ASMUSSEN TRIO, SONNETEER WORK TOWARD DERBY 143;
GORMLEY, ROYAL MO ARRIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, May 1, 2017) – Trainer Steve Asmussen’s three Kentucky Derby hopefuls turned in half-mile works Monday morning at Churchill Downs as did Sonneteer for trainer Keith Desormeaux.

The first Asmussen runner to work was Untrapped, who covered the four furlongs in :50.40. Next up for the Hall of Fame trainer was Lookin At Lee, who worked in :50.20. Both of those works were over a track labeled as “sloppy” following overnight rain.

Following the 8 o’clock track maintenance renovation break, with the track labeled as “good,” Hence worked a half-mile in :48.40.

Completing the morning workers was Sonneteer, who covered the distance with a best-of-22 time of :47.

Arriving at Churchill Downs Monday afternoon after a flight from California were Kentucky Derby hopefuls Gormley and Royal Mo for trainer John Shirreffs as well as Kentucky Oaks contenders Paradise Woods for trainer Richard Mandella and Mopotism for trainer Doug O’Neill.

KENTUCKY DERBY NOTES

ALWAYS DREAMING/PATCH/TAPWRIT – It was time for a bit of adjustment with one of the Todd Pletcher trio of Kentucky Derby runners and it started early Monday morning.

The duo of Patch and Tapwrit would later take advantage of the 8:30-8:45 Derby/Oaks special training time, but first came Always Dreaming onto the track just after it opened at 5:45. He was the “adjustable” one.

The first adjustment notable with the Florida Derby (G1) winner was that he had a new exercise rider attached in old pro Nick Bush, who, come this August, will have been a Pletcher stable mainstay for 10 years. Also changed with the dark son of Bodemeister were the reins used to guide/control him. He now sported what are called “draw reins,” which are longer than a regular set and used in special circumstances.

“The reins basically give the rider more leverage,” Pletcher explained. “It allows him to control his head more; to take it down. Nick (Bush) is our draw rein specialist. That’s why he’s up.”

Always Dreaming, a “good-feeling” horse to start, has been feeling especially good over the past few days while as he gears up for the Derby, which will be his first start in five weeks. It’s one of those “good problems” for a trainer to have, but one that has to be controlled so that racing energy is saved.

Bush had a pony at his side when he took his colt onto the big Churchill Downs track that was “sloppy” thanks to rain storms during the night in Louisville. He then set off on his own and took him “wire-to-wire” one time around the oval, working hard to keep his charge’s head down as the colt pulled and struggled just a bit with his new arrangement.

“Oh, he’s feeling plenty good,” Bush said afterward. “In fact he’s all but jumping out of his skin. But he came back to me some as we went along. He was better with it. I think he was getting the idea. Come tomorrow, he’ll be better yet. He’ll get it and we’re going to be fine.”

Pletcher agreed with his rider’s assessment. “He’ll be better tomorrow. It’s going to be OK,” he said.

Always Dreaming has been robust in his training and racing since Pletcher took him over following a pair of starts last summer in New York. In three outings this year, all under star rider John Velazquez, he has won his races by wide-open lengths, culminating in a five-length tally in the Florida Derby. Since then he’s fired a series of bullet works, most recently at Churchill last Friday with Velazquez up. Naturally enough, the Hall of Fame rider once again will be attached come Derby 143, his 19th time in the Run for the Roses.

Pletcher’s other two Derby starters galloped roughly a mile and three eighths on their own just after 8:30 with regular exercise riders Isabelle Bourez (Patch) and Silvio Pioli (Tapwrit) on board. They both went strongly – no draw reins required -- and drew a thumbs up from the trainer following the exercise. Tyler Gaffalione will handle Patch on Saturday, while Jose Ortiz has the call on Tapwrit.

Ortiz will be making his third Kentucky Derby start; Gaffalione his first.

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BATTLE OF MIDWAY – WinStar Farm and Don Alberto Stable’s Santa Anita Derby (G1) runner-up Battle of Midway has settled in nicely at Churchill Downs, impressing Jerry Hollendorfer’s East Coast assistant Christina Jelm, who has been getting to know the Smart Strike colt this week since his arrival from Southern California.

