrow Sunday morning following his five-furlong breeze Saturday in 1:01 for trainer Dale Romans.

The colt is expected to return to the track Tuesday.

McCRAKEN – Whitham Thoroughbreds’ McCraken completed the heavy lifting for his run in Kentucky Derby 143 by working five furlongs in 1:00.80 under jockey Brian Hernandez Jr. Sunday morning.

Working on his own, McCraken produced fractions of :13, :25.20, :36.80, :48.60 and 1:00.80 with a six-furlong gallop out in 1:13.40, seven-eighths in 1:27.20 and the mile in 1:41.80. The five-eighths time was the 10th fastest of 32 at the distance.

“It was just what I wanted,” trainer Ian Wilkes said with a laugh in repeating one of the most-used clichés in trainer-speak. “I only wanted him to gallop out an extra eighth because I wanted him to want to do more and he wants to do more.”

McCraken won his first four starts, but Wilkes knew early on that he had a special horse on his hands.

“I worked him with one of my good fillies and I knew the horse could run then,” Wilkes said. “A lot of horses have the talent, but they don’t have the class. This horse has the class. You can have all the talent in the world, but if they can’t handle the pressure, that’s the difference. The horse with class can handle the pressure and get better.”

Sunday’s work was the third for McCraken since finishing third in the Blue Grass (GII) at Keeneland on April 8.

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“I feel like he is back into his rhythm,” Wilkes said. “The Blue Grass was a little different for him in that he was fresh and didn’t switch leads and that took away from his punch.”

As he had done in a five-furlong breeze last Monday, McCraken galloped out well past the track kitchen at the half-mile pole. “The last three times he has done that,” Hernandez said. “You think he is going to pull up and then he spots the pony and takes off again. He just enjoys what he is doing. He sees the pony and doesn’t want to go back to the barn.”

PRACTICAL JOKE – Klaravich Stables and William H. Lawrence’s Practical Joke galloped 1 3/8 miles under exercise rider Fernando Rivera during the Kentucky Oaks and Derby training session, his first time back on the track since a timed work Friday.

“The horse did really well,” trainer Chad Brown said. “He came out of the work good. He continues to get stronger and I’m real happy with him overall.”

The Into Mischief colt finished a strong second in the Blue Grass Stakes (GII) while stalking Irap from the outside, but could not get past that 31-1 winner.

“I was very pleased with the race,” Brown said. “I was disappointed with the result in that he didn’t win but I was very pleased with the effort. The horse showed a sustained run going a mile-and-an-eighth and past the wire. He got a lot out of that and physically he’s a fitter horse now. I’m optimistic that he can stretch it out a little farther.”

SONNETEER – Calumet Farm’s Sonneteer, looking to become the first maiden to win the Kentucky Derby since Brokers Tip in 1933, had his first gallop over the Churchill Downs track Sunday morning after arriving Saturday from California. Exercise rider Maurillo Garcia was aboard.

“He travels so well,” assistant trainer Julie Clark said. “He doesn’t care where he’s at.”

The Midnight Lute colt, who had been sitting at No. 22 on the leaderboard, officially made the 20-horse Derby field Saturday after trainer Todd Pletcher declared Malagacy and Battalion Runner out of Derby 143.

“It's nice to know we're in the field,” Clark said. “We can make plans now. We also have the chance to draw a better post rather than drawing in and getting stuck in number 20.”

Clark said Sonneteer would work Monday with jockey Kent Desormeaux aboard. Trainer Keith Desormeaux, who finished second in last year’s Kentucky Derby with Exaggerator, is scheduled to arrive Tuesday or Wednesday.

THUNDER SNOW – Godolphin Racing’s homebred UAE Derby (Group II) winner Thunder Snow arrived on the scene at Churchill Downs at 7:10 a.m. following an eight-hour flight from East London Airport to Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport and a van ride to Louisville.

“We left England last night at 6:30 p.m. and he couldn’t have traveled any better,” said Rachel Perry, the barn manager who traveled with Thunder Snow from Godolphin Stables in Newmarket, near London. “He’s a good horse and he’s quite sound anyway. He’s a very laid-back horse, and good horses tend to be that way. I’m very happy with him.”

