WALSH CLOSELY MONITORING WEATHER AS HONORABLE DUTY PREPARES FOR GRADE I CLARK HANDICAP

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, Nov. 16, 2017) – Trainer Brendan Walsh will be closely monitoring the weather for the Grade I, $500,000 Clark Handicap Presented by Norton Healthcare on Friday, Nov. 24, and he’s hoping for a dry track for Lukas Classic (GIII) winner Honorable Duty.

“I just don’t think Honorable Duty handles the off going very well,” Walsh said. “Last out in the (Oct. 28) Fayette, he never took to the surface at Keeneland. The track was playing forwardly and he never got a hold of the ground with how wet it was.”

Owned by David Ross’ DAARS Inc., Honorable Duty has been ultra-consistent throughout his career, finishing off the board only four times in 16 starts. The 5-year-old gelding’s 2017 campaign included victories in Fair Grounds’ Feb. 25 Mineshaft Handicap (GIII) and April 1 New Orleans Handicap (GII) prior to runner-up finishes at Churchill Downs in the May 5 Alysheba Presented by Big Fish Casino (GII) and the Stephen Foster Handicap Presented by GE Appliances (GI).

“He’s been doing really well overall this year,” Walsh said. “I think he’s doing as well leading into the Clark as he was from the Fayette. I have to look at the wet surface as to why he didn’t run well. Even when he finished second in the Alysheba there was some moisture in the track and I don’t think he got over it incredibly well.”

Probable challengers for Honorable Duty in the Clark include Carl Hurst and William “Buff” Bradley’s The Player, Charles Fipke’s Seeking the Soul and Karl Watson, Mike Pegram, and Paul Weitman’s 2014 Clark Handicap winner Hoppertunity, according to Churchill Downs’ Assistant Racing Secretary and Stakes Coordinator Dan Bork.

Entries for the Clark Handicap will be drawn Sunday.
Limousine Liberal, trained by Ben Colebrook, won a trio of stakes races at Churchill Downs during the Spring Meet that began with a 13-1 upset in the $500,000 Churchill Downs (GII) on the Kentucky Derby undercard. The 5-year-old gelding by Successful Appeal was the heavy favorite in the June’s $100,000 Aristides Stakes (GIII) and scored a 2 ½-length victory over The Truth Or Else. Limousine Liberal closed out the meet with a win in the $70,893 Kelly’s Landing Overnight Stakes on July 1.

The seven-furlong contest for 3-year-olds and up is carded as Race 5 with a scheduled post time of 2:55 p.m. (all times Eastern).

The field for the Bet On Sunshine from the rail out with (jockey, assigned weight, and morning line odds): Le Ken (Arg) (Ricardo Santana Jr. 120 pounds, 5-1); The Truth or Else (Robby Albarado, 120, 5-1); Sir Navigator (Joe Rocco Jr., 120, 20-1); Pinson (C.J. McMahon, 120, 20-1); Storm Advisory (Alex Canchari, 120, 8-1); Warrior’s Club (Chris Landeros, 120, 12-1); Uncontested (Channing Hill, 118, 8-1); and Limousine Liberal (Corey Lanerie, 124, 4-5).

COX LOOKS TO FUTURE WITH UNDEFEATED Filly MONOMOY GIRL – Michael Dubb and Monomoy Stables’ Monomoy Girl continues to impress trainer Brad Cox as she prepares for her next start in the $200,000 Golden Rod Stakes (Grade II) on Saturday, Nov. 25 at Churchill Downs.

“She’s an absolute runner,” Cox said. “It was interesting leading into the (Oct. 29) Rags to Riches because she began her career on the turf. We thought if she ran as well on the dirt as she trained she’d do very well. And, after that race, she’s looked just as good preparing for the Golden Rod.”

Monomoy Girl, a 2-year-old filly by Tapizar, romped to an emphatic 6 ½-length score in the $82,670 Rags to Riches. Prior to recording that victory, Monomoy Girl broke her maiden at Churchill Downs on the turf and subsequently won a first-level allowance race on the grass at Indiana Grand.

“We’ll probably breeze her one more time Saturday,” Cox said. “I won’t do too much with her in this work. The way she breezed last week was something special (five furlongs in 1:00.60 on Nov. 11). Hopefully she can continue to excel as she’s shown in her training.”

The Golden Rod shares the spotlight with the $200,000 Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) on the Nov. 25 “Stars of Tomorrow II” program at Churchill Downs that features all 2-year-old races. The Golden Rod will award points to the top four finishers on the “Road to the Kentucky Oaks” on a 10-4-2-1 scale. Kentucky Oaks leaderboard: https://www.kentuckyderby.com/horses/oaks

MOTT REFLECTS ON TIME AS CHURCHILL DOWNS’ ALL-TIME LEADING TRAINER – Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott held the all-time leading trainer record at Churchill Downs for more than 31 years until South Louisville-native Dale Romans recorded his 703rd victory in Sunday’s sixth race, a record that Mott knew would be broken in the coming weeks.

“I knew it was coming and I’ve talked to Dale about it,” Mott said. “I called him the other day to see what the score was and he said, ‘Well, we’re tied up.’ And neither one of us could win a race – it seems like it took forever.”