“He’s taken everything in stride since he’s been here,” Jelm said. “He loves the people, he likes the attention, he likes the commotion. He’s a very alert horse and nothing seems to faze him at all.”

Battle of Midway was on the track during the Kentucky Oaks and Derby training session for a 1 ½-mile gallop under regular exercise rider Edgar Rodriguez.

“He stood in the gates, jogged over to the paddock, walked through paddock, and then he galloped nice and easy,” Jelm said. “His ears were pricked and he was looking around. He did everything perfectly.”

CLASSIC EMPIRE/STATE OF HONOR – Champion 2-year-old Classic Empire, ridden by Martin Rivera, and Florida Derby (G1) runner-up State of Honor, with Orlando Cross up, galloped 1 ½ miles at 8:30 Monday morning for trainer Mark Casse.

Following his half-length victory in the April 15 Arkansas Derby (GI), Classic Empire could be the favorite for this year’s Kentucky Derby.

“I love being the favorite,” Casse said. “That doesn’t bother me at all. We’re happy to be where we are given the last couple of months. Let’s just enjoy the ride.”

“This is home,” Casse continued. “This is where I started. I remember when my dad brought me here at 18 years old and we had three horses in the Receiving Barn. To be in this position is incredible.”

FAST AND ACCURATE – Spiral (GIII) winner Fast and Accurate, a stakes winner on turf and Polytrack who has yet to win on dirt, walked the shedrow at Trackside Louisville one day after his final Kentucky Derby (GI) breeze. The son of champion juvenile Hansen, also trained by Mike Maker, breezed five furlongs on Sunday at Churchill Downs in 1:01.20 with jockey Channing Hill aboard. Hill will ride on Saturday.

“He went really well yesterday,” Hill said. “I can’t say that I was surprised, but I definitely had more horse than I thought I would. His workmate (GI-placed Adventist) is a good horse, so that made me even more confident and happy. I let his head go at the eighth pole and he handled the dirt really well.

“It’s exciting to pick him up,” Hill continued. “He’s going to have to run the race of his life to win, but as good as he breezed, it’s not out of the question. He has speed and we will likely go (to the front). I would not mind ‘War Emblem-ing’ the field at all and I know Mike knows how to get one ready.”

GIRVIN — Two days after his final Kentucky Derby (GI) breeze in :59.60 for five furlongs, Brad Grady’s Girvin left Keeneland for Kentucky Equine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Center (KESMARC) to swim. On Sunday, the Joe Sharp-trained Louisiana Derby (GII) winner walked the shedrow.

“He’s doing well,” Sharp said. “He just went for a swim today.”

The son of Tale of Ekati has been battling a right front quarter crack since April 19. He is expected to arrive at Churchill Downs Tuesday evening.

GORMLEY/ROYAL MO – The Mr.-Mrs. Jerry Moss-owned and John Sherriffs-trained duo of Gormley and Royal Mo boarded a plane at Ontario airport outside Los Angeles very early Monday morning to join about a dozen equine mates jetting east for a touchdown in Louisville. They were scheduled to arrive at Barn 42 on the Churchill Downs backside around 1:30 in the afternoon.

Between them, the two colts had accounted for two of the three major placings in the Santa Anita Derby (GI) on April 8 – first place to Gormley and third to Royal Mo.

His victory in the nine-furlong Santa Anita crucible had assured Gormley an assigned spot in the starting gate for Kentucky Derby 143. The third-place finish got Royal Mo close enough to being “in” that he now sits at No. 21 in a 20-horse lineup.

Victor Espinoza will ride Gormley Saturday. Gary Stevens hopes to ride Royal Mo.

Trainer Sherriffs, who is known for — among other things — winning the 2005 Kentucky Derby with Giacomo at 50-1, has made it to town and will join his pair on the backstretch for the run-up to America’s most famous race.

GUNNEVERA – Peacock Racing Stables’ Gunnevera galloped 1 ¼ miles under exercise rider Victor O’Farrel at Churchill Downs Monday morning.

