FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CHURCHILL HORSEMEN GIVE THEIR Preakness Stakes PICKS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, May 19, 2017) – The pageantry of the 142nd running of the $1.5 million Preakness Stakes (GI), the Middle Jewel of the Triple Crown headlined by the Kentucky Derby winner Always Dreaming, will be featured prominently at Churchill Downs on Saturday with the simulcast of the 1 3/16-mile race scheduled for 6:45 p.m. (all times Eastern).

Churchill Downs admission gates will open Saturday at 11:15 a.m., the first of 11 races is 12:45 p.m. and the finale is scheduled for 5:51 p.m. Video and audio of the races from Baltimore’s Pimlico Race Course will be shown on select television monitors throughout the facility, and NBC’s coverage of the 1 3/16-mile Preakness, which is Race 13 of 14 at Pimlico, will be broadcast on the massive Big Board after the last race.

General Admission is $5, reserved seating is $10 and reserved dining packages are $47. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets.

Guests at Churchill Downs will have an opportunity to enjoy a taste of the Preakness with The Black-Eyed Susan, the event’s official drink that will be available at locations throughout the track (complete with commemorative glass). Also, Levy Restaurants plans to sell Crab Cake Sandwiches on the second floor of the Clubhouse.

Last call for drinks will be “Call to the Post” for the Preakness, and all dining rooms will remain open through the big race.

The following are Preakness opinions from select horsemen around Churchill Downs:

Retired Trainer Tom Bohannan, winner of 1992 (Pine Bluff) and 1993 Preakness (Prairie Bayou): “I miss not being at Pimlico with a good horse. Always Dreaming is the one to beat.”

Trainer “Buff” Bradley: “Always Dreaming looks tough. I’ve liked him since I first saw him this winter in Florida but got off him for the Derby because of how aggressive he was training.”

Trainer Pat Byrne: “I think it will be tough to beat Always Dreaming. I think the way that he won the Derby that horse has a legitimate chance to win the Triple Crown.”

Trainer Brad Cox: “Always Dreaming will be tough to beat. I thought Cloud Computing looked good in his training but I don’t know how far he wants to go.”

Trainer Mark Danner: “As soon as I saw Always Dreaming train I knew he would be tough to beat. He’s full of energy. I think he’ll win again.”

Trainer Greg Foley: “Always Dreaming and Classic Empire look to be the horses to beat but we’ll be rooting on (Kenny) McPeek’s horse (Senior Investment). We have his 2-year-old full sister that Tamaroak Partners purchased that is coming to our barn next week.”

Trainer Wes Hawley: “Always Dreaming is the one to beat. Classic Empire should improve and even Lookin At Lee deserves another shot.”

Trainer Dale Romans: “Todd (Pletcher) will be tough to beat with Always Dreaming. He’s a good guy so I’ll be cheering him on.”

Trainer Mike Tomlinson: “I don’t think I could bet against Always Dreaming.”

Trainer Ian Wilkes: “I think Classic Empire will sit a closer trip. Conquest Mo Money will probably have to go from the outside post so it will be interesting how close Always Dreaming is to the pace.”

WEEP NO MORE RETURNS FROM NINE-MONTH LAYOFF IN MATRON – Ashbrook Farm’s Weep No More, winner of the 2016 Ashland (Grade I), returns to the racetrack in Saturday’s Matron (GIII) at Churchill Downs for trainer Rusty Arnold II.

“She’s been training great,” assistant trainer Jack Bohannon said. “It’s a bit of a tough spot to come back in.”

Weep No More was a $120,000 purchase from the 2015 OBS March Sale and has earned $407,269, including three victories in seven starts.

“Obviously bringing a horse off the layoff fitness will be a question,” Bohannon said. “The way she’s been training, though, has me very excited for her future.”

The 4-year-old filly by Mineshaft was a seventh-place finisher in the 2016 Kentucky Oaks and tried her hand in the Coaching Club American Oaks (GI) and Alabama (GI) at Saratoga. She has been on the sideline since.

Arnold also entered two-time winner Improv, who will stretch out from sprint races.