Thunder Snow is required to spend 42 hours in quarantine before he can visit the main track.

“He’ll walk in the quarantine barn two or three times a day and then Tuesday we’ll get to the track,” Perry said.

Thunder Snow will be Godolphin’s 10th Kentucky Derby starter since 1999, with the best finish being Frosted’s fourth in 2015. Two of the nine previous starters, including Frosted, had prep races in the United States, and those that didn’t typically showed up at Churchill Downs at least two weeks out to acclimate. The only one to arrive the week of the race, Curule in 2000, ranged up at Churchill Downs at least two weeks out to acclimate. The only one to arrive the week of the race, Curule in 2000, ranged up to 1 1/2 miles on Saturday, May 6: Always Dreaming (John Velazquez), Battle of Midway (Flavien Prat), Classic Empire (Julien Leparoux), Fast and Accurate (Channing Hill), Girvin (Mike Smith), Gormley (Victor Espinoza), Gunnevera (Javier Castellano), Hence (Florent Geroux), Irap (Mario Gutierrez), Irish War Cry (Rajiv Maragh), J Boys Echo (Luis Saez), Lookin At Lee (Corey Lanerie), McCraken (Brian Hernandez Jr.), Patch (Tyler Gaffalione), Practical Joke (Joel Rosario), Sonneteer (Kent Desormeaux), State of Honor (Jose Lezcano), Tapwrit (Jose Ortiz), Thunder Snow (Ire) (Christophe Soumillon) and Untrapped (Ricardo Santana Jr.).

Next up in order of preference: Royal Mo (Gary Stevens), Local Hero (TBA), Master Plan (TBA) and Petrov (TBA).
KENTUCKY OAKS NOTES

ABEL TASMAN – China Horse Club and Clearsky Farms’ Abel Tasman, winner of the Starlet (Grade I) at 2 and runner-up in last month’s Santa Anita Oaks (GI), visited the Churchill Downs main track for the first time after arriving Saturday from trainer Bob Baffert’s base at Santa Anita Park. The Quality Road filly jogged one mile under Dana Barnes, according to the exercise rider’s husband, and Baffert’s longtime assistant, Jimmy Barnes.

“It was a simple trip,” Jimmy Barnes said. “She jogged a mile this morning and we’ll wait to see what Bob tells us to do the rest of the week.”

Abel Tasman could have exercised during the special Oaks and Kentucky Derby training session at 8:30 a.m., but went out earlier in succession with Baffert’s other Derby Week shippers, American Freedom (probable for Friday’s Alysheba Stakes (GII) and a filly for an unspecified allowance race.

“We didn’t want to wait all day [to send Abel Tasman to the track],” Barnes said. “When you only have three horses you don’t want to take two of them out and leave the other one tied to the wall for three hours.”

DADDYS LIL DARLING – Normandy Farm’s Daddys Lil Darling walked the shedrow at Keeneland following her five-furlong breeze in 1:01.80 Friday morning.

The Ashland (GI) runner-up is expected to arrive at trainer Kenny McPeek’s Churchill Downs Barn 7 Monday.

“We’re excited to get her to Louisville,” Churchill Downs-based assistant trainer Jeff Hiles said. “She was stabled with me at Payson Park (Florida) this winter and we’re getting excited for the Oaks.”

With a record of 8-2-3-0 and $464,365 in earnings, Daddys Lil Darling began her Road to the Kentucky Oaks journey by winning Churchill Downs’ Pocahontas (GII) in September as a juvenile.

EVER SO CLEVER – Clearview Stable’s Ever So Clever completed her final Kentucky Oaks preparations by working an easy half mile in :49.80 under regular exercise rider Angel Garcia. The move was the 42nd fastest of 61 at the distance.

“It was spot on,” trainer Steve Asmussen said. “It’s a good race, but the filly is doing wonderful. She’s very comfortable here at Churchill and has run solid over the racetrack. We feel that she has that going for her. And, obviously we were impressed with today’s move.”