“It was a slow gallop. His last work at Calder (Gulfstream Park West) was very strong. Right now everything is maintenance,” said trainer Antonio Sano, whose trainee breezed five furlongs at Churchill Downs in 1:03.60 last Friday. “I need my horse to be 100 percent for the Derby.”

Solomon Del-Valle, the majority owner of Gunnevera, has been on hand each morning to watch the son of Dialed In’s preparation for Saturday’s Kentucky Derby.

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Training Center in Maryland early Monday morning before being loaded onto a van bound for Churchill Downs with an expected Arkansas Derby in which he wore blinkers for the first time. He will not wear them in the Kentucky Derby.

“An experiment that did not work out. We’re very happy with how he’s training over the Churchill track.”

J BOYS ECHO – Arrived at Churchill Downs Sunday at Fair Hill. Was the last of the trio to make the field after the Saturday defection of Lookin At Lee and was an experiment that did not work out. We’re very happy with how he’s training over the Churchill track.

IRISH WAR CRY – Isabelle de Tomaso’s Irish War Cry walked the shedrow of trainer Graham Motion’s barn at Fair Hill Training Center in Maryland early Monday morning before being loaded onto a van bound for Churchill Downs with an expected arrival time between 4 and 5 p.m.

“I’m very upbeat, but anyone who knows me knows I’m anxious. I want to get him there in one piece. I want him to have a good week,” Motion said prior to boarding a flight to Louisville. “I feel very good about his work and how he’s doing.”

Irish War Cry, who captured the Wood Memorial (GII) at Aqueduct in his most recent start, breezed six furlongs in 1:13.20 Sunday at Fair Hill.

J BOYS ECHO – Gotham (GI) winner J Boys Echo jogged Monday morning at 8:30 for trainer Dale Romans with regular exercise rider Tammy Fox aboard.

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“The heavy lifting is done,” Romans said. “We just want to keep him happy between now and the Derby.”

**McCRAKEN – Whitham Thoroughbreds’** homebred **McCraeken** returned to the track a day after working five furlongs in 1:00.80 for a one-mile jog that included a visit to the starting gate after the morning renovation break.

Trainer **Ian Wilkes** said the gate visit was routine and that McCraken has not had gate issues in his five career starts.

McCraeken may visit the paddock Tuesday.

“I might take him to the paddock, I’m thinking about it,” Wilkes said. “I have a slot to do it Tuesday and I might.”

McCraeken will represent the first Derby starter for the unflappable Wilkes, who served as the exercise rider for 1990 Kentucky Derby winner **Unbridled** and assistant to **Carl Naughton** when **Street Sense** won the 2007 Derby.

Any chance the trainer may “wash out” leading up to Saturday afternoon?

“Nope. I don’t have to run,” Wilkes said.

**Brian Hernandez Jr.**, who has been aboard for all five of McCraken’s races, will be making his second Derby appearance. He finished 12th last year on Tom’s Ready.

“My parents are coming in from Lafayette (Louisiana) tomorrow and spending the week,” Hernandez said. “Last year, they just came up for the day, but this time they will be doing everything and coming out in the mornings.”

**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, just as he’d done the morning prior.

“The horse galloped fine,” trainer **Chad Brown** said. “He’s doing really well.”

A final decision has not been reached on whether the Blue Grass Stakes (GII) runner-up will add blinkers for the first time in the Derby.

“I’m not sure what I’m doing yet,” Brown said.

**SONNETEER – Calumet Farm’s Sonnetteer** had his final work for the Kentucky Derby Monday, breezing a half mile in :47 under jockey **Corey Lanerie**, who was substituting for the horse’s rider, **Kent Desormeaux**, after he had travel problems.

The Midnight Lute colt had splits of :11.80, :23.20, :35.20 and galloped out five furlongs in :59.60 and six furlongs in 1:13.60 over a track labeled as good after the morning renovation break. The half-mile work was the fastest of 22 at the distance Monday.

