ROMANS BREEZES J BOYS ECHO FOR POSSIBLE START IN BELMONT STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, May 27, 2017) – Albaugh Family Stable’s J Boys Echo, 15th in the $2,395,800 Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Grade I), breezed five furlongs in 1:00.80 Saturday morning at Churchill Downs for a possible start in the $1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) on Saturday, June 10.

“It was a very solid work,” trainer Dale Romans said. “He was aggressive into the bit and that’s exactly what we wanted to see.”

J Boys Echo was ridden by regular exercise rider Tammy Fox and breezed in company with Reedini through fractions of :11.80, :23.80 and :48.20 before galloping out six furlongs in 1:14.

“It was good to see this type of move,” Romans said. “We want to see how he comes out of the breeze and then we'll make our decision on the Belmont and work out all of the logistics.”

Jason Loutsch of Albaugh Family Stable confirmed J Boys Echo’s Belmont participation via Twitter on Saturday afternoon.

Robby Albarado, J Boy’s Echo’s regular jockey who has been sidelined with a broken left leg since April 23, was at Romans’ Barn 4 to watch the breeze. Albarado, who was aboard for five of J Boys Echo’s seven lifetime starts, including his victory in the Gotham (GIII), is expected to return to the saddle in the next two weeks.

Classic Empire, runner-up in the Preakness (GI) and fourth in the Kentucky Derby, jogged one mile Saturday morning at Churchill Downs and remains on target for the Belmont Stakes where he is expected to go favored.

The possible field for the 1 ½-mile Belmont Stakes (with jockeys): Classic Empire (Julien Leparoux), Conquest Mo Money, Epicharis (Jpn) (Christophe Lemaire), Gormley (Victor Espinoza), Irap (Mario Gutierrez), Irish War Cry (Rajiv Maragh), J Boys Echo, Lookin At Lee (Irad Ortiz Jr), Meantime, Multiplier, Patch, Senior Investment (Channing Hill), Tapwrit (Jose Ortiz), True Timber and Twisted Tom (Javier Castellano).

ALBARADO NEARING A RETURN TO THE SADDLE – Jockey Robby Albarado, who fractured his left leg during a spill at Keeneland on April 23, is expected to return to the saddle in the next two weeks, according to agent Ronnie Ebanks.

“He will start getting on horses at the end of next week,” Ebanks said. “The healing is going really well and he’s been doing therapy every day.”

Albarado was walking without crutches on the Churchill Downs backstretch Saturday morning after successful surgery to repair the fractured leg. The injury occurred when his mount, Chiltern Street, stumbled out of the gate in a turf race at Keeneland.

The Louisiana-native has been riding professionally for 28 years and has 5,045 victories in 31,833 starts.

FOREVER UNBRIDLED NEARING FIRST START OF 2017 – Charles Fipke’s third-place finisher in the Breeders’ Cup Distaff (Grade I), Forever Unbridled, continued to progress toward her 5-year-old debut by breezing five furlongs in 1:02.20 Saturday morning at Churchill Downs.

“I’ve been really happy with her progress,” trainer Dallas Stewart said. “We are glad to get her back to serious training and really excited about her 2017 season.”

Forever Unbridled has been on the sidelines since the Nov. 4 Breeders’ Cup Distaff but Stewart is eying a return to the races in the near future.

“We’ll nominate her for the Fleur de Lis but we’ll see if she is ready to go by then,” Stewart said.

The $200,000 Fleur de Lis Handicap (GII) is a Breeders’ Cup Win and You’re In Challenge Series race on the Saturday, June 17 undercard of the $500,000 Stephen Foster Handicap (GI) at Churchill Downs, with the winner receiving an automatic berth to the Nov. 3 Breeders’ Cup Distaff at Del Mar.

“Oh obviously getting her back in top shape for the Breeders’ Cup is the main goal so we’ll keep our options open and hope for the best,” Stewart said.

Forever Unbridled has $1,591,600 in earnings that was highlighted in 2016 by victories in the Houston Ladies Classic Stakes (GIII), Apple Blossom Handicap (G1) and Beldame Stakes (GI).
WORK TAB – There were 139 horses on the work tab Saturday morning at Churchill Downs including Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (Grade I) winner Divisidero, who breezed five furlongs in 1:02.80 for trainer “Buff” Bradley. … Trainer Brad Cox’s Eight Belles (GII) winner, Benner Island, recorded a bullet workout, five furlongs in :58.80, the fastest of 27 at the distance. … Conquest Wildcat, recently third in the April 29 William Walker, returned to the work tab by breezing a half-mile in :48.20 for trainer Randy Morse. … Alysheba (GII) fourth-place finisher December Seven breezed a half-mile in :47 for trainer Paul McGee. … Alysheba runner-up Honorable Duty returned to the work tab with an easy half-mile move in :51.40. Trainer Brendan Walsh is targeting the June 17 Stephen Foster Handicap (GI) for Honorable Duty’s next start. … Kentucky Oaks 12th place finisher Jordan’s Henny breezed a half-mile in :49.40 for trainer Mike Tomlinson. … The complete Churchill Downs work tab is available here: churchilldowns.com/horsemen/racing/workouts.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Trainer Brendan Walsh is on a six-race win streak at Churchill Downs, dating back to May 21. Walsh is tied with Steve Asmussen for second in the trainer standings with nine victories. J. R. Caldwell is leading the standings with 10 wins. … The 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot was hit Friday at Churchill Downs for $60,301.92. The winning wager was placed by a TwinSpires.com customer. … There is an $8,816 carryover in the $1 Super Hi-5 Saturday at Churchill Downs in Race 11 at approximately 5:51 p.m. (all times Eastern) … Trainer “Buff” Bradley is one win away from 100 victories at Churchill Downs. … Sunday’s 10-race card features a 1 ¼-mile maiden special weight. The rare 1 ¼-mile race is carded as Race 4 at approximately 2:13 p.m. … Sunday also features a Stakes & Eggs brunch in the Stakes Room for $45 ($22 for children). … In celebration of Memorial Day on Monday, all active and retired members of the United States armed forces will be admitted free of charge. Also, Churchill Downs’ bugler Steve Buttleman will perform patriotic melodies following the “Call to the Post” for each race.

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