

SIERRA LEONE TOPS HEAVY WORK TAB OF KENTUCKY DERBY HOPEFULS

LOUISVILLE, KY (Saturday, April 27, 2024) – On a picture perfect Saturday morning at Churchill Downs, Blue Grass Stakes (GI) winner Sierra Leone headlined a list of nine Kentucky Derby hopefuls who put in their works for the 150th running of the \$5 million Kentucky Derby (GI) presented by Woodford Reserve.

Working in company with stablemate **Domestic Product**, the duo breezed five furlongs in 1:00.20. Splits for the duo were :13, :24.80, :36.40 and galloped out in 1:13.20 and 1:26.20.

Also working Saturday morning over a fast track were **Catching Freedom** and **Encino** (five furlongs together in :59.20), **Dornoch** and **Society Man** (four furlongs together in :46.60), **Just a Touch** (five furlongs in 1:00.80), **West Saratoga** (three furlongs in :37.20) and **Mystik Dan** (five furlongs in 1:01.20).

Working toward the Longines Kentucky Oaks were **Regulatory Risk** (four furlongs in :49.60) and **Lemon Muffin** (five furlongs in :58.20).

Scheduled to work Sunday morning are Santa Anita Derby (GI) winner **Stronghold**, Florida Derby (GI) runner-up **Catalytic** and Ashland (GI) runner-up **Just F Y I**. Possible to breeze are Wood Memorial (GII) winner **Resilience** and Arkansas Derby (GI) runner-up **Just Steel**.

Post positions for the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks will be drawn this evening at 7:15 ET following the third race on the Opening Night of the 44-day Spring Meet.

CATALYTIC – Trainer **Saffie Joseph Jr.** was preparing **Tami Bobo**, **Julie Davies** and **George Isaacs' Catalytic** for a planned Sunday work. On Saturday, the Florida Derby (GI) runner-up was out with exercise rider **Olaf Hernandez** during the designated training time for Oaks and Derby horses.

“He’s doing well,” said Joseph, who plans to keep a string of horses stabled at Churchill for the entire meet. “He had a nice gallop today, about a mile-and-a-half again. I thought he got over the track well.”

Catalytic is scheduled to work Sunday during the designated training period for Oaks and Derby horses that starts around 7:30 a.m.

CATCHING FREEDOM/ENCINO/JUST A TOUCH – “Let’s go to work.”

That was the statement **Brad Cox** said when he arrived at Barn 22 early Saturday morning before his trio of Kentucky Derby contenders – **Catching Freedom** (five furlongs, :59.20); **Encino** (five furlongs, :59.20) and **Just a Touch** (five furlongs, 1:00.80) – all had their final works prior to the “Run for the Roses.”

At 5:15 a.m., **Albaugh Family Stables' Catching Freedom** worked to the inside of **Godolphin's Encino**. The duo went an opening quarter-mile in :23.80 and galloped out six furlongs in 1:12.

Then, during the 7:30 a.m. exclusive training window for Derby/Oaks contenders, **Qatar Racing, Resolute Racing** and **Marc Detampel's Just a Touch** breezed five furlongs in 1:00.80.

“Solid morning overall,” said jockey **Florent Geroux**, who worked both Encino and Just a Touch. “I thought both horses worked well. Encino seems to have bounced out of the Lexington in good shape and was solid. Just a Touch was very easy. He did everything on his own.”

Geroux is set to ride Just a Touch while 2023 Eclipse Award-winning apprentice rider **Axel Concepcion**, represented by Cox’s son, **Bryson**, will ride Encino.

“All three had good, solid moves this morning,” Cox said. “I liked the breeze this morning for Encino and that was really the thing we were looking for as far as making the decision to enter the Derby. His work went great. We did a little more with him this morning than we normally would back in two weeks. He responded well and so did Catching Freedom.”

“I thought Just a Touch went pretty working a minute and change and galloped out in hand.”

All three Derby contenders are scheduled to have an easy Sunday morning and walk the shedrow.