“It was a good work,” Lanerie said. “(Trainer) **Keith Desormeaux** said he wanted a good stiff work and hopefully he got it. He did everything I asked and seems like a nice laid back horse. He galloped out real nice.”

**THUNDER SNOW – Godolphin Racing’s** homebred **UAE Derby** (Group II) winner **Thunder Snow** remains in quarantine at Barn 17 until late tonight and likely will make his first appearance on the Churchill Downs main track Tuesday morning.

Godolphin representatives declined comment and referred all inquiries to trainer **Saeed bin Suroor**, who is expected to arrive in Louisville in time for Tuesday’s exercise.

**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), **Battle of Midway** (Flavien Prat), **Classic Empire** (Julien Leparoux), **Fast and Accurate** (Channing Hill), **Gormley** (Victor Espinoza), **Gunnevera** (Javier Castellano), **Hence** (Florent Geroux), **Irish War Cry** (Rajiv Maragh), **J Boys Echo** (Luis Saez), **Lookin At Lee** (Corey Lanerie), **McCraeken** (Brian Hernandez Jr.), **Patch** (Tyler Gaffalione), **Practical Joke** (Joel Rosario), **Sonnetteer** (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), jogged back to the finish line before galloping 1 1/4 miles Monday morning under regular exercise rider Dana Barnes.

“She felt really good,” Barnes said. “She was looking around, busy checking out all the people and the new place. It seems like every day she gets a little better, a little happier. She’s a really nice filly and I just love her.”

Last time out the daughter of Quality Road closed from last to finish a clear second in the Santa Anita Oaks but still crossed the finish line nearly 12 lengths behind the surprisingly dominant winner, **Paradise Woods**.

“She’s going to lay a little closer this time,” Barnes said of Abel Tasman. “She’s a little fresher and this long stretch suits her much better than Santa Anita.”

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DADDYS LIL DARLING – Ashland (GI) runner-up Daddys Lil Darling jogged at Keeneland Monday morning for trainer Kenny McPeek.

The filly is scheduled to arrive at McPeek’s Churchill Downs Barn 7 early Monday afternoon.

EVER SO CLEVER – Clearview Stable LLC’s Ever So Clever had an easy day Monday walking the shedrow, one day after working a half mile in :49.80.

Trainer Steve Asmussen reported that the filly came out of her work well and would return to the track Tuesday.

FARRELL – Coffeepot Stables’ homebred multiple GII-winning 3-year-old filly Farrell left Barn 30 at 8:35 a.m. and galloped two miles with three-time Breeders’ Cup-winning trainer Wayne Catalano observing. The daughter of Malibu Moon first jogged with the pony, ridden by Sara Tittle, before breaking off under exercise rider Antonio Ramos.

In the Kentucky Oaks (GI), Farrell will put her four-stakes — all two-turn events — winning streak on the line. She has been ridden in all seven of her starts by Catalano’s son-in-law, jockey Channing Hill. Usually staying in the clear and to the outside in her races, she will be up against an expected large field Friday, where such a tactic may or may not be an option. As a result, post position may become a key component to her success or failure.

Since breaking her maiden in her second start, the half-sister to GI winners J. B.’s Thunder and Carpe Diem has raced between horses only twice, including in November’s $80,000 Rags to Riches, in which she finished third, chasing and defeating subsequent GI winner and Kentucky Oaks competitor Sailor’s Valentine by two lengths into fourth. She lost by 1 1/2 lengths that day to the highly regarded filly Lovely Bernardette, whom she would soundly defeat one race later in the Golden Rod (GII). Both stakes were at Churchill Downs.

Her only other effort in which she raced between horses for any extended period of time was in her least impressive of three stakes victories this year, a 2 3/4-length tally in Fair Grounds’ $150,000 Silverbulletday on Jan. 21.

“The Rags to Riches was kind of weird in how it unfolded,” Hill said. “I ended up chasing and probably going too fast with her and that’s what did it. That was probably more of a problem than the trip itself and I wound up feeling a little better when Sailor’s Valentine came back and won a GI this year. That was actually the first time I thought Farrell could be special because she had to run so fast that day and still didn’t give up and finished strong. In the Golden Rod, she started to figure it out and breezed terrifically before the race. She punched clear that day and kept running. If she runs her Golden Rod race on Friday, I think she could gallop.

