HOLLYWOOD HANDSOME ADDS NAME TO BELMONT STAKES CONTENDERS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, June 4, 2017) – Mark Stanley’s Churchill Downs-based Hollywood Handsome added his name to Saturday’s $1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I) probable roster, according to trainer Dallas Stewart.

“I’m so excited to get this horse to the Belmont Stakes,” Stewart said. “We originally toyed with the idea of keeping him at Churchill prior to the Kentucky Derby to see if we could sneak in with 10 points. We eventually decided to run in the Illinois Derby and forego the Kentucky Derby.”

Hollywood Handsome finished fifth in the Illinois Derby but rebounded three weeks later with a narrow-allowance victory at Churchill Downs.

“In hindsight it wouldn’t have worked out with the (Kentucky) Derby,” Stewart said. “I’m glad we got back to the winner’s circle the other week in the allowance race.”

Jockey Florent Geroux is scheduled to ride the 3-year-old son of Tapizar in the third jewel of the Triple Crown.

“We’re very excited to ride for Dallas (Stewart) in the Belmont,” Geroux said. “We’ll head to New York on Thursday and have a lot of live mounts. Hollywood Handsome is a nice horse. It’s great to ride one like this in such a big race.”

Hollywood Handsome put in his final breeze for the Belmont Stakes on Friday at Churchill Downs, clipping through five furlongs in 1:00.60.

WOODFORD RESERVE TURF CLASSIC CHAMP DIVISIDERO BREEZES FOR MANHATTAN – Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (Grade I) winner Divisidero breezed a half-mile in :49.80 Sunday morning on the Matt Winn Turf Course in preparation for Saturday’s $1 million Manhattan Stakes (GI) at Belmont Park.

“This was a really nice work,” trainer “Buff” Bradley said. “We had Chris Landeros breeze him (Sunday) morning and I told him to start nice and easy but let him go down the lane.

“When I saw him get to the top of the stretch, he was moving great. You could visibly see him pick up his stride and it was a very solid work. This horse was doing so well at Churchill prior to last year’s Manhattan but he seems to have a different attitude this year. He’s been bucking and playing in the mornings and you can tell he’s ready to go.”

Jockey Julien Leparoux rode Divisidero to victory in the Woodford Reserve Turf Classic but committed to ride World Approval in the Manhattan for trainer Mark Casse.

“We picked up John Velazquez to ride,” Bradley said. “You’re not in the worst place when you get a Hall of Fame rider to pick up the mount.

“Our end goal with Divisidero is the Breeders’ Cup but there are a lot of options we’ll look at between now and then. Races like the Arlington Million (GI) are a possibility but we’ll keep our options open.”

Divisidero is scheduled to leave for Belmont Park on Tuesday morning.

SANTANA ENJOYING FINAL DAY AT CHURCHILL BEFORE SHIFTING TACK TO NEW YORK – Jockey Ricardo Santana Jr. will shift his tack full-time to New York next week following Sunday’s nine-race card at Churchill Downs.

Santana, 24, began riding at Churchill Downs in 2013 and had recorded 176 local victories through 1,218 mounts at the start of Sunday’s action.

“It’s been great riding at Churchill Downs,” Santana Jr. said. “We rode a lot of memorable races and I have a lot of friends here.”

The Panama native will be represented by jockey agent Steve Rushing in New York. Rushing also represents top jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. Santana plans to ride the rest of the meet at Belmont Park and transition to Saratoga this summer.

Santana has six mounts on Churchill Downs’ Sunday card.

STAKES PROBABLES – Next Saturday’s 11-race card at Churchill Downs is headlined by the $100,000 Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap (Grade III) for fillies and mares at 1 1/16 miles on the Matt Winn Turf Course. The following horses are probable entrants: Believe In Bertie, Dona Bruja (ARG), Dynazar, Linda, and Sky My Sky.

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WORK TAB – Trainer Brad Cox breezed four horses on the grass Sunday morning at Churchill Downs, including American Turf (Grade II) winner Arklow, :50.20; Churchill Distaff Turf Mile (GII) runner-up Believe in Bertie, :49.20; Twin Spires Turf Sprint (GIII) winner Green Mask, :51.20; and impressive allowance winner Sassy Little Lila, :48.80. … Trainer Ian Wilkes breezed Kentucky Derby (GI) eighth-place finisher McCraken five furlongs in 1:00.20 and Alysheba (GII) winner Bird Song six furlongs in 1:12.80. McCraken is likely for the $100,000 Matt Winn (GIII), while Bird Song tackles the night’s headliner, the $500,000 Stephen Foster Handicap (GI). … The complete Churchill Downs work tab is available here: churchilldowns.com/horsemen/racing/workouts.

DOWN THE STRETCH – There is a $36,073 carryover for the 20-cent minimum Single-6 Jackpot on Races 4-9 Sunday and a $38,989 carryover in the $1 Super Hi-5 in Race 11. … Next week is a four-day racing week with Twilight Thursday kicking off the action with a first post of 5 p.m. (all times Eastern) Friday, Saturday and Sunday’s cards have a 12:45 p.m. first post.

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