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J BOYS ECHO BREEZES HALF-MILE AT CHURCHILL DOWNS FOR BELMONT STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 3, 2017) – Albaugh Family Stables’ J Boys Echo, Gotham (Grade III) winner and, most recently, 15th in the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (GI), breezed five furlongs in 1:00 Saturday morning at Churchill Downs in preparation for a start in the June 10 Belmont Stakes (GI).

“I think this is the best he’s ever worked,” trainer Dale Romans said. “He’s been training great and will ship to New York Tuesday morning.”

J Boys Echo, ridden by regular exercise rider Tammy Fox, breezed in company with Reedini (inside), with jockey Robby Albarado up, through splits of :23 and :47.40 before galloping out six furlongs in 1:13.80.

Albarado was confirmed to ride J Boys Echo in the Belmont Stakes by Albaugh Family Stables’ Racing Manager Jason Loutsch on Saturday via Twitter.

“T’m part of Dale’s team,” Albarado said. “I certainly wouldn’t want to hurt the team. So, if my body’s ready, I’m excited to ride the horse.”

Albarado is scheduled to ride two horses on Thursday’s card at Churchill Downs – his first mounts since he fractured his left leg in a spill at Keeneland on April 23. The Louisiana-native was scheduled to ride J Boys Echo in the Kentucky Derby prior to his injury.

Along with J Boys Echo, likely Belmont Stakes favorite, Classic Empire will fly to Belmont Park on Tuesday morning.

GAZADER ENJOYING RIDING IN KENTUCKY – Apprentice jockey Rayan Gazader is enjoying his early success at Churchill Downs and plans to stay in the Bluegrass State this summer to ride at Ellis Park.

“I love Kentucky,” Gazader said. “I’ve had a lot of good relationships that we’ve started here and hopefully we can keep it going.”

Gazader, 21, had three wins through the first 21 days of the 38-day Spring Meet. The south Florida native will keep his five-pound apprentice allowance through August.

“My agent (Ronnie Ebanks) and I will be staying in town for the Ellis Park meet,” Gazader said. “I’m really excited to stay here.”

Gazader began his career at Gulfstream Park West in late 2015 and rode primarily in Florida through 2016 before moving his tack to Aqueduct in New York this winter and Kentucky in April. He began Saturday with 22 wins from 354 career mounts.

STEPHEN FOSTER NIGHT STAKES NOMINATIONS CLOSE SATURDAY, JUNE 3 – Nominations close Saturday for the five stakes that comprise the June 17 Downs After Dark/Stephen Foster Handicap Night program at Churchill Downs: the $500,000 Stephen Foster Handicap (Grade I) for 3-year-olds at 1 1/8 miles; $200,000 Fleur de Lis Handicap (GI) for fillies and mares at 1 1/8 miles; $200,000 Wise Dan (GI) for 3-year-olds and up at 1 1/16 miles on the turf; $100,000 Matt Winn (GIII) for 3-year-olds at 1 1/16 miles; and $100,000 Regret (GIII) for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/8 miles on turf.

The Stephen Foster and Fleur de Lis Handicap are part of the Breeders’ Cup “Win and You’re In” program. The winner of the Stephen Foster receives an automatic berth to the Nov. 4 Breeders’ Cup Classic while the Fleur de Lis victor receives a starting gate spot in the Breeders’ Cup Distaff on Nov. 3. The Breeders’ Cup will take place at Del Mar in Southern California.

Horsemen can nominate to the stakes online at https://www.churchilldowns.com/horsemen/stakes/nomination-forms/.

WORK TAB – There were 131 horses on the Saturday work tab at Churchill Downs which included J Boys Echo’s five-furlong breeze in 1:00 for trainer Dale Romans. The Romans stable also breezed Peter Pan (Grade III) third-place finisher Impressive Edge five furlongs in :59, the fastest of 29 at the distance. … Benner Island, the May 5 Eight Belles (GI) winner, breezed a half-mile in :48.60 for trainer Brad Cox. … Breeders’ Cup Distaff (GI) third-place finisher Forever Unbridled breezed six furlongs in 1:14.80 for trainer Dallas Stewart. The 5-year-old mare is eyeing a comeback in the June 24 Chicago Handicap (GIII). … Honorable Duty continued his march to the June 17 Stephen Foster (GI) with a five furlong move in 1:01.60 for trainer Brendan Walsh. … Buff Bradley’s The Player, who was the runner-up in the Indiana Derby 11 months ago, breezed five furlongs in 1:00.60. Bradley is targeting a race at the end of the meet for The Player’s return. The complete Churchill Downs work tab is available here: churchilldowns.com/horsemen/racing/workouts.

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DOWN THE STRETCH – There is an $11,418 carryover for the 20-cent minimum Single-6 Jackpot on Races 6-11 Saturday and a $10,905 carryover in the $1 Super Hi-5 in Race 11. ... Sunday's 10-race card features the year’s first Family Adventure Day Presented by Kroger. The day of racing is complimented by plenty of family activities in the Plaza area including pony rides, inflatables, a petting zoo, stick horse races, face painting and more. There also will be a special “meet and greet” with popular “Trolls,” Poppy and Branch. ... Reminder: Churchill Downs Racetrack will raise overnight race purse offerings 10 percent over the final four weeks of the Spring Meet thanks to record Kentucky Derby week business levels. Purses for overnight races – which include overnight stakes, allowance, maiden special weight, claiming and maiden claiming events – will rise by an approximate blended average of $3,209 per race.

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