The Medaglia d’Oro filly, who broke her maiden last spring at Churchill and then finished third in the Golden Rod (GII) last fall, enters the Oaks off a victory in the $400,000 Fantasy Stakes (GIII) at Oaklawn. The win followed two fifth-place finishes in the Martha Washington and Honeybee (GIII) Stakes.

“She was geared up for the Fantasy,” Asmussen said. “She’s a nice, laid back filly and she was just coming back. She was sharp enough for the Fantasy, but maybe still a little flat in the Honeybee.”

FARRELL – Coffeepot Stables’ Farrell went out Sunday at 8:30 a.m. from Barn 30 and proceeded to school in the paddock and then gallop 1 1/2 miles for trainer Wayne Catalano.

“Everything’s good,” Catalano said. “She schooled great -- we try to school them twice before races -- and then went nice and easy.

“We got her here early (in April) because I was coming here and we were all done (at Fair Grounds) and I wanted her here with me,” he continued. “We have her in the same stall she was in last fall when she won the Golden Rod (GII) and she likes it here.”

Exercise rider Antonio Ramos was once again aboard the three-time Grade II winner. Catalano’s son-in-law Channing Hill has the mount in the Kentucky Oaks (GI).

Catalano also touched on Robert LaPenta and Harry Rosenblum’s expected Pat Day Mile (GII) starter Uncontested. Previously on the Kentucky Derby (GI) trail, the Smarty Jones Stakes winner drilled a bullet five furlongs at Churchill Downs on Tuesday in :58.20 and is unraced since finishing eighth in the Rebel (G2) on March 18.

“He worked very good here and it looks like it’s right up his alley,” Catalano said.

JORDAN’S HENNY – Erv Woolsey and Ralph Kinder’s Jordan’s Henny walked the shedrow at trainer Mike Tomlinson’s barn. D.W. Fries, assistant to Tomlinson, said Jordan’s Henny would return to the track in the morning.

LOCKDOWN – The Juddmonte Farms’ homebred Lockdown galloped about 1 3/8 miles under exercise rider Jo Lawson during the Oaks and Derby training session, Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott reported. The First Defence filly also schooled in the starting gate without incident.

“We might blow her out Tuesday,” Mott said.

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MISS SKY WARRIOR – Miss Sky Warrior once again gave a good account of herself, leaving Barn 43 at 8:30 a.m. and galloping a lap around Churchill Downs’ main track for trainer Kelly Breen and owner Arlene’s Sun Star Stable. Exercise rider Aurelio Gomez was aboard.

Twice a winner at 1 1/8 miles in graded stakes company, the daughter of First Samurai exits a 13-length romp in the Gazelle (GII) and rides a five-race winning streak into the toughest test of her career. In her lone career loss, she was fourth on debut behind subsequent GI winner Yellow Agate.

“She’s bright-eyed and seems to be doing well and eating well,” Breen said. “It’s all the things you want to see.”

MOPOTISM – Assistant Leandro Mora confirmed that Mopotism, the Uncle Mo filly owned by Paul Reddam who has two wins and two stakes placings to her credit, will fly with a California contingent Monday to Louisville and run in this Friday’s Kentucky Oaks (G1).

The Doug O’Neill-trained filly will be ridden in the nine-furlong Oaks by Mario Gutierrez in a field limited to 14 3-year-old fillies. The same connections finished second to Cathryn Sophia in last year’s Kentucky Oaks with Land Over Sea.

PARADISE WOODS – Trainer Richard Mandella reported from Santa Anita Sunday morning that his assistant, Alex Bisono, had once again galloped their Santa Anita Oaks (GI) winner Paradise Woods a mile and a half that morning at the Arcadia track as her final West Coast prep for this Friday’s Kentucky Oaks (GI).

The lightly raced daughter of Union Rags was slated to board an airplane early Monday morning and jet east to Louisville for her date in the $1 million Oaks, considered by most to be the premier race nationally for 3-year-old fillies.