DOMESTIC PRODUCT/SIERRA LEONE – Call it trainer speak, but **Chad Brown** was definitive in his belief that what he saw from his two Kentucky Derby (GI) contenders Saturday morning was just the eyeful he was looking for one week out from the first leg of the Triple Crown

Heading up a busy work tab morning under ideal weather conditions, the Brown-trained duo of **Peter Brant, Mrs. John Magnier, Michael Tabor, Derrick Smith, Westerberg** and **Brook Smith's Sierra Leone** and **Klaravich Stables' homebred Domestic Product** put in their final major piece of work ahead of the 10-furlong classic on May 4. Working in company with Blue Grass Stakes (GI) winner Sierra Leone inside, the duo drilled five furlongs in 1:00.20 over the fast main track.

With **Kriss Bon** in the irons for Sierra Leone and **Tyler Gaffalione** up on Domestic Product, the duo notched splits of :13, :24.80, :36.40 and galloped out in 1:13.20 and 1:26.20. Gaffalione is set to be aboard Sierra Leone on Derby Day, but has ridden Domestic Product in the past and was filling in for **Irad Ortiz Jr.**, who had to be in New York.

“Just that,” Brown said when asked what he wanted to see from his Derby duo. “It was executed perfectly. I wanted them to a good five-eighths out in three-quarters but well within themselves. (Sierra Leone) is super fit and it was just an outstanding work. I’m just trying to get him in there happy and sound.

“He’s a very rare horse. He’s just everything you want as a trainer.”

Touting himself in the morning hours is nothing new for Sierra Leone, as he posted a similarly impressive four-furlong breeze at Keeneland on April 20. With the last breeze now in the books, Brown can now focus on getting the horse who may arguably be his best Kentucky Derby contender yet over to the starting gate in the best condition possible.

“We’re just really trying to stay out of his way. Me and my team, we’ve been managing this horse and just trying to allow him to be who he was meant to be,” said Brown, who best finish in the Kentucky Derby came when he second with champion **Good Magic** in 2018. “Don’t do anything to prevent him from getting there really. He has a tremendous amount of power and endurance. He might not be the fastest horse early in his races but once he gets moving, it does seem like his stride is probably two to the horses next to him.

Brown added that Sierra Leone, who was fractious while loading for the Blue Grass Stakes, has had two gate schooling sessions at Churchill.

“He’s visited the gate twice this week and did really well, there is no need to take him back,” Brown said.

Domestic Product is one Brown said has been “glowing” since he arrived at Churchill Downs. The winner of the Tampa Bay Derby (GIII) on March 9 continued that trend with the way he handled the final workout.

“With these two horses, I feel as confident that I’ll have good runs in the Derby if they can get clear trips,” Brown said.

DORNOCH/SOCIETY MAN – The **Danny Gargan**-trained duo of **Dornoch** and **Society Man** have been workmates for each other throughout their careers. Hence, it was fitting the two pushed each other through the last major breeze ahead of the biggest race of their young lives.

Dornoch, owned by **West Paces Racing, R. A. Hill Stable, Belmar Racing and Breeding, Two Eight Racing and Pine Racing Stables**, and stablemate Society Man were once again in company as they put in a half-mile move in :46.60 during the 7:30 a.m. training period at Churchill Downs Saturday.

With Dornoch situated on the inside, the two posted splits of :11.60, 23.20, and 34.60 before galloping out in :59 and 1:12.60.

“The track is playing super fast right now,” Gargan said. “We thought we’d go in 47 and change, I got them 46 and 4. They went out nice though and ... that’s kind of the work for everybody, they’re all going around the same time. We wanted to go a little bit slower but they looked good doing it, they were in hand, no one was asking them. We’re just hoping they come back good, everything looks good and they’re cooling out good.”

Society Man, who is owned by the partnership of **Reeves Thoroughbreds, West Paces, GMP Stables and Carl and Yurie Pascarella**, has been friendly company for his multiple graded stakes winning stablemate since their juvenile seasons with Gargan saying the Wood Memorial (GII) runner-up is one of the few horses he has that can hang with Dornoch.

“They’ve worked together even as 2-year-olds,” Gargan said. “They’ve breezed together multiple times, I couldn’t even tell you how many times. They worked twice before the Remsen together and they’ve worked twice here now together. They worked in Saratoga together as babies so they’re definitely familiar with each other.”

ENDLESSLY – Trainer **Michael McCarthy** was asked if the conversation had taken place.