“Bill was the first person to call me Sunday after I won,” Romans said. “I think that would have to be the best part about this honor. He’s been a great friend and mentor throughout my years of training and it really meant a lot for him to call.”

Mott, who won his first race at Churchill Downs with Miss Mill Creek on May 17, 1977, has taken 702 trips to Churchill Downs' Winner's Circle including multiple Breeders’ Cup races.

“It was people like Dr. David Richardson and Dr. Hiram Polk, William F. Lucas, Warner Jones – they all gave me a big chance,” Mott said. “I really appreciate it and still train for some of those people. Jim Karp was one of my first clients and we still have horses for him there. So I really appreciate the opportunity that those people had given me there. The opportunity they gave me kind of propelled us, or was the catalyst to get us where we’ve gotten – to come back there and win Breeders’ Cup races and some of the big races that we’ve won has been very special.

“Churchill Downs has always held a special place for me. I really got rolling in Detroit and then moved on to Churchill, but it’s always been a special place for me. I guess that’s where we really got rolling and we made a lot of great contacts and we trained for a lot of good people around Kentucky or people who had their horses in Kentucky with us. I was really given a big opportunity there. I think it’s a great place. I think it’s a great place and a great location for anybody to really cut their teeth.”

Of course Mott could tie or regain the record as he continues to have a productive string of horses at Churchill Downs under the care of assistant Kenny McCarthy, but Romans’ has started three times as many horses and has won three times as many races as Mott in recent years.

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FREE ONLINE BRISNET PAST PERFORMANCES FOR CHURCHILL DOWNS; NEW BRISNET BETTING GUIDE DEBUTS ON-TRACK – Throughout Churchill Downs' 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 features informative Brisnet.com Premium Plus 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.

MEET LEADERS – Through Wednesday at Churchill Downs, perennial leading rider Corey Lanerie held a 20-11 win lead over Ricardo Santana Jr. in the jockey standings. Miguel Mena and Jon Court were tied in third with eight victories and Brian Hernandez Jr. was fifth with seven wins. … Following a two-win day Wednesday, Louisville-native Brad Cox held a 7-6 win lead in the trainer standings over Steve Asmussen while Chris Hartman, Eddie Kenneally, and Kenny McPeek were tied for third with five victories each. … There is a seven-way tie in the owner standings with two victories between Coffeepot Stables, Magdalena Racing, Newtown Anner Stud, Ken and Sarah Ramsey, Southwest Racing Stables, Stoneway Farm, and Walking L Thoroughbreds.

KENTUCKY DERBY FUTURE WAGER – The first pools of the 2018 Kentucky Derby Future Wager will be offered Nov. 23-26. The traditional pool with 23 individual wagering interests and an “all others” option will return, and so will the Kentucky Derby Sire Future Wager, which debuted in 2015 and requires bettors to wager on the winning sire for next year’s Kentucky Derby winner. The other Future Wager dates will be Feb. 9-11 (Pool 2), March 9-11 (Pool 3) and April 6-8 (Pool 4). The lone Kentucky Oaks Future Wager will coincide with Pool 3 of the Kentucky Derby Future Wager on March 9-11.

“INSIDE CHURCHILL DOWNS” – The final episode of the 2017 season of “Inside Churchill Downs” will air Friday at 6 p.m. on ESPN 680/105.7. The one-hour horse racing radio show is co-hosted by Churchill Downs Racetrack’s John Asher, Darren Rogers and Kevin Kerstein and delivers a wide-ranging list of interesting guests, from jockeys, trainers, owners to well-informed handicappers and other industry insiders. Those outside the Louisville radio market can listen live online at http://www.espnlouisville.com/ or via podcast on the station’s website or https://soundcloud.com/.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Churchill Downs’ popular “Who’s the Champ?” Handicapping Contest will return 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 will take place Sunday between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on the Clubhouse second floor at the top of the Gate 17 escalators. … The 11th annual Benefit for the Backside Day at the Races benefitting the Backside Learning Center at Churchill Downs will be held Friday. Formerly known as “Ladies Day at the Races,” the event, sponsored by CaloSpa Rejuvenation Center, will take place at noon in Millionaires Row 6 and includes lunch, one-of-a-kind auction items and raffles. Tickets are $100 per person. Proceeds will benefit the Backside Learning Center, which provides educational and social services to Churchill Downs’ equine workers and their families. For more information, please visit BacksideLearningCenter.org … Churchill Downs will welcome outstanding Metro Louisville area high school students who are members of the 2017 Churchill Downs Governor's Scholars initiative with a reception at the track on Friday. The students will be joined by their parents, family members and officials of their respective schools to celebrate their participation in the track’s Governor’s Scholars Program, an initiative launched in 2001 that funds the participation in the overall Kentucky Governor’s Scholars Program by students from Jefferson County and portions of surrounding counties who have overcome personal adversity and challenges to become high achievers in their personal lives and academic pursuits. One student is chosen from each of Jefferson County’s legislative districts, some of which extend into surrounding counties, to benefit from the Churchill Downs Governor's Scholars Program. … 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.derygives.com to purchase tickets and for more information.

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