“As far as the post, with a filly like her, I am not super concerned,” Hill continued. “I’d like an outside trip for simplicity’s sake. I don’t want to get creative or change anything, but I won’t shy away from an inside spot. I’d like to have the stalking trip I’ve been fortunate to have a couple times this year and getting one of the three inside posts obviously isn’t ideal because I might have to use her more than I’d like. If I could choose, I would say post seven or eight with the speed inside me would be great. In a perfect world, that’s the trip I want. Four out of the last five Oaks winners have had sit-and-pounce trips. I’d like the exact trip of Cathryn Sophia last year and I think she’s fast enough to do it.”

Hill’s only other mount in the Kentucky Oaks was the Catalano-trained Aurelia’s Belle, who finished ninth of 13 behind Untapable in 2014. This year, he also picked up his first Kentucky Derby (GI) mount in Fast and Accurate.

“Farrell likes to eye them up, overpower them and stroll home,” Hill said. “She sometimes gets to looking around, but she never comes off the bridle and I’ve never really had to ask her. That’s why we gallop her out after the wire of the Fair Grounds Oaks.”

JORDAN’S HENNY – Erv Woolsey and Ralph Kinder’s Jordan’s Henny jogged a mile and galloped a mile after the morning renovation break with exercise rider Edgar Cano aboard for trainer Mike Tomlinson.

Tomlinson, who turned 63 Monday and received an early present Saturday night when both of his starters won, watched his Davona Dale (GII) runner-up perform her morning activity over a track labeled as “good” following overnight rain.

Jordan’s Henny finished fifth in the Pocahontas (GII) at Churchill Downs last fall in her only start on an “off” track. Rain is predicted in the Louisville area Thursday and a chance of showers exist for Friday afternoon that could set up “off” conditions.

“That was only her third start,” Tomlinson said of the Pocahontas. “I don’t think it will matter to her. She has matured physically after a little break she got after she broke her maiden at Gulfstream Park (on Dec. 18).

“She grew up physically and mentally and she always runs her race and tries.”

Joe Rocco, who rode both of Tomlinson’s winners Saturday night, has the Oaks mount on Jordan’s Henny.

LOCKDOWN – The Juddmonte Farms homebred Lockdown schooled in the paddock before galloping “about a mile and three-eighths,” according to Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott.

“It was pretty straightforward,” Mott said, adding that she’s never had any paddock or gate issues in any of her races. “Same as yesterday.”

Lockdown is likely to have a blowout through the stretch Tuesday during the Oaks and Derby training session.

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MISS SKY WARRIOR – Streaking multiple GII-winning filly Miss Sky Warrior left Barn 43 at 8:30 a.m. and galloped a strong 1 ½ miles Monday. With trainer Kelly Breen on the lead pony, the homebred Arlene’s Sun Star Stable-owned daughter of First Samurai was ridden by exercise rider Aurelio Gomez.

“Everything went well today,” Breen said. “She’s great. It was a nice gallop.”

Jockey Paco Lopez, who has been a vital part of Breen’s operation and success for a good portion of the past decade, will have the mount on the last-out Gazelle (GII) winner. The two have been together for all six of her starts, including five consecutive victories heading into Friday’s Kentucky Oaks (GI).

“I like for riders to get to know the horses if they’re going to want to ride them,” Breen said. “You can have top-notch riders who know how to win, but if they don’t know your horse, they sometimes won’t mesh well. Paco had made comments in the past about how instrumental a horse like (retired trainee) Pants On Fire was for him when it comes to winning big races and getting to the next level and then the other day he won a graded stakes at Keeneland on a Godolphin horse. He’s a top rider, a young rider, and has guts and confidence. He’s a good part of what we have and I’m always happy to have him on our horses.

