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RACING RETURNS TO CHURCHILL DOWNS THURSDAY AT 5 P.M. FOR ACTION-PACKED 14-DAY SEPTEMBER MEET

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2023) – Horse racing on the Kentucky circuit shifts to Churchill Downs on Thursday (Sept. 14) with the first of three **Twilight Thursday** programs at 5 p.m. (all times Eastern) as the famed Louisville racetrack opens its 11th annual **September Meet** for an action-packed 14-date run through Sunday, Oct. 1.

Thursday's eight-race opener lured 79 entries (74 in the body plus five also eligible runners) for an average of 9.3 horses per race. A field of 17 three-year-olds and up (12 will run) was entered for the featured seventh race, a \$134,000 second-level allowance/optional claiming event at 1 1/8 miles on turf. The **Mike Maker**-trained **Yamato** is the 5-2 morning line favorite as the 6-year-old gelding drops back to softer competition after fourth- and eighth-place finishes against graded stakes company in the Louisville (GIII) and United Nations (GI), respectively.

The opening day program also has a \$127,000 first-level allowance/optional claimer for 2-year-old fillies at 6 ½ furlongs led by the **Wesley Ward**-trained **Sam's Treasure** and Adirondack (GIII) third **Streaming Now** (Race 6), and a \$120,000 maiden special weight for 2-year-old fillies at 1 1/16 miles (Race 5).

Horsemen will compete for a record \$15.133 million (all purses include prize money from the **Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund**) offered in Vice President of Racing **Ben Huffman**'s September Meet condition book, which features 135 races including a 12-race stakes schedule cumulatively worth a record \$3.775 million.

Average daily purses are \$1,080,929. Maiden special weight races have a \$120,000 purse while allowance races range from \$127,000 to \$141,000.

Five stakes races, including two important fixtures for juveniles that could produce starters in this year's Breeders' Cup and next spring's Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) and the Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI), will be showcased Saturday afternoon. Total prize money for the 11-race program is \$2.251 million – the most lucrative day of the boutique meet.

The \$300,000 Iroquois (GIII) kicks off the Road to the 150th Kentucky Derby series, while the \$300,000 Pocahontas (GIII) starts the Road to the 150th Kentucky Oaks. The promising Gun Runner colt **Risk It**, who won his Saratoga debut by 4 ½ lengths for Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen**, heads the one-mile Iroquois. **Empire Island**, **Hot Beach**, **Riperton**, **V V's Dream** and **Youalmosthadme** are among the entrants in the Pocahontas.

Meanwhile Distaff and Filly & Mare Sprint prospects surface in a pair of Saturday stakes for fillies and mares, the \$400,000 Locust Grove (GIII) over 1 1/16 miles and the \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) at six furlongs. The Locust Grove attracted Grade I winners **Pauline's Pearl** and **A Mo Reay**, who were first and third, respectively in the Fleur de Lis (GII), as well as Grade I winner **Search Results**. Seven-time stakes winner **Wicked Halo** heads the Open Mind.

The \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society, an open sprint for 3-year-olds and up at six furlongs, starts the stakes-laden program and will feature crack-sprinter **Bango**, who will attempt to land his record-equaling 11th Churchill Downs win in showdown with Iowa Sprint runner-up **Strobe**.

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Other marque events during the September Meet include a stakes quartet in primetime under the light for the final Downs After Dark of the year on Saturday, Sept. 23: the \$300,000 Dogwood (GIII) for 3-year-old fillies at seven furlongs; \$300,000 Bourbon Trail for 3-year-olds at 1 3/16 miles; \$300,000 Harrods Creek for 3-year-olds at seven furlongs; and \$175,000 Seneca Overnight Stakes for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/16 miles.

Closing weekend is anchored by the \$500,000 Lukas Classic (GII) for 3-year-olds and up at 1 1/8 miles on Saturday, Sept. 30 and honors Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas**, the iconic four-time winner of the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks and conditioner of 26 Eclipse Award-winning champions who has been based at Churchill Downs' Barn 44 since 1989. The Lukas Classic serves as a prep for the \$6 million Longines Breeders' Cup Classic (GI) five weeks in advance of the Nov. 4 race at Santa Anita.

Also run on Sept. 30 is the \$400,000 Ack Ack (GIII) for 3-year-olds and up at one mile – a Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In" race for the Nov. 4 Dirt Mile at Santa Anita – and the return of the \$200,000 Jefferson Cup for 3-year-olds at one mile on turf.

Five-Day Racing Weeks

Churchill Downs' 14-day meet will be staged over three weeks from Thursday, Sept. 14 through Sunday, Oct. 1 with racing on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Outside of the three Twilight Thursdays (5 p.m. ET) and the lone Downs After Dark on Sept. 23 (6 p.m. ET), the first race for all other race days will be 12:45 p.m. ET. Nine races are scheduled on Wednesdays, eight races are scheduled on Thursdays with 10-race programs on Fridays and Sundays. Eleven races will be showcased each Saturday.

Popular 5 p.m. 'Twilight Thursdays' Return With \$2 Beer, Live Music, Food Trucks

Churchill Downs will host three **Twilight Thursdays** from 5-8 p.m. at The Grove, which is located just inside the Clubhouse and VIP Gates. Weekly features include \$2 select domestic can beer, live music (**The Leftovers Band** on Sept. 14; **Sweet Lady** on Sept. 21; and **Tyler Embry** on Sept. 28) and food trucks.

The Food Truck lineup includes **Annie Up Pizza** (Sept. 21 and Sept. 28), **Bamba Egg Rolls** (Sept. 28), **Black Rock Grille** (Sept. 14), **Celtic Pig** (Sept. 14 and 21), **Cookie Dough Bliss** (Sept. 14), **Cooper Kitchen** (Sept. 21), **FlavaVille** (Sept. 28), **HurriKanes** (Sept. 28), **Mr. C's Cheesecakes** (Sept. 21), **Red Top Hot Dogs** (Sept. 21), **Seafood Lady** (Sept. 14), **Smok'n Cantina** (Sept. 28) and **Sweet n Savory** (Sept. 14).

Connections of Mage to Receive Engraved Kentucky Derby Trophies on Saturday, Sept. 16

The connections of Mage – owners **OGMA Investments** (Gustavo Delgado), **Ramiro Restrepo**, **Sterling Racing** (Sam Herzberg) and **CMNWLTH** (Brian Doxtator and Chase Chamberlain); trainer **Gustavo Delgado**; and breeder **Grandview Equine** (Robert Clay) – will be on-hand at Churchill Downs on Saturday, Sept. 16 to receive their engraved Kentucky Derby 149 trophies after the Iroquois Stakes. Jockey **Javier Castellano** is unable to attend due to riding commitments elsewhere. Engraved Oaks trophies will be presented to the connections of **Pretty Mischievous** after the Pochontas.

All guests in attendance at Churchill Downs on Saturday also will be able to take pictures with the trophies beforehand at The Grove, which is located just inside the Clubhouse and VIP Gates, between 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Senior Day on Friday, Sept. 22

The lone **Senior Day** of the September Meet at Churchill Downs is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 22. Guests 60 and up will receive \$3 general admission or can enjoy lunch and a day at the races in Millionaires Row or Skye Terrace for only \$34. Senior Day tickets can be purchased by calling (502) 636-4450.

Downs After Dark: Bourbon & Boots on Saturday, Sept. 23

The final **Downs After Dark** of the year will take place Saturday, Sept. 23 as Churchill Downs presents “Bourbon & Boots” where Music City meets Derby City with the perfect combination of music, bourbon, fashion and horse racing.

Louisville’s biggest “Honky Tonk” will feature music from **DJ Stingy** (5-8:15 p.m.) and Nashville’s **Tim Cote Band with special guest Lana Scott** (8:30-11 p.m.) on a stage at The Grove, which is located just inside the Clubhouse and VIP Gates. There also will be **a mechanical bull; a Tootsie’s-inspired photo booth; Nashville-inspired murals; Sherwin-Williams Sponsored Live Art; and an Old Forester Cocktail Demonstration.**

Admission gates will open at 5 p.m. and the 11-race program will be conducted between 6-11:10 p.m. General admission to Downs After Dark is \$20 and includes an official program. Guests under the age of 18 will only be admitted to the track if accompanied by a parent or adult guardian. Limited premium dining packages are available starting at \$84 per person. Outdoor box seats range from \$25 to \$35 per person. Reserved seating can be purchased online at www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets.

Family Adventure Day Scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 1

Family Adventure Day is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 1 at The Grove, which is located just inside the Clubhouse and VIP Gates. Families are encouraged to bring the kids to Churchill Downs for a day of racing and family activities including **face painting; inflatables; a bubble station; music; an arts and craft station; and the Kona ice truck.** Up to two children may attend for free per paying adult.

Betting Menu Features 20-Cent Derby City 6 Jackpot

The betting menu will be the same as recent meets and includes the 20-cent minimum **“Derby City 6”** jackpot, which is offered on the last six races each day with a low 15-percent takeout. The Derby City 6 jackpot will be paid only if there is a single winning wager with six winners placed at the required minimum bet value. If there are multiple winning wagers with six winners in the six-race sequence, 90 percent of the net money wagering into the pool will be paid, and the remaining 10 percent will carry to the Derby City 6 jackpot. If there are no tickets will all six winners, 100 percent of the pool will carry to the Derby City 6 jackpot. There will be a mandatory payout on closing day.

The daily betting menu also features 50-cent Pick 5s with a low 15-percent takeout and 50-cent Pick 4s. Win, Place, Show, Exacta, 50-cent Trifecta, 10-cent Superfecta, Daily Double, 50-cent Pick 3 wagers and rolling \$1 Super Hi-5s will be offered every race (on all races that qualify under Kentucky statutes for minimum field size).

Free Workout Videos for Horseplayers

Thanks to the support of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund, horseplayers and horsemen can view workouts of select horses at Churchill Downs free-of-charge throughout the year. The workouts are available at <https://www.kentuckybred.org/workout-videos/>.

Gaffalione, Cox, Wests Defend September Titles

Tyler Gaffalione had the hot hand during last year’s September Meet with 13 wins, one more than **Florent Geroux** and two more than **Brian Hernandez Jr.** **Brad Cox** was last September’s champion trainer with 11 wins, four more than **Tom Amoss, Steve Asmussen** and **Kenny McPeck.** **Gary and Mary West** were the runaway leading owners with seven trips to the winner’s circle, four more than **Godolphin LLC.**

2023 Churchill Downs September Meet Stakes Schedule

Date	Running	Grade	Purse	Race	Conditions	Distance	Surface
Saturday, Sept. 16	39 th	III	\$400,000	Locust Grove	3&cup, f&m	1 1/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 16	42 nd	III	\$300,000	Iroquois	2yo	1 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 16	55 th	III	\$300,000	Pocahontas	2yo f	1 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 16	14 th	Listed	\$300,000	Open Mind	3&cup, f&m	6 F	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 16	3 rd		\$300,000	Louisville Thoroughbred Society	3&cup	6 F	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 23	48 th	III	\$300,000	Dogwood	3yo f	7 F	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 23	3 rd		\$300,000	Bourbon Trail	3yo	1 3/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 23	3 rd		\$300,000	Harrods Creek	3yo	7 F	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 23	3 rd		\$175,000	Seneca Overnight Stakes	3yo f	1 1/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 30	10 th	II	\$500,000	Lukas Classic	3&cup	1 1/8 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 30	31 st	III	\$400,000	Ack Ack	3&cup	1 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 30	43 rd		\$200,000	Jefferson Cup	3yo	1 M	Turf

* All purses include prize money from the Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund

General Admission, Reserved Seating Options

General admission to Churchill Downs is \$10 (\$20 for Downs After Dark on Saturday, Sept. 23). Reserved box seats range from \$12 to \$15 (\$25 to \$35 for Downs After Dark) and indoor dining options start at \$44 (\$84 for Downs After Dark). Children 12 and under are admitted free when accompanied by an adult (Downs After Dark policy: no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to the track unless they are accompanied by a parent or responsible adult). Tickets can be purchased online at www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets or by calling (502) 636-4400.

Odds and Ends

Travis Stone will describe the racing action throughout the September Meet for the ninth straight year. Veteran odds maker **Mike Battaglia** has morning line odds duty for the 49th consecutive year.

'Churchill Downs Today' Airs One-Hour Before First Race

Horseplayers can get the latest expert advice and a preview of the day's card by watching "**Churchill Downs Today**" one hour prior to first post. Join **Joe Kristufek**, **Scott Shapiro** and **Kaitlin Free** as the trio will handicap the program, give crucial ticket-structure advice and inside information for horseplayers betting the racing program. Churchill Downs Today will be shown on www.TwinSpires.com, the Churchill Downs LIVE app on Smart TVs and Twitter via @ChurchillDowns.

Churchill Downs Racing Televised on FanDuel TV

The racing action from Churchill Downs throughout the September Meet will be broadcast on FanDuel TV and the FanDuel+ app. Several FanDuel TV hosts and handicappers will be live on-site throughout the September Meet including **Andie Biancone**, **Christina Blacker**, **Caton Bedar**, **Matt Carrothers**, **Larry Collmus**, **Gabby Gaudet**, **Joaquin Jaime**, **Mike Joyce**, **Caleb Keller** and **Todd Schrupp**.

Wager on Churchill Downs Racing via TwinSpires.com

Racing fans are encouraged to wager on racing from Churchill Downs via www.TwinSpires.com, the official advance-deposit wagering service for Churchill Downs Incorporated and its family of racetracks. TwinSpires.com boasts an improved wagering experience and mobile app combining the latest technology with the ability to wager on virtually every quarter, harness and thoroughbred horse race from venues across the globe. TwinSpires.com also offers access to unmatched insight and analysis from our horse racing experts, handicappers, insiders, educators and Bloodstock Research Information Services (Brisnet).

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Paddock, Jockey Club Suites Construction Continues; Entry Procedures for Remainder of Year

Construction on the new \$200 million Paddock and a \$14 million renovation of the Jockey Club Suites at Churchill Downs continues. As was the case during the Spring Meet, a temporary saddling paddock adjacent to the First Turn Grandstand will be utilized and several areas of the facility will be closed for the remainder of the year.

Here are some things guests need to know prior to arriving at Churchill Downs:

Parking:

- Guests are encouraged to park in the Yellow (Y30-Y39) and Turquoise Lots. The White (W1-W11), Black and Green Lots also will be open.
- Passes are required the Red, White (Racine to W18), Blue (B20-B25) and Yellow (Y26-Y-29) Lots.
- ADA Placards will be permitted to the White Lot (W16-W-18) on a first come, first serve basis.
- Rideshare and taxis can be accessed at the VIP Gate.
- Bus parking is located in the Black or Turquoise Lots.

Entry Gates:

- Guests can enter either the Clubhouse or VIP Gates each day of the 2023 Racing Season.
- The Executive Gate will be used when groups are in the Starting Gate Suites or Homestretch Club.

Box Office:

- The Clubhouse Box Office will open one hour before gates each live race day and close at the second to last post.

Grandstand Seating:

- General Admission: Sections 113-114.
- Reserved Seating: Sections 115-117 and 313-319.

Temporary Saddling Paddock:

- A temporary saddling paddock has been constructed adjacent to the new First Turn Grandstand.

First Turn Grandstand:

- The First Turn viewing terrace is open to guests.
- The first floor inside the First Turn is open for horsemen.
- The second and third floors of the First Turn Grandstand are closed.

Food and Beverage Options

- Second Floor Clubhouse ITW (moving to cashless operations)
- Twilight Thursdays: food trucks and beer sales will be available at The Grove, which is located inside the Clubhouse and VIP Gates.
- Matt Winn's Steakhouse: open Wednesday-Saturday from 5-10 p.m.

Areas Closed:

- Paddock Gate
- Jockey Club Suites
- Plaza Area
- Paddock Grill and Red Roses Bar behind section 117
- Winner's Circle Suites 0-20
- Courtyard 118-119 and Lounge Area
- President's Hallway
- Third-floor box seats 320-328
- Parking in Orange and Pink Lots.

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Churchill Downs Implements Key Enhancements to Further Ensure Safety

The September Meet at Churchill Downs will take place following a temporary suspension of racing operations during the Spring Meet to conduct an internal safety review. Following a comprehensive evaluation of existing safety protocols and a thorough assessment of industry best practices, Churchill Downs has implemented several key enhancements to further ensure the safety and well-being of equine and human athletes. Key elements include:

- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Analysis by multiple leading industry experts found no issues with the racing surfaces, however, to further maximize surface oversight and consistency, the Racetrack has invested in additional new surface maintenance equipment and committed to doubling the frequency of surface testing.
- **Increased Veterinary Oversight:** Additional resources will be added to CDI's highly qualified veterinary team to provide additional monitoring and specialized care for horses and assist in pre-race inspections and entry screening.
- **Collaboration with Industry Experts:** Work will continue with HISA and other industry experts to predict at-risk horses using up-to-date data and advanced analytic techniques.
- **Establish Safety Management Committee:** A new safety committee will be established consisting of horsemen designees, racetrack employees and veterinarians to candidly discuss concerns and observations to constantly provide real time feedback on areas of improvement.

"We are excited to resume live racing again at Churchill Downs," said Bill Carstanjen, CEO of Churchill Downs Incorporated. "Our commitment to safety remains paramount as we enter this September Meet and our participants, fans and the public can be assured that we will continue to investigate, evaluate and improve upon every policy and protocol."

Additional Information

For more information, call (502) 636-4400 or visit www.churchilldowns.com.

ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK

Churchill Downs Racetrack ("CDRT"), the world's most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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