Flavian Prat, the California-based rider who has handled Paradise Woods in her three starts, will once again be aboard Friday.

Mandella, who never has won the Run for the Lillies, has a plane scheduled this afternoon from Los Angeles. He and Paradise Woods will set up shop at Barn 42 on the Churchill Downs backside.

SAILOR’S VALENTINE – After arriving Saturday afternoon from Keeneland, Semaphore Racing LLC and Homewrecker Racing LLC’s Ashland (GI) winner Sailor’s Valentine galloped a circuit of the Churchill Downs main track at 8:30 a.m. Sunday under exercise rider Kelly Wheeler for trainer Eddie Kenneally.

Eleven years ago, Kenneally entered the Kentucky Oaks (GI) with another well-regarded Ashland winner, Bushfire, who was owned by Homewrecker’s Ron and Ricki Rashinski. After a tumultuous trip and finishing third across the wire, she was disqualified to sixth. She followed that up with two Grade I victories in New York and was a year-end Eclipse Award finalist.

“She’s peaking at the right time and there are plenty of similarities between her and Bushfire,” Kenneally said. “They both got started in the fall of their 2-year-old years, with Bushfire not starting until November and this filly starting in October, where she became a TDN Rising Star in an excellent Keeneland win. That was one of the reasons we ran her in the Ashland.

“I bought both horses. Bushfire only cost $35,000 as a yearling and Sailor’s Valentine was $100,000,” he continued. “They’re very similar in talent and depending on how she runs Friday, I think she could go on to the Grade I races that Bushfire won in New York.”

In six starts, Sailor’s Valentine has two wins and two seconds. She faced Kentucky Oaks rival Farrell in her second start, a fourth-place finish in the $80,000 Rags to Riches Stakes at Churchill Downs, finishing two lengths behind that foe.

SALTY – Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII) winner Salty jogged Sunday morning for trainer Mark Casse.

“The first time Salty worked for us I was wowed,” assistant trainer Norm Casse said. “I like to hold judgment until horses can prove it to me in the afternoons but immediately I knew that we had a very serious contender for the Kentucky Oaks.”

The daughter of Quality Road is scheduled to jog Monday morning.

TEQUILITA – Dorothy Matz’s Tequilita returned to the track Sunday morning two days after putting in her final half-mile work for the Kentucky Oaks. She galloped one mile and schooled in the paddock with regular exercise rider Jo Saville aboard.

“We’re happy with her,” trainer Michael Matz said. “She did fine this morning.”

TORRENT – Westrock Stable LLC’s Torrent, currently sitting at No. 15 on the Oaks leaderboard, put in a sharp work Sunday morning, breezing a half mile in :47.60 under former jockey Greta Kuntzweiler. The daughter of Blame is still in need of one defection to make the Kentucky Oaks field.

“It was a smooth, fast work,” trainer Ron Moquett said of the move that was the eighth fastest of 61 at the distance. “Just what I wanted.”

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VEXATIOUS – Calumet Farm's Vexatious went for an easy jog once around the one-mile main track at 9:15 a.m., just before the dirt surface closed early to make way for turf workers. Hall of Fame trainer Neil Drysdale said he is pleased with his filly’s conditioning.

“No we just need 12 or 13 scratches and we’ll be in business,” the trainer quipped. Joking aside, Drysdale believes the regally bred Giant's Causeway filly is meant for Grade I success. He intended on the Kentucky Oaks for her from the time she broke her maiden at Del Mar in November. They got a late start in 2017 because of bad weather in Los Angeles and had to catch up by giving her three races in five weeks, starting with a 3-year-old allowance debut on March 9 against colts, won by Derby contender Battle of Midway.

“There was nothing else so we had to run against colts,” Drysdale said. “We were thinking this so we needed to get rolling and we didn't want to run against Unique Bella first time out.”

WICKED LICK – Lee Mauberret’s Wicked Lick had a regularly scheduled walk day Sunday at trainer Brendan Walsh’s barn. Runner-up to Oaks rival Farrell in the Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) in her most recent start, Wicked Lick is the only filly among the Oaks probable to have started her career on grass.