“He’s been there in her training and they get along very well,” Breen continued. “Even more than other horses, he’s been there for her. Her regular exercise rider couldn’t be there to breeze her in Florida, so Paco did a lot of her breezes, which is something you don’t usually do with jockeys. Exercise riders often are heavier and have more control of the horses. I had to have a lot of faith in Paco to breeze her.”

Breen also touched on tactics for his speedy 3-year-old, who likely will have to fight for the lead with anticipated race favorite, Santa Anita Oaks (GI) winner Paradise Woods.

“It’s hard to do much handicapping until the PPs and post positions come out, but at the same time you have a speed rider on a speed horse,” he said. “Her general nature is to be up close, anyway, so that’s likely what will happen.”

MOPOTISM – The Uncle Mo filly Mopotism, earmarked for this Friday’s Kentucky Oaks (GI), was en route to the Bluegrass State after boarding a flight out of Ontario Airport outside Los Angeles early Monday morning. The bay filly will join a string of seven other Doug O’Neill-trained runners at Barn 41 on the Churchill Downs backside who are candidates for a series of stakes presented at the track during the upcoming week.

Mopotism will be one of the more seasoned runners in the nine-furlong Oaks with seven starts already under her belt. She’s a two-time winner, including a small stakes at Sunland Park, as well as being stakes-placed twice in graded offerings in Southern California.

Mario Gutierrez, who has ridden Mopotism in five of her seven starts, once again has the call for the $1 million Run for the Lillies.

Mopotism is owned by the Canadian-turned-Californian Paul Reddam. It was the trio of Reddam-O’Neill-Gutierrez who almost pulled off an Oaks triumph last year, though in the end they had to settle for second with Land Over Sea behind Cathryn Sophia.

PARADISE WOODS – Alex Bisono, assistant trainer to Hall of Famer Richard Mandella, was on the scene early Monday morning on the Churchill Downs backstretch making sure arrangements for the stable’s Oaks filly, Paradise Woods, as well as their stakes horse Bal A Bili (BRZ), were in good order at Barn 42. The former jockey also doubles as an exercise rider for the Southern California-based Mandella outfit and will handle those duties during the week in Louisville.

“At one time I had a general good flight out from Los Angeles) and just getting ready for the horses,” Bisono said.

The Mandella duo was among a dozen or so four-legged athletes who boarded a jet at Ontario Airport outside L.A. early Monday morning bound for Kentucky. They were expected to arrive by van from the Louisville International Airport to Churchill around 1:30 p.m.

Paradise Woods, heroine of the Santa Anita Oaks (GI) in romping fashion April 8, will be ridden by the Frenchman-now-riding-in-California Flavien Prat in Friday’s run for the $1 million Kentucky Oaks (GI).

SAILOR’S VALENTINE – Semaphore Racing LLC and Homewrecker Racing LLC’s Sailor’s Valentine left Barn 31 of trainer Eddie Kenneally at 8:30 a.m. Monday and galloped 1 1/2 miles around the Churchill Downs main track with her conditioner watching on horseback. Exercise rider Kelly Wheeler was aboard the gray filly.

The daughter of Mizzen Mast exits a victory in the Ashland (GI) on April 8 at Keeneland, a course over which she owns a pair of wins from six career starts. Previous to the Ashland, she wintered in Florida and made two starts, on Jan. 7 and March 12, to kick off her 3-year-old season. As a juvenile, she made two starts at Churchill Downs, finishing fourth and second in one-turn events.

“It was a huge step up in company to run in a race like the Ashland coming out of a turf allowance, but we were thrilled with the way she worked and handled Keeneland once she got up to Kentucky from Florida,” Kenneally said. “She seemed to find a new lease on life. She had a phenomenal work before the race that was quick, but she did it really easily. That, along with the race coming up a little light, was why we thought she would run well in the Ashland.
“Everything has been positive since she ran,” Kenneally continued. “She’s held her weight. Her appetite and mind are as good as ever and she’s moving as soundly as a horse can move. Hopefully she’ll continue to improve. Based on the numbers, she needs to improve to get a piece of the action, but we believe she is.