“It’s been done,” the conditioner said. “We’ll be running in the Derby.”

The Oscar Performance colt had drilled a half-mile in :47.80 Friday morning and the trainer had called owner **John Amerman** not long after to discuss the next step for his multiple-stakes winner.

The bay was a winner of five of his six starts, none of them on dirt. In light of that, the conditioner gently encouraged his boss to consider staying on the sure road and entering Endlessly in the \$600,000 American Turf (GII) next Saturday.

But Derby Fever is hard to cure and owner-breeder Amerman and his wife **Jerry** opted to take their big shot at the world’s most famous race.

So it will be a first-timers special for the connections around the bay: Owner, trainer and jockey (**Umberto Rispoli**) will all be experiencing their first go-round in the \$5 million headliner.

FIERCENESS – The possible Kentucky Derby favorite – **Repole Stable’s Fierceness** – had a quiet walk morning Saturday at Churchill Downs following his :48.80 final prep Friday for the Run for the Roses.

“He looked super this morning,” trainer **Todd Pletcher** said of his Florida Derby (GI) winner. “We’re all good.”

The trainer has lined-up Hall of Famer **John Velazquez** to be at the controls for 2023’s 2-year-old champion. Racing fans with a recall for recent history might remember a similar scenario in 2017. Pletcher won the Florida Derby with **Always Dreaming**, then gave Velazquez a leg up on the colt in the Kentucky Derby. They met next in the winner’s circle.

FOREVER YOUNG (JPN) – **Susumu Fujita’s Forever Young (JPN)** warmed up in the mile chute during the morning’s first harrow break and then gallop at a two-minute-mile clip under **Yusaku Oka**.

Trainer **Yoshito Yahagi** is scheduled to arrive in Louisville Tuesday night. Fujita is scheduled to arrive in Louisville on Friday.

GRAND MO THE FIRST – Granpollo Stables' Grand Mo the First made his first appearance on the track Saturday morning for trainer **Victor Barboza Jr.**, jogging a mile under exercise rider **Amel Macias**.

Grand Mo the First walked around in the grass behind Barn 41 before going to the track at 6:45 when equine traffic thinned before the first harrow break of the morning. Barboza said the colt would train at the same time during the coming week.

Grand Mo the First worked six furlongs in 1:16.46 at Gulfstream Park on Tuesday that will serve as his final pre-Derby work.

"No works here, but he will go to the paddock and gate one or two times," said Barboza, who won an allowance race last year here on Derby Day with **Petulante**.

Third in the Tampa Bay Derby (GIII) and Florida Derby (GI) in his past two starts, Grand Mo the First will be ridden in the Derby by **Emisael Jaramillo**.

Barboza was eager Saturday morning to see what this evening's post position draw would bring.

"The draw is very important," Barboza said. "I don't want to be inside where a lot of horses could come over on you. I'd prefer the middle to the outside, say from the 12 to the 18."

HONOR MARIE – TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby (GII) runner-up Honor Marie went back to the track Saturday for the first time since his sharp five-furlong drill in :59.20 Thursday.

"He came out of the work great," trainer **Whit Beckman** said. "I was very happy when I got back to the barn from the work because he looked like he didn't do much at all."

Honor Marie jogged about a mile under regular exercise rider **Maurilio Garcia**.

JUST STEEL – BC Stable's Just Steel, runner-up in the Arkansas Derby (GI) in his most recent outing, galloped during the special 7:30 a.m. training period with trainer **D. Wayne Lukas** looking on.

"The next couple days I might do something with him," Lukas said regarding when Just Steel might have his final pre-Derby breeze.

MYSTIK DAN – Lance Gasaway, 4 G Racing and Daniel Hamby III's Mystik Dan put in his final major tuneup on Saturday for the Derby for trainer **Kenny McPeek**. He was timed for the five furlongs in 1:01.20 with jockey **Brian Hernandez Jr.**, finishing up in 1:14.40.

"It was pretty basic stuff out there," McPeek said. "For me, he worked fast enough last weekend. He didn't need a whole lot. I told Brian to go a minute and change, and that I didn't want him to go 59. He went in 1:01, which is fine, and he had a nice gallop out. He'll gate school, paddock school, and have regular gallops all week."

