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FLAMEAWAY, FREE DROP BILLY, PROMISES FULFILLED LEAD SATURDAY TRAINING AT CHURCHILL DOWNS IN PREPARATION FOR KENTUCKY DERBY 144

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, April 21, 2018) – John Oxley’s Flameaway, Albaugh Family Stables’ Free Drop Billy and Robert Baron’s Promises Fulfilled kicked off the exclusive training period for Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve contenders from 7:30-7:45 a.m. (all times Eastern) Saturday with five-furlong workouts at Churchill Downs in preparation for the May 5 “Run for the Roses.”

Flameaway, with regular exercise rider Chris Garraway aboard, breezed outside of 3-year-old allowance winner Ride a Comet (1:00.40) through splits of :11.80, :23.40 and :35.20 before galloping out six furlongs in 1:14.40, according to Churchill Downs clocker John Nichols.

“I was really happy with his breeze this morning,” said assistant trainer Nick Tomlinson, who is overseeing trainer Mark Casse’s string at Churchill Downs. “He’s doing really well with the track at Churchill and he recorded one of his best breezes that I’ve seen.”

Flameaway was the winner of the Feb. 10 Sam F. Davis (GIII) at Tampa Bay Downs and runner-up in the March 10 Tampa Bay Derby (GII) prior to returning to Kentucky with a second-place effort in the April 7 Blue Grass (GII) at Keeneland.

“He’s such a cool horse,” Casse said. “He always lays it down when it matters and tries so hard. We’re very fortunate enough to have a horse like this leading into the Kentucky Derby.”

Casse was in Florida on Saturday but is expected to be in Kentucky for the colt’s final breeze before the Derby next weekend.

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Flameaway is stabled in Barn 36 at Churchill Downs.

One major item that is missing on Dale Romans’ impressive training résumé is a victory in the Kentucky Derby, but the 51-year-old Louisville native is beginning to feel the excitement after Saturday morning works from Free Drop Billy and Promises Fulfilled.

Promises Fulfilled, with exercise rider Faustino Herrarte up, breezed five furlongs in :59.20 through splits of :11.80 and 23, before galloping out six furlongs in 1:11.80.

Free Drop Billy had a slightly different five-furlong move than his stablemate. With rider Juan Segundo aboard, the colt jogged one mile, galloped one mile, then breezed opening splits of :12.20, :23.60, :35 and :46.80 before passing the wire in :59 and galloping out six furlongs in 1:12 and seven furlongs in 1:25.40.

“Impressive is all I can really say,” Romans said. “I’ll tell you what, both of these horses looked awesome this morning. It would definitely be a relief to win one of these things one day. These are very smart horses and are doing everything right in the lead up to the Derby.”

Romans confirmed Robby Albarado has the call on Free Drop Billy while Churchill Downs’ perennial leading rider Corey Lanerie has the mount on Promises Fulfilled.

Both colts, who are expected to put in their final Derby works next Saturday, are stabled in Romans’ Barn 4 at Churchill Downs.

KNOWN KENTUCKY DERBY ARRIVAL SCHEDULE – With two weeks remaining until the first Saturday in May, shipping plans to Louisville, Ky. are being finalized for many Kentucky Derby horses.

Trainer Todd Pletcher is slated to enter four horses in the Derby: Florida Derby (GI) winner Audible, Arkansas Derby (GI) victor Magnum Moon, Louisiana Derby (GII) hero Noble Indy, and Wood Memorial (GII) champ Vino Rosso. The quartet, which are expected to be joined by several other members of the “Todd Squad,” including 2017 Kentucky Derby winner Always Dreaming, are scheduled to arrive from Palm Beach, Fla. on Monday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. (all times Eastern), according to Director of the Stable Area Steve Hargrave.

Santa Anita Derby (GI) winner and likely Kentucky Derby favorite Justify is expected to have his final breeze in California next weekend along with stablemate and Arkansas Derby third Solomini before shipping to Churchill Downs soon thereafter, Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert reported Saturday.

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Impressive 18 ½-length UAE Derby (GI) winner Mendelssohn is expected to travel to Kentucky from Ireland on Monday, April 30, according to Hargrave.

The trip to Churchill Downs should only take about two hours for Blue Grass Stakes (GI) winner Good Magic and Lexington (GIII) winner My Boy Jack as the pair are expected to van from Keeneland on Sunday afternoon, according to Hargrave.

Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott reported Friday on ESPN Louisville’s “Inside Churchill Downs” that Florida Derby runner-up Hofburg could breeze Sunday at Payson Park in Florida and ship to Churchill Downs on Monday or Tuesday.

Wood Memorial runner-up Enticed, currently stabled at Palm Meadows in South Florida for trainer Kiaran McLaughlin, could ship to Churchill Downs either April 28-29, according to Hargrave.

It was announced Wednesday that NFL star Rob Gronkowski acquired an ownership stake in European Road to the Kentucky Derby-invitee Gronkowski. The colt is expected to arrive at Churchill Downs on Saturday, April 28, according to trainer Jeremy Noseda.

Follow @DerbyMedia on Twitter for the latest shipping updates.

**BARN LIST:** Five Kentucky Derby contenders and eight likely Kentucky Oaks contenders are on the grounds at Churchill Downs:

**Kentucky Derby contenders:** Bravazo (trainer D. Wayne Lukas, Barn 44); Flameaway (Mark Casse, Barn 36); Free Drop Billy (Dale Romans, Barn 4); Lone Sailor (Tom Amoss, Barn 29); and Promises Fulfilled (Barn 4).

**Kentucky Oaks contenders:** Blamed (Joel Marr, Barn 43); Chocolate Martini (Amoss, 29); Classy Act (Bret Calhoun, Barn 23); Coach Rocks (Romans, Barn 4); Monomoy Girl (Brad Cox, Barn 22); Patrona Margarita (Calhoun, Barn 23); Sassy Sienna (Cox, Barn 22); and Wonder Gadot (Casse, Barn 36).

**LIKELY KENTUCKY OAKS FAVORITE MONOMOY GIRL BREEZES AT CHURCHILL DOWNS** – Monomoy Stables and Michael Dubb’s Ashland (Grade I) winner Monomoy Girl worked a half-mile in :47.40 in company with recent-allowance winner Compass Zone during Saturday’s exclusive training session for Kentucky Derby (GI) and Kentucky Oaks (GI) probables at Churchill Downs.

With jockey Florent Geroux up, Monomoy Girl breezed outside of Compass Zone through splits of :12.40, :24.20, and :36 before galloping out five furlongs in :59.80.

“She’s been training very forward since coming to Churchill Downs,” trainer Brad Cox said. “She’s been keen in the mornings, so we think she’s definitely ready.”

A native of Louisville, Ky., Cox recorded his first Grade I victory with Monomoy Girl in the Ashland. The 38-year-old conditioner grew up within walking distance of Churchill Downs.

“I grew up two blocks outside Churchill Downs,” Cox said. “My father brought me to the track at a very early age and I was just mesmerized reading the racing program and attending the races. I would always watch races during the summer when I was out of school and it always caught my attention to be a part of this game. It was very special to win my first Grade I in the Ashland and being as competitive as I am, I can’t wait to go out and win the second one. Hopefully it’s in the Oaks.”

Monomoy Girl began her career on the turf at Indiana Grand prior to switching to the dirt in her third-career start when she cruised to a 6 ½-length score in the Rags to Riches at Churchill Downs. The lone blemish on daughter of Tapizar’s résumé is a narrow second behind Sassy Sienna in the Nov. 25 Golden Rod (GII).

Stablemate Sassy Sienna, winner of the April 13 Fantasy (GIII) at Oaklawn Park, galloped 1 ½ miles Saturday at Churchill Downs with Edwin Vargas up. The filly is expected to work next weekend, according to Cox.

Beaumont (GIII) runner-up Kelly’s Humor, currently No. 17 on the Kentucky Oaks leaderboard for Cox, breezed four furlongs in :46.80 through splits of :12.60, and :24.40 before galloping out five-eighths of a mile in 1:01.60.

All three fillies are stabled in Cox’s Barn 22 at Churchill Downs.

**COACH ROCKS CLIPS FIVE FURLONGS IN :59 IN PREPARATION FOR KENTUCKY OAKS** – Roddy Valente, RAP Racing and West Point Thoroughbreds’ Gulfstream Park Oaks (Grade II) winner Coach Rocks breezed five furlongs in :59 Saturday morning at Churchill Downs as she continued preparations for the $1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) on May 4.

With former jockey Tammy Fox up, Coach Rocks worked through eighth-mile fractions of :11.60, :22.80, :34.80 and :46.60 before galloping out five furlongs in 1:11.80 and three-quarters of a mile in 1:25.40, according to Churchill Downs clocker John Nichols.