“She is a big-framed filly that wanted two turns and that is why she started on the grass (at Ellis Park),” Walsh said. “She broke her maiden at Churchill and then we tried her in a stake (the Jessamine-GIII) at Keeneland and she didn’t like the course.”

Wicked Lick's dirt debut was at a one-turn mile at Churchill Downs but after that it was all two-turn tests at the Fair Grounds with Oaks rider Brian Hernandez Jr. aboard.

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 (Julien Leparoux), Ever So Clever (Luis Contreras), Farrell (Channing Hill), Jordan’s Henny (Joe Rocco Jr.), Lockdown (Jose Ortiz), Miss Sky Warrior (Paco Lopez), Mopotism (Mario Gutierrez), Paradise Woods (Flavien Prat), Sailor’s Valentine (Corey Lanerie), Salty (Joel Rosario), Tequilita (Luis Saez), Vexatious (Kent Desormeaux), Wicked Lick (Brian Hernandez Jr.).

Next up in order of preference: Torrent (TBA), Summer Luck (TBA).

KNOWN WORKOUT SCHEDULE

MONDAY – Hence (Steve Asmussen, Barn 38, TBA), Lookin At Lee (Asmussen, Barn 38, TBA), Untrapped (Asmussen, Barn 38, TBA)

KNOWN ARRIVAL SCHEDULES

MONDAY (BY VAN FROM MARYLAND) – Irish War Cry (Graham Motion, Barn 41)

MONDAY (BY VAN FROM KEENELAND) – Daddys Lil Darling (Kenny McPeek, Barn 7)

MONDAY (BY PLANE FROM CALIFORNIA) – Masochistic (Ron Ellis, Barn 39); Bal A Bali (Richard Mandella, Barn 42); Paradise Woods (Richard Mandella, Barn 42); Conquest Farenheit (Peter Miller, Barn 43); Richards Boy (Peter Miller, Barn 43); Solid Wager (Peter Miller, Barn 43); Storm the Hill (Peter Miller, Barn 43); Dennmans Call (Doug O’Neill, Barn 41); Mopotism (Doug O’Neill, Barn 41); What What What (Doug O’Neill, Barn 41); Gormley (John Shirreffs, Barn 42); Royal Mo (John Shirreffs, Barn 42).

WEDNESDAY (BY PLANE FROM CALIFORNIA) – Finest City (Ian Kruljac, Barn 24); Ritzy A.P. (Dan Blacker, 9); Union Strike (Mick Ruis, Barn 24).

PROSPECTIVE FIELDS FOR UPCOMING STAKES

$400,000 ALYSHEBA (GII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 2, race Friday, May 5) – Probable: American Freedom, Behesht, Bird Song, Breaking Lucky, December Seven, El Huerfano, Honorable Duty, International Star, Noble Bird

$300,000 LA TROIENNE (G1) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 2, race Friday, May 5) – Probable: Big World, Eskenformoney, Impasse, Paid Up Subscriber, Streamline, Walkabout
$200,000 EIGHT BELLES (GII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 2, race Friday, May 5) – Probable: Benner Island, Cajun Delta Dawn, China Grove, Florida Fabulous, Ghalia, I'mluckygirl, Let It Ride Mom, Lovely Bernadette, Mopotism, Phone Chick, Pretty City Dancer, Summer Luck, Union Strike, What What What. Possible: Someday Soon

$150,000 EDGEWOOD (GIII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 2, race Friday, May 5) – Probable: Bernadiva, Dream Dancing, Emphatically, India Mantuana, My Sweet Stella, Purely A Dream, Stallion Heiress, Storm the Hill, Sweeping Paddy, You Missed It

$150,000 TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (GIII) (Entries taken Tuesday, May 2, race Friday, May 5) – Probable: Black Bear, Derek’s Smile, Green Mask, Holding Gold, Partly Mocha, Power Alert, Pure Sensation, Tell All You Know, Why Two

