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ROMANS AIMING FOR LATE 2017 CAMPAIGN WITH 3-YEAR-OLD PROSPECTS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 24, 2017) – Trainer Dale Romans’ name was part of the 2017 Triple Crown picture with J Boys Echo but a pair of late-developing 3-year-olds, Stronach Stables’ Singing Bullet and Albaugh Family Stable’s Watch Me Whip, could shake up the picture for the second half of 2017.

“We have some solid 3-year-olds in the barn,” Romans said. “We always try and gear our 2-year-olds for the Kentucky Derby but sometimes things go array.”

Singing Bullet broke his maiden at Ellis Park as a 2-year-old at first asking last September but was on the shelf for 236 days before returning to the winner’s circle Friday.

“This horse ran a monster race Friday,” Romans said. “He had a bit of a setback after he broke his maiden last year but the way he came back I’d like to point him to the (Aug. 26) H. Allen Jerkens Memorial Stakes (GI) (formerly known as the King’s Bishop) at Saratoga.”

Watch Me Whip dazzled while winning his career debut at Keeneland by 3 ¾ lengths at odds of 10-1. Romans would joke in the mornings following his victory, “Did you see my horse for the (July 30) Haskell (Grade I)?”

Romans tested the waters with Watch Me Whip in the Sir Barton Stakes on the Preakness undercard but he never really got into the race and finished a disappointing eighth.

“He had a lot of little issues as a 2-year-old and that’s why we could never get there early enough,” Romans said. “I wouldn’t be surprised if he ends up running in some of the better races this summer and end up in some big races this fall.”

Watch Me Whip is listed as 9-2 on the morning line in Race 9 on Sunday, a first-level allowance event for 3-year-olds.

Following a disappointing conclusion to the Triple Crown season for J Boys Echo, Romans is aiming for a late summer return for the 3-year-old son of Mineshaft.

“He was completely eliminated from the Derby at the start and I don’t think he liked the track at Belmont,” Romans said. “He’ll come back in the late summer and could run in the Haskell and hopefully make it to the (Aug. 26) Travers (GI).”

After Singing Bullet’s victory Friday, Romans was only four wins behind Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott for the all-time winningest trainer mark at Churchill Downs, 701 wins to 697.

CASSE BARN THINKING TO FUTURE WITH MO DIDDLEY – Gary Barber and Cheyenne Stables LLC’s Mo Diddley could add his name to the early 2-year-old Kentucky Derby watch list when he goes to post in Friday’s $100,000 Bashford Manor Presented by GE Appliances (GIII).

In his career debut, Mo Diddley rushed past rivals from off the pace after he missed the break and battled with Make Noise in the final eighth of a mile for a narrow victory.

“That was a really solid win,” assistant trainer Norm Casse said. “He was training well prior to the race but he overcame a lot after missing the break.”

“Anytime you have a talented 2-year-old you catch yourself dreaming about the Derby,” Casse said. “We realize how tough it is to get there and you just have to let the horse take you there race by race.”

The Bashford Manor is one of three stakes races on tap for Friday night’s Spring Meet ender, a prime-time program billed as “Downs After Dark Presented by Stella Artois and Finlandia Vodka.” The $100,000 Debutante Presented by Finlandia Vodka (Listed) for 2-year-old fillies at six furlongs and the $65,000-added Kelly’s Landing Overnight Stakes for 3-year-olds and up at seven furlongs round out the stakes action for the closing night program of the 38-day Spring Meet.

WORK TAB – Several horses put in their final preparations for the Spring Meet’s final week of racing at Churchill Downs, including a :35.80 three-furlong move by The Player for trainer William “Buff” Bradley. The Player is expected to headline the $65,000-added Kelly’s Landing Overnight Stakes. … The Truth Or Else, most recently a third-place finisher in the $100,000 Aristides Stakes (GIII), breezed a half-mile in :49.20 for trainer Kenny McPeek. … Impressive 2-year-old debut winner Patrona Margarita, who is expected to start in the $100,000 Debutante Presented by Finlandia Vodka, breezed an easy half-mile in :51 for trainer Bret Calhoun. … Peter Pan (GIII) third-place finisher Impressive Edge had a five-furlong move in 1:01.60 for trainer Dale Romans. … The complete Churchill Downs work tab is available here: churchilldowns.com/horsemen/racing/workouts.

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MILESTONE WATCH – With Singing Bullet’s victory in Friday’s featured allowance race, trainer Dale Romans (697 victories) is only four wins behind Churchill Downs’ all-time leading trainer Bill Mott (701). Romans has eight horses entered over the next two days at Churchill Downs with six days left in the Spring Meet: Tizthesound (Saturday, Race 11); Mizz Tutu (Saturday, Race 11); Silver Wraith (Sunday, Race 1); Gurlin (Sunday, Race 3); Little Irishdancer (Sunday, Race 4); Prado Vision (Sunday, Race 4); Blake’s Lucky Star (Sunday, Race 6); and Watch Me Whip (Sunday, Race 9). Mott has two local entrants this week: Harkness (Saturday, Race 8); and Cite (Saturday, Race 9).

DOWN THE STRETCH – There is a growing $119,457 jackpot carryover for the 20-cent minimum Single-6 Jackpot on Races 6-11 Saturday, which is scheduled to commence at 3:15 p.m. (all times Eastern) … Sunday’s card will feature the return of 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 on the turf course, face painting and more. … The podcast of “Inside Churchill Downs” featuring interviews with trainer Dale Romans and clocker John Nichols is available at www.espnlouisville.com. The show, hosted by Churchill Downs’ Communications Department: John Asher, Darren Rogers and Kevin Kerstein, will be on a week’s hiatus but is scheduled to return Saturday, July 8. … The “Who’s the Champ? Handicapping Contest” returns Sunday. Interested participants can enter for $35 ($30 for TSC Elite members) for a chance to win the $1,000 cash voucher first prize by placing mythical $2 win and place bets on Races 3-8. Second place receives a $500 voucher and third place is worth a $200 voucher. Registration takes place between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on the Clubhouse second floor at the top of the Gate 17 escalators.

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