“The biggest factor is knowing what to do and when not to do too much with these young horses in the day-to-day training,” he concluded. “You need to know your horses and it helps if you pay attention to their normal good behavior and know what that looks like. Keeping that is key when it comes to feeding, training and preparing for races like this.”

SALTY – Gary Barber, Baccari Racing Stable LLC. and Chester Prince’s Salty galloped 1 ½ miles Monday morning under E.J. Bowler for trainer Mark Casse.

“She had nothing go her way in the Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII) and still won impressively,” Casse said. “I think they have to beat us.”

SUMMER LUCK – Currently No. 16 on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard, Summer Luck galloped at 8:30 Monday morning with Froylan Garcia aboard for trainer Mark Casse.

TEQUILITA – Dorothy Alexander Matz’s Tequilita galloped a mile under exercise rider Jo Robinson Monday morning at Churchill Downs in preparation for a start in Friday’s Kentucky Oaks (G1).

“She’s doing fine. She worked nicely the other day. I think she’s plenty fit enough,” said trainer Michael Matz, who sent his wife’s homebred filly to the Churchill track last Friday for a half-mile breeze in :48.

After winning the seven-furlong Forward Gal (GII) at Gulfstream Park in her 2017 debut Feb. 4, Tequilita closed from fifth to finish second behind Oaks contender Salty in the 1 1/16-mile Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII) April 1.

“It was the first time she went around two turns, and it might have been a bit my fault,” Matz said. “I told Luis (Saez) to wait until the head of the stretch before he moved on her. He said ‘Salty went by me so fast, I didn’t have time to catch her.’

“But I think Salty is a very good horse. It was our filly’s first time around two turns, and she was running at the end. We wanted to see if she could handle two turns, and I thought she did.”

TORRENT – Westrock Stable LLC.’s Torrent, sitting at No. 15 on the Oaks leaderboard, walked the shedrow at trainer Ron Moquett’s barn a day after breezing a half-mile in :47.60.

VEXATIOUS – Calumet Farm’s Vexatious galloped 1 1/2 miles at 9:30 a.m. under exercise rider Freddy Quevero.

“Everything’s fine,” Hall of Fame trainer Neil Drysdale said.

The Giant’s Causeway filly typically takes to the track incognito at the end of training hours, without the pink saddle towel that makes Oaks contenders easy to identify. Drysdale referred to his preference for hiding in plain sight as a “superstition” that dates back to prior visits with his two Oaks winners, Bold’n Determined (1980) and Princess Rooney (1983), as well as 2000 Derby winner Fusaichi Pegasus, among others. Those successes all came well before the introduction of custom, race-specific saddle towels and the special Oaks and Derby training session.

WICKED LICK – Lee Mauberret’s homebred Wicked Lick galloped a little less than a mile under exercise rider Leo Garcia over a “good” track after the morning renovation break.

Trainer Brendan Walsh said the Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) runner-up likely would go a mile and a quarter Tuesday and may stand in the gate.

Walsh said he would not be concerned if the track for Friday’s Oaks happened to turn up less than fast.

“I don’t think it would be an issue for her,” Walsh said of Wicked Lick, who was second in the Silverbulletday at Fair Grounds in her only off-track start. “I think it might bother some others.”

Brian Hernandez Jr., who has ridden Wicked Lick in six of her eight starts, has the Oaks mount.

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 ARRIVAL SCHEDULES

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 Huertano, Honorable Duty, International Star, Noble Bird

$300,000 LA TROIENNE (GI) (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

Monday, May 1, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bhvz_ZrAMII

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

Saturday, April 29, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kksPlKI4Uo

Friday, April 28, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRX3vhclk6k

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

Wednesday, April 26, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwvX6FlhLHe4

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

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

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

Saturday, April 22, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97zKxR_qb0U

PAST PERFORMANCES COURTESY OF BRISNET.COM

Kentucky Derby:

Kentucky Oaks:

Both Derby & Oaks:

-more-
TWINSPIRES.COM “TURF TALK” WITH GARY YOUNG

Sunday, April 30, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp8noanH8_M

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-