$500,000 WOODFORD RESERVE TURF CLASSIC (GI) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 3, race Saturday, May 6) – Probable: Bal A Bali, Ballagh Rocks, Beach Patrol, Can'thelpbelieving, Conquest Panthera, Divisidero, Enterprising, Flatlined, Kaigun, Kasaqui, Oscar Nominated

$300,000 HUMANA DISTAFF (GI) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 3, race Saturday, May 6) – Probable: Carina Mia, Finest City, Paulassilverlining

$500,000 CHURCHILL DOWNS (GII) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 3, race Saturday, May 6) – Probable: Awesome Slew, Clearly Now, Denman’s Call, Limousine Liberal, Masochistic, Solid Wager, Tarpy’s Zapper, Tom’s Ready

$300,000 CHURCHILL DISTAFF TURF MILE (GII) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 3, race Saturday, May 6) – Probable: Believe In Bertie, Harmonize, Linda, Miss Temple City, Mississippi Delta, Roca Rojo

$300,000 AMERICAN TURF (GII) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 3, race Saturday, May 6) – Probable: Big Score, Conquest Farenheit, Holiday Stone, Kitten’s Cat, La Coronel, Made You Look, Oscar Performance, Parlor, Ritzy A.P.

$250,000 PAT DAY MILE (GIII) (Entries taken Wednesday, May 3, race Saturday, May 6) – Probable: Bitumen, Bobby On Fleck, Chief Know It All, Colonelsdarktemper, Excitations, Guest Suite, Impressive Edge, No Dozing, Rapid Dial, Rockin Rudy, Sonic Mule, Uncontested, Warrior’s Club, Wild Shot, You’re To Blame

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT …

DERBYGIVES.COM 50/50 RAFFLE – The Churchill Downs Incorporated Foundation will host a trio of nationwide online 50/50 charitable raffle drawings on Thurby (May 4), Kentucky Oaks Day (May 5) and Kentucky Derby Day (May 6) to help raise money for its charitable initiatives, including Thoroughbred aftercare; arts and educational opportunities for stable area employees; and breast and ovarian cancer research and prevention. Raffle tickets are on sale now at www.DerbyGives.com for $5 in jurisdictions where online wagering is permitted. The winner will receive half of each day’s sale and the other half will go toward the charitable initiative. The Churchill Downs Incorporated Foundation has donated more than $2.2 million and thousands of volunteer hours to charitable partners, including more than $740,000 for education and prevention of breast cancer and more than $140,000 to Thoroughbred retirement aftercare.

ENHANCED APP FOR ON-TRACK GUESTS – Churchill Downs Racetrack has launched a new version of its on-track mobile app to provide guests with additional features and information to enhance their experience at the racetrack and The Kentucky Derby presented by Yum! Brands. The new features offer fans easy access to equine, racing and wagering information, as well as up-to-date information about each day’s events and news. Additionally, guests can wager from their mobile device; find parking and get directions to seating locations; skip food and beverage lines in seats where Express Pickup or In-Seat Delivery is offered; and buy, manage and scan mobile admission tickets. The updated app is available at iTunes at https://appsto.re/us/USS6bb.i and the Google Play Store at https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.venuenext.churchilldowns&hl=en.
WORKOUT VIDEOS

Sunday, April 30, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8ZZUYbTe2A

Saturday, April 29, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kxsPlKI4Uo

Friday, April 28, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRX3vhcIk6k

Thursday, April 27, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFEIUxoKKLs

Wednesday, April 26, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwvX6FhLHe4

Tuesday, April 25, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MULqY6_yM0

Monday, April 24, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uF3Fs4JUYkM&t=1s

Sunday, April 23, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40LNE7itWks

Saturday, April 22, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97zKsR_qbU

PAST PERFORMANCES COURTESY OF BRISNET.COM

Kentucky Derby:

Kentucky Oaks:

Both Derby & Oaks:

TWINSPIRES.COM “TURF TALK” WITH GARY YOUNG

Saturday, April 29, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_uQP4sfWo10

Friday, April 28, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPe2aWoz_to&feature=youtu.be&a

-END-