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CHURCHILL DOWNS PARTNERS WITH JOCKEY CLUB, ROYAL ASCOT FOR NEW KENTUCKY DERBY WEEK INITIATIVE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023) – Churchill Downs has announced a new partnership with the British Jockey Club along with Ascot Racecourse to offer a program where horses competing during Kentucky Derby week could receive an entry and travel incentive for races at Epsom Downs and the Royal Ascot meeting.

“This is a really special partnership that will give owners and trainers a great opportunity to run in some of our marquee races during Kentucky Derby week and, in exchange, they could receive entries into some of Europe’s most prestigious turf races,” said **Gary Palmisano Jr.**, Executive Director of Racing for Churchill Downs Incorporated. “The Kentucky Derby was born after Colonel Meriweather Lewis Clark visited Europe for the Epsom Derby in 1872. With this being the 150th Kentucky Derby, it is a great chance to revisit history. More recently, we’ve annually seen some of our country’s top turf horses compete on the undercard of the Kentucky Derby and this partnership will give owners and trainers based in Europe a good initiative to bring some of their top horses over to experience Kentucky Derby week. Not only is this a great opportunity for connections based in Europe but this will give our owners and trainers here in North America a shot to compete on the international stage.”

Two races on Kentucky Derby Day will offer horses an entry and travel incentive to run at Royal Ascot in mid-June. The winner of the Old Forester Turf Classic (Grade I) will receive a berth to either the one-mile Queen Anne Stakes (GI) or 1 ¼-mile Prince of Wales’s Stakes (GI). Earlier on the Kentucky Derby Day program, the winner of the Twin Spires Turf Sprint (GII) will receive an entry to the King Charles Stakes (GI).

“We are very excited to be working with Churchill Downs and the UK Jockey Club on this exciting new initiative,” said **Nick Smith**, Director of Racing and Public Affairs at Ascot Racecourse. “We were very pleased to play our part hosting the Churchill team at Royal Ascot last year, with the Kentucky Derby trophy on display as they built up to this important 150th running of the world’s greatest dirt race. We have a rich modern history of American runners at Royal Ascot and their success always adds hugely to the meeting – with NBC covering the event all week, the Saturday on the main network channel, hopefully this new link up of races will add a new dimension to their and ITV’s coverage.”

Three-year-old turf specialists in the American Turf (GII) and Edgewood (GII) can receive their entry to either the Betfred Derby (GI) or Betfred Oaks (GI) at Epsom Downs. The winner of the American Turf on Kentucky Derby Day will receive an entry and travel stipend to compete in the Betfred Derby while one day earlier, on Kentucky Oaks Day, the winner of the Edgewood will receive the same benefits for the Betfred Oaks.

“We’re delighted to develop these links with races at the Kentucky Derby Meeting in its 150th year,” said **Matt Woolston**, Assistant Racing and International Racing Director at The Jockey Club. “A trip to Churchill Downs is one that should be on the bucket list for every racing fan, the world over. The Kentucky Derby itself can trace its origin back to Epsom Downs in 1780 when Diomed won the very first Derby and we are proud to reinforce this historic link. We look forward to welcoming American runners to the Betfred Oaks and Betfred Derby. Runners who perform well in the Edgewood Stakes and the American Turf will come to Epsom Downs with a fighting chance and it will be fascinating to see how they fare. These historic races already have an international reputation, and we want to welcome more and more international runners in the years to come.”

In return for the above incentives for horses on Kentucky Derby weekend, a runner from both the Prince of Wales’s Stakes and Queen Anne Stakes will receive an entry and a travel incentive to run in the Arlington Million Stakes (GI) in mid-August at Colonial Downs. In addition, a runner from the Tattersalls Falmouth Stakes (GI) at Newmarket’s July Festival will also receive an entry and travel incentive to run in the Beverly D. Stakes (GI) on the same day as the Arlington Million.

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 saddling paddock and 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 Race and Sports Book and simulcast wagering facility. www.churchilldowns.com.

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