Mystik Dan, the winner of the Southwest (GIII) and most recently finished third in the Arkansas Derby (GI) at Oaklawn Park, will have Hernandez aboard in the Derby.

Traffic problems may have cost him an even better finish in the Arkansas Derby.

"He could have had a cleaner trip. He got turned sideways on the first turn, and I think it cost him some ground," McPeek said. "But he ran well enough to get him some points to get in. He likes it here, this is his home track. He almost got the track record for five-and-a-half (furlongs) on a dry track. We're pretty optimistic, whether it's rain or shine."

RESILIENCE – Similar to Friday, Emily Bushnell and Ric Waldman's Wood Memorial (GII) winner Resilience galloped during the 7:30 training session Saturday morning after taking a trip through the new Churchill Downs paddock. Trainer **Bill Mott** said his intention is to work Resilience on Sunday.

STRONGHOLD – The Santa Anita Derby (GI) winner Stronghold again trained during the special 7:30-7:45 Oaks/Derby session Saturday morning at Churchill Downs. The Ghostzapper colt galloped strongly for exercise rider **Sherri Alexander**, covering about a mile and one half on a fast track during a warm morning.

Trainer **Phil D'Amato** looked on from the clocker's stand on the backside and said he liked what he saw.

"He seems like he's full of energy," the conditioner said, "and that what you like to see. I'm very happy with how he's coming up to this."

D'Amato has scheduled Stronghold's final prep for the \$5 million Derby for Sunday during the 7:30-7:45 special training period for Oaks and Derby runners. He's signed on local rider **Joe Talamo** to be aboard for a work of "probably five furlongs."

Stronghold's Derby date means it will be another case of an owner (**Eric and Sharon Waller**), a trainer (D'Amato) and a jockey (**Antonio Fresu**) getting their first go-round in the world's most famous race.

T O PASSWORD (JPN) – Tomoya Ozasa's T O Password (JPN) left the Quarantine Barn at 5:45 Saturday morning for his first activity at Churchill Downs since arriving early Friday from Chicago where he was in quarantine.

With training assistant **Yuichi Tomomichi** aboard, T O Password and stablemate **T O Saint Denis (JPN)** warmed up for about a half-hour in the mile chute and then galloped a mile before returning to the chute to cool down. T O Saint Denis is a candidate for Friday's \$750,000 Alysheba (GII) presented by Sentient Jet.

Trainer **Daisuke Takayanagi** is scheduled to arrive in Louisville Monday afternoon. Breeder **Bokujo Yanagawa** arrives Friday and will represent the owner.

Kazushi Kimura, who has the Derby mount, is scheduled to arrive in Louisville Monday.

TRACK PHANTOM – L and N Racing, Clark Brewster, Jerry Caroom and Breeze Easy's Track Phantom had another routine 1 ½-mile gallop Saturday around 5:45 a.m. under exercise rider **Roberto Howell**.

The **Steve Asmussen** trainee is scheduled to school in both the paddock and starting gate prior to the Derby.

WEST SARATOGA – Harry Veruchi's **West Saratoga** completed his major training for Derby 150 by working three furlongs under jockey **Jesus Castanon** in :37.20.

With Veruchi and trainer **Larry Demeritte** looking on from the frontside, West Saratoga clocked an initial eighth in :11.80 and galloped out a half-mile in :50.20.

"He was good this morning and handled the track well," said Castanon, who waited to work until six other Derby and two Oaks hopefuls had completed their breezes. "He has handled every track that I have been on him ... Tampa, Turfway, Keeneland and here."

Demeritte only got to see the last part of the work.

"By the time we got to the frontside, I just got to see the stretch," Demeritte said. "I liked the gallop out. I was hoping for :36, but he had strong gallop out."

Demeritte said West Saratoga would walk Sunday and then gallop up to the race with paddock schooling slated for Monday and a gate visit for Tuesday.

After the work, West Saratoga was a handful after getting a bath.

"He likes to show off for the cameras," Demeritte said. "If he's happy, I'm happy."

West Saratoga is named for the street in Littleton, Colorado, where Veruchi grew up.

"It is six blocks from the old Centennial Racetrack which closed in 1983," said Veruchi, who is in Louisville through the Derby.

ALSO ELIGIBLES – **Welch Racing's Epic Ride** galloped a mile under **Sophie Doyle** for trainer **John Ennis**.

Epic Ride arrived at Churchill Downs at 8 p.m. Friday from The Thoroughbred Center in Lexington where he worked a half-mile in :51.20 that morning.

Epic Ride will need one deflection from the anticipated Derby field to make the main body of the race.

"We are going to go to the paddock maybe Wednesday and the gate Thursday," Ennis said. "If we get in, we get in. If we don't, after scratch time Friday we will go back to Lexington. I'm not sure (where he may run next if he does not get in the Derby.)"

Average Joe Racing Stables and **Dan Wells' Mugatu** galloped at a two-minute lick under **Joe Talamo** at 9 o'clock for trainer **Jeff Engler**.

Mugatu arrived at Churchill Downs at 5 p.m. Friday from Belterra.

"We moved to Belterra from Turfway so he could train on the dirt," Engler said. "If he doesn't get in the Derby, he would probably work here and then ship Saturday or Sunday for the Peter Pan."

The \$200,000 Peter Pan (GIII) will be run May 11 at Aqueduct going 1 1/8 miles.

SHAPING UP: THE KENTUCKY DERBY – Here are the horses (with jockeys and trainers) that are qualified for the Kentucky Derby and those on the also-eligible list (in alphabetical order with AEs listed last in preference order):

Catalytic (Jose Ortiz, Saffie Joseph Jr.); **Catching Freedom** (Flavien Prat, Brad Cox); **Domestic Product** (Irad

Ortiz Jr., Chad Brown); **Dornoch** (Luis Saez, Danny Gargan); **Encino** (Axel Concepcion, Brad Cox); **Endlessly** (Umberto Rispoli, Michael McCarthy); **Fierceness** (John Velazquez, Todd Pletcher); **Forever Young (JPN)** (Ryusei Sakai, Yoshito Yahagi); **Grand Mo the First** (Emisael Jaramillo, Victor Barboza Jr.); **Honor Marie** (Ben Curtis, Whit Beckman); **Just a Touch** (Florent Geroux, Brad Cox); **Just Steel** (Keith Asmussen, Wayne Lukas); **Mystik Dan** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Kenny McPeck); **Resilience** (Junior Alvarado, Bill Mott); **Sierra Leone** (Tyler Gaffalione, Chad Brown); **Society Man** (Frankie Dettori, Danny Gargan); **Stronghold** (Antonio Fresu, Phil D'Amato); **T O Password (JPN)** (Kazushi Kimura, Daisuke Takayanagi); **Track Phantom** (Joel Rosario, Steve Asmussen); **West Saratoga** (Jesus Castanon, Larry Demeritte).

Also Eligibles: **Epic Ride** (Adam Beschizza, John Ennis); **Mugatu** (Joe Talamo, Jeff Engler).

LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS UPDATE

EVERLAND – **Foster Family Racing, William Wargel, R.K. Eckrich Racing** and **Maxis Stable's Everland**, winner of the Bourbonette Oaks (Listed) in her most recent start for trainer **Eric Foster**, arrived at her barn at Churchill Downs at around 10:30 a.m. Saturday from Keeneland.

FIONA'S MAGIC – **Stonehedge LLC's Fiona's Magic**, winner of the Davona Dale (GII), arrived at Churchill Downs at 3:50 Saturday morning after vanning from trainer **Bo Yates'** base at Gulfstream Park.

Fiona's Magic did not go to the track this morning.

GIN GIN/TARIFA – Trainer **Brad Cox's** duo of **Gin Gin** and **Tarifa** both walked Barn 22 Saturday morning following their five-furlong moves in :59.60 and :59.20, respectively, Friday morning.

Both fillies are scheduled to go back to the track Sunday at 7:30 a.m.

INTO CHAMPAGNE – Following a Friday work, **Six Column Stables, Randy Bloch, Jim Gladden, Mike Davis** and **Michael Steele's Into Champagne** was back out shortly after the track opened Saturday morning for trainer **Ian Wilkes**. Exercise rider **Adelso Orantes** was aboard.

"She was out for a jog, just a mile," Wilkes said. "She came out of her work fine. She'll gallop tomorrow, then walk Monday."

On Friday, the Gulfstream Parks Oