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Caldwell Firing on All Cylinders to Start Spring Meet

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, May 21, 2017) – Through the first 13 days of the 38-day Spring Meet, Texas native J.R. Caldwell is making his presence known at Churchill Downs with an impressive nine victories in 14 starts (64.3%), including a trio of wins on Saturday’s 11-race card.

“We are very blessed for the opportunity we’ve had so far in Kentucky,” Caldwell said. “We love it here.”

This is Caldwell’s second try on the Kentucky circuit. He had a full stable during Churchill Downs’ 2015 Spring Meet but could only manage three victories from 48 starters and did not return in 2016.

“Our goal is to build our Arkansas and Kentucky divisions,” Caldwell said.

Along with his string of horses at Churchill Downs, Caldwell has horses at Texas’ Lone Star Park and Louisiana’s Evangeline Downs. Caldwell stays primarily in Texas and has left his Kentucky division under the watchful eye of assistant trainer Kylie Salisbury in Barn 21.

“We plan on staying the entire year in Kentucky,” Caldwell said. “Now we just need a (Kentucky) Derby horse and clients to keep in Kentucky with fast horses.”

Caldwell currently has 558 career victories through 3,866 starters (14.4%) and earnings of $9,116,528.

None of Caldwell’s well-placed Spring Meet winners have been higher than odds of 4-1:

- **Bold Shot** ($3.80 payoff for $2 to win),
- **Greeleys Charm** ($6.40),
- **Cheyenne Blues** ($7.40),
- **Ship Disturber** ($10.80),
- **Dan the Go to Man** ($10.60),
- **Learning Curve** ($3.80),
- **Merilore** ($4.20),
- **Manhattan Mischief** ($2.40) and
- **Bob’s Gone Wild** ($6.60).

Caldwell’s Spring Meet record heading into Sunday’s action was 14-9-1-1—$143,235, which led all trainers. He was followed by Brad Cox (30-8-2-4—$613,856), Steve Asmussen (40-7-4-5—$681,922), Mark Casse (35-6-3-3—$554,767) and Ian Wilkes (26-6-2-3—$492,427).

FINLEY’S LUCKYCHARM PUTS IN FINAL BREEZE FOR WINNING COLORS – Carl Moore Management LLC’s Finley’sluckycharm, who was most recently a three-quarter-length winner in the April 29 Roxelana Stakes at Churchill Downs, put in her final half-mile breeze before Saturday’s $100,000 Winning Colors (Grade III) by clocking :48.40 on Saturday morning.

“She’s been doing really well,” trainer Bret Calhoun said. “We were just a little bit short in her training Derby week and that’s why we ran her in the Roxelana and not any of the graded stakes.”

Finley’sluckycharm was the runner-up in the Dec. 26 La Brea (GI) at Santa Anita in her first test against Grade I company. The 4-year-old daughter of ‘Twirling Candy has a perfect four wins in four starts at Churchill Downs.

“The Winning Colors is the perfect set up after the Roxelana,” Calhoun said. “With the Chicago Handicap (GIII) moving to Churchill, that could be a great steppingstone if she runs well to keep her at home.”

The $100,000 Chicago Handicap will be staged for the 28th time on Saturday, June 24, but the first time at Churchill Downs. Previously, the seven-furlong race was held at Churchill’s sister track, Arlington Park near Chicago.

The six-furlong Winning Colors and the $65,000-added Keertana (fillies and mares at 1 ½ miles on turf) headline Saturday’s card. Entries will be drawn for both races Wednesday. In addition to Finley’sluckycharm, another possible Winning Colors entrant is the Brad Cox-trained Game Time Decision. The 4-year-old filly was a second-level allowance winner at Oaklawn Park this winter and most recently finished third against fellow Illinois-breds in the $45,950 Third Chance Handicap at Hawthorne Race Course.

DIVISIDERO TO TARGET GRADE I MANHATTAN ON BELMONT STAKES UNDERCARD – Two-time Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (Grade I) winner Divisidero will target the June 10 Manhattan (GI) on the Belmont Stakes undercard, according to trainer “Buff” Bradley.

“He’s been doing really well out of the Woodford,” Bradley said. “We took it easy on him the last two weeks and he’ll probably breeze next week. Derby weekend has been really good to us. It’s always fun to win at home.”

The 5-year-old son of Kitten’s Joy has racked up $1,047,950 in earnings through 13 starts, five wins, two seconds and three thirds.

“It would certainly be nice to get him to the Breeders’ Cup this year (at Del Mar),” Bradley said. “It boosts the entire barn’s morale when you have such a talented horse like this.”

The Manhattan would be Divisidero’s second trip to the Big Apple. He finished seventh in the 2015 Belmont Derby (GI).
WORK TAB – Rain hit the Louisville area Saturday night and Sunday morning so many trainers took advantage of Saturday’s mostly dry track conditions with 120 horses filling the work tab, including a :48.80 half-mile breeze by Breeders’ Cup Distaff (GI) third-place finisher Forever Unbridled. This was Forever Unbridled’s second workout since the Nov. 4 race. … Eight Belles (GII) winner Benner Island returned to the work tab with a sharp :47.20 move for trainer Brad Cox. … Trainer “Buff” Bradley’s The Player clipped through a half-mile work in :47.80. The 4-year-old Indiana Derby (GII) runner-up is targeting a start towards the end of the meet, according to Bradley. … Alysheba (GII) winner Bird Song breezed an easy half-mile in :50. The 4-year-old son of Unbridled’s Song is targeting the June 17 Stephen Foster Handicap (GI) at Churchill Downs, according to trainer Ian Wilkes. … The complete Churchill Downs work tab is available here: churchilldowns.com/horsemen/racing/workouts.

DOWN THE STRETCH – There is a $36,239 carryover in the 20-cent Single-6 Jackpot on Sunday at Churchill Downs. The sequence starts in Race 5 with a post time of 2:43 p.m. (all times Eastern). There also is a three-day carryover of $7,298 in the $1 Super Hi-5 wager in the 10th and final race of the week with a post time of 5:23 p.m. … After “dark days” Monday-Wednesday, racing will continue Thursday for another installment of Twilight Thursdays, which feature $1 beer, food trucks and live music. Thursday’s first post is 5 p.m. and the music will be performed on the Plaza stage by Curio Key Club … Thursday’s opener is a five-furlong maiden special weight for 2-year-olds. Keeneland debut runner-up Copper Bullet is the 5-2 favorite for trainer Steve Asmussen but the More Than Ready colt’s rivals include well-bred siblings Special Forces (3-1 on the morning line), a half-brother to multiple graded-stakes winning mare Stonetastic, and Street Cat Sam (20-1), a half-brother to 2010 Hopeful (GI) winner Boys At Tosconova. … Next week is a five-day racing week with special holiday racing on Memorial Day (Monday, May 29). … A look at the Top 5 Spring Meet jockeys by wins heading into Sunday: Corey Lanerie (99-20-20-15—$1,250,724), Brian Hernandez Jr. (67-14-13-14—$699,298), Florent Geroux (65-12-4-12—$911,082), Ricardo Santana Jr. (44-10-6-3—$292,686) and James Graham (59-9-9-6—$347,464). Hernandez won a trio of races Saturday, including the $100,000 Matron (GIII) aboard Walkabout.

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