McCRAKEN LOOKS AHEAD TO GRADE I, $500,000 CLARK HANDICAP PRESENTED BY NORTON HEALTHCARE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2017) – Janis Whitham’s homebred McCraken, seeking to land an elusive Grade I victory, continues to prepare for his next start in the $500,000 Clark Handicap Presented by Norton Healthcare (Grade I) on “Black Friday,” Nov. 24 at Churchill Downs.

“Toward how well he ran in the Fayette (GII) off a two-month layoff,” trainer Ian Wilkes said. “I’d love to get a Grade I victory for him before his 3-year-old campaign is over, and at his home track in the Clark could be the perfect spot.”

McCraken was highly-touted entering the Kentucky Derby (GI) but finished a disappointing eighth after encountering trouble at the start. The 3-year-old colt by Ghostzapper rebounded after the Triple Crown season with a victory in the Matt Winn Stakes (GIII) on the Stephen Foster Handicap (GI) undercard and finished a narrowly-beaten second in the Haskell Invitational (GI) at Monmouth Park in late July.

After a non-threatening seventh in the Travers Stakes (GI) at Saratoga in August, McCraken ran against elders for the first time in the Oct. 28 Fayette and finished third over a “sloppy” racetrack at Keeneland.

“He really dug in to get third,” Wilkes said. “When I talked to (jockey Brian Hernandez Jr.) after the race, he said he really lowered his body and puffed up when a horse engaged him. The track was playing pretty forward throughout the day so it was hard to make up ground. I think in the Clark we’ll get a full field and hopefully a couple horses will make the race a better pace for him to run at.”

McCraken breezed a half-mile in :50.40 Tuesday at Churchill Downs, which was his first published workout since the Fayette. The bay colt has an overall record of 10-5-1-2—$722,228 with four victories coming beneath the Twin Spires.

FREE ONLINE BRISNET PAST PERFORMANCES FOR CHURCHILL DOWNS; NEW BRISNET BETTING GUIDE DEBUTS ON-TRACK – Throughout Churchill Downs’ 21-day Fall Meet, Brisnet.com is offering horseplayers complimentary past performances for each day’s races at the Louisville, Ky. racetrack. To download the free Churchill Downs past performances online, guests can visit: https://www.brisnet.com/product/past-performances/FPP.

Additionally, Brisnet.com has introduced an excellent new product for on-track guests at Churchill Downs. The Brisnet.com Betting Guide debuted Wednesday and features informative Brisnet.com past performances for four-to-eight different racetracks around the country in a bound book with high-quality paper. The book will retail for only $5, which means the new product will be significantly cheaper for Churchill Downs’ guests compared to previously-offered past performance products. It also will have better quality and more targeted content for horseplayers.

The new Brisnet.com Betting Guide is available at program stands and other distribution locations throughout Churchill Downs.

LANERIE NOTCHES 900TH VICTORY SUNDAY AT CHURCHILL DOWNS – Jockey Corey Lanerie became only the sixth jockey to record 900 victories at Churchill Downs when he guided Undrafted to a one-length victory in Sunday’s fourth race at the Louisville, Ky. racetrack.

“I’m glad I finally got that win,” Lanerie said. “When you sit on a milestone it feels like it takes five-times as long to achieve. I’ve been extremely lucky to ride for some great people in Kentucky. Onwards and upward.”

Undrafted was the 4-5 favorite in the five-furlong turf sprint and returned his backers $3.60, $2.80 and $2.10. Lanerie, 42, is ranked sixth in all-time wins by jockeys at Churchill Downs and is within striking distance of fifth-place Larry Melancon (914 wins) and fourth-place Don Brumfield (925). The native of Lafayette, La. has been the perennial leading rider at Churchill Downs for 14 of the last 16 meets.

The top five leading jockeys at Churchill Downs: Pat Day (2,482 wins); Calvin Borel (1,207); Robby Albarado (1,141); Brumfield (925) and Melancon (914).
MEET LEADERS – With seven days into the 21-day Fall Meet, Corey Lanerie (13 wins) began the week with an eight-win lead over Jon Court, Miguel Mena, and Ricardo Santana Jr. in the jockey standings. Eddie Kenneally held a one-win lead over Brad Cox and Chris Hartman in the trainer’s standings 4-3 wins. Coffeepot Stables recorded two victories to start the Fall Meet as they lead the owner standings with 14 days of racing to go.

ROMANS VS. MOTT – Dale Romans, a 51-year-old native of South Louisville, began Wednesday just two wins away from surpassing Hall of Famer Bill Mott as the all-time leading trainer in races won at Churchill Downs – a record that 64-year-old Mott has held for 31 years. Mott was victorious in Friday’s first race with The Money Monster and now leads Romans 702-701 wins at Churchill Downs.

Romans Entries: Captivated (Wednesday, Race 5); Miss Katie Bug (Thursday, Race 3); Mizz Tutu (Friday, Race 2); Little Irishdancer (Friday, Race 3); King Zachary (Friday, Race 7); and Coach Rocks (Saturday Race 7).

Mott Entries: Richmond Street (Thursday, Race 9); Ecru (Friday, Race 7); Border Force (Friday, Race 10); and Love Mo (Saturday, Race 7).

MILESTONE WATCH – Along with the heated-battle between Dale Romans and Bill Mott for the all-time leading trainer honors at Churchill Downs (702-701 wins), trainer Greg Foley (399) is one win away from 400 career-victories beneath the historic Twin Spires while trainer Ian Wilkes is targeting 200 career victories at Churchill Downs (195 wins).

DOWN THE STRETCH – There is a $36,526 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot Wednesday. The wager begins in Race 5 with a scheduled post time of 3 p.m. (all times Eastern). A Veteran’s Day tradition continues. Military Appreciation Day at Churchill Downs will take place on Saturday, Nov. 11, and all United States veterans and active military will receive free general admission with proof of identification. Additionally, men and women who served American in the military can spend a day at the races with family and friends in the track’s Sky Terrace for just $29 per person – a nearly 25-percent discount – by calling (502) 636-4450. The package includes admission, a race day program, Chef’s Table buffet and soft beverages. The 50/50 charitable gaming raffle is back for the Fall Meet. Proceeds from the raffle will go towards charitable organizations that benefit from the Churchill Downs Incorporated Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that helps support the critical work of nonprofits in our industry, make a difference in important public health programs and provide meaningful opportunities in art and education. Visit www.derbygives.com to purchase tickets and for more information. For more information about Churchill Downs’ Fall Meet visit: https://www.churchilldowns.com/racing-wagering/news/40-things-to-know-about-churchill-downs-fall-meet.

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