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The complete Matron field from the rail out (with jockeys and morning line odds): **Weep No More** (Joe Rocco Jr., 4-1), **She's a True Beauty** (Shaun Bridgmohan, 20-1), **Lots o' Lex** (Jesus Castanon, 30-1), **Tiger Moth** (Gabriel Saez, 10-1), **Lady Fog Horn** (Albin Jimenez, 8-1), **Belle Hill** (ChrisLanderos, 15-1), **Curlin's Approval** (Edgard Zayas, 8-5), **Divine Elegance** (Miguel Mena, 12-1), **Naylor** (Malcolm Franklin, 20-1), **Improvis** (James Graham, 10-1), **Walkabout** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 10-1), **Miss Mo Kelly** (David Flores, 20-1) and **Crooked Stick** (Sophie Doyle, 20-1). All entrants will carry 122 pounds except for Curlin's Approval, who will tote 126.

**MO DIDDLEY IMPRESSES IN CAREER DEBUT** – At odds of 2-5 in Thursday's opener, Mo Diddley did not disappoint bettors by winning a 4 ½-furlong maiden special weight for 2-year-olds for trainer Mark Casse.

“He ran very well for his debut,” assistant trainer Norm Casse said. “Being a New York-bred we'll keep our options open at Belmont but the Bashford Manor (Grade III) looks like a logical spot.”

Mo Diddley, ridden by jockey Florent Geroux, veered outward at the start but made up ground to lock heads with Make Noise at the quarter pole. The two battled to the wire with Mo Diddley prevailing by a head.

The 2-year-old colt by Uncle Mo, owned by Gary Barber and Cheyenne Stables, was purchased for $450,000 at the 2016 Fasig Tipton August sale.

**WORK TAB** – There were 90 horses who made the Churchill Downs’ work tab Friday morning that included La Troienne (Grade I) victor Big World, who breezed a half-mile in :48.60 for trainer Tom Amoss. Amoss also breezed graded stakes winner Mo Tom a half-mile in :48.40. Following her fifth-place finish in the Kentucky Oaks, Salty stretched her legs breezing an easy half-mile in :50.40 for trainer Mark Casse. The Casse barn also breezed multiple graded stakes winner Awesome Slew four furlongs in :51. Multiple graded stakes placed Conquest Panthera clipped through a half-mile in :48.40 and graded stakes winner Holding Gold breezed a half-mile in :49. Three-year-old Silver Dust, who was involved in Oaklawn Park’s series of Road to the Kentucky Derby prep races, returned to the work tab in an eye-catching half-mile move in :47.60 with jockey Corey Lanerie aboard. … Third-place finisher in the Churchill Downs (GII), Tom's Ready, breezed four furlongs in :50. … Multiple stakes winner Athena, who was most recently the runner-up in the Roxelana, breezed an easy half-mile in :50. … Guest Suite, probable entrant for the June 17 Matt Winn (GIII), worked five furlongs in 1:01.40 with Brian Hernandez Jr. aboard. The complete Churchill Downs work tab is available here: churchilldowns.com/horsemen/racing/workouts.

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – Advance wagering on Saturday’s Preakness Stakes will be offered all day Friday at Churchill Downs. … Friday’s feature race at Pimlico is the $250,000 Black-Eyed Susan (GII) for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/8 miles. It goes as Race 11 at approximately 4:50 p.m. (all times Eastern). Similar to the Oaks/Derby Double, Pimlico will offer the Black-Eyed Susan/Preakness double, which requires bettors to pick the winners of both races. … On Friday’s nine-race card at Churchill Downs, there is a $17,921 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot and $3,540 carryover in the $1 Super Hi-5 wager. The Single 6 starts in Race 4 with a post time of 2:13 p.m. and the Super Hi-5 is in Race 9 with a post time of 4:51 p.m. … Best wishes to several Churchill Downs-based jockeys competing this weekend at Pimlico including Jesus Castanon, Florent Geroux, Corey Lanerie, Julien Leparoux and Ricardo Santana Jr. … Sunday features a Stakes & Eggs brunch in the Stakes Room for $45 ($22 for children). … “Inside Churchill Downs,” co-hosted by Churchill Downs Racetrack’s John Asher, Darren Rogers and Kevin Kerstein, airs Saturday throughout the Spring Meet from 10-11 a.m. on ESPN 680/105.7. Saturday’s Preakness preview will include guests Daily Racing Form’s Marty McGee and trainer Brendan Walsh (Multiplier) via telephone from Baltimore. … Barn Notes will not be published Saturday, but return Sunday.

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