“Look at Tammy’s face, you can tell how much she loved the work,” trainer Dale Romans joked. “(Coach Rocks) is really improving and training well here at Churchill Downs.”

Coach Rocks took seven tries to record her first win but Romans remained optimistic about the daughter of Oxbow’s future.

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“We’ve always thought highly of her,” Romans said. “It was tough to get her maiden broke. She got into some trouble in a few starts but most of her starts she ran really well. She proved that to us by coming from a maiden race and winning the Gulfstream Park Oaks.”

Coach Rocks is stabled in Romans’ Barn 4 at Churchill Downs.

NEW MEXICO SHIPPER BLAMED COMPLETES PENULTIMATE OAKS BREEZE – Cleber Massey’s Sunland Park Oaks winner Blamed worked five furlongs in 1:01.40 Saturday morning at Churchill Downs for trainer Joel Marr in preparation for the $1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I) on May 4.

With jockey Ken Tohill in the saddle, Blamed worked through splits of :13, :25.40 and :37.20 before galloping out six furlongs in 1:14.40, according to Churchill Downs clocker John Nichols.

“It’s exciting to be here in Kentucky for the first time,” Marr said. “This will be the first horse I’ve run in Kentucky and it’s great to be here. We’ll see what she’s made of in the Oaks.”

The filly enters the Kentucky Oaks off five consecutive victories in New Mexico. The daughter of Blame is stabled in Barn 43 at Churchill Downs.

FRONT-RUNNING CLASSY ACT RECORDS FIVE-FURLONG WORK IN :59 FOR OAKS – Carl Moore Management’s Rachel Alexandra (Grade II) second-place finisher Classy Act stepped onto the Churchill Downs track just minutes after it opened Saturday at 5:15 a.m. (all times Eastern) and recorded a five-furlong move in :59 in preparation for a start in the $1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) on May 4.

With jockey Brian Hernandez Jr. in the saddle, Classy Act worked through splits of :12.20, :24, :35.40 and :47.20 prior to galloping out six furlongs in 1:11.60 and seven furlongs in 1:25.40, according to Churchill Downs clocker John Nichols.

“I thought it was a great work,” trainer Bret Calhoun said. “She went to the pole a little aggressive and obviously we are trying to slow her down a little bit, but Brian checked her a couple of times and she settled pretty well. She worked great and finished up well.”

Classy Act was the heavy favorite in the March 24 Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) but tired late in the stretch to finish fourth.

“It was way too aggressive and fast early in the Fair Grounds Oaks,” Calhoun said. “She used to be a filly that loved to sit off the pace and actually needed a target to even work in the mornings. She’s changed and became a little more aggressive so we’re trying to get her to revert back to her old ways.”

Stablemate Patrona Margarita, currently No. 12 on the Kentucky Oaks Leaderboard, remains under Oaks consideration. She galloped 1 ½ miles Saturday and is expected to breeze next week, according to Calhoun.

Both fillies are in Barn 23 at Churchill Downs.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Kentucky Derby hopeful Bravazo walked the shedrow Saturday morning following his six-furlong breeze Friday in 1:15.40 for Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas. The Risen Star (GII) winner is located in Lukas’ Barn 44 at Churchill Downs. … Louisiana Derby (GI) runner-up Lone Sailor jogged one mile Saturday morning at Churchill Downs with regular exercise rider Maurice Sanchez on board for trainer Tom Amoss. The colt breezed Thursday in :57.60 at Churchill Downs. … Likely Kentucky Derby favorite Justify breezed six furlongs in 1:13.20 Saturday morning at Santa Anita for Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert. Joining Justify on the Santa Anita worktab was UAE Derby (GI) runner-up and Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) contender Rayya, who breezed six furlongs in 1:12.80. … Blue Grass (GI) winner Good Magic breezed a half-mile in :48 Saturday morning at Keeneland for trainer Chad Brown. The colt is expected to van from Keeneland to Churchill Downs on Sunday. …. Ashland (GI) runner-up and Kentucky Oaks contender Eskimo Kisses breezed a half-mile in :49.20 Saturday morning at Keeneland for trainer Kenny McPeek. … The Kentucky Derby and Oaks exclusive training period continues through May 3 from 7:30-7:45 a.m. (all times Eastern). No Derby or Oaks contenders are known to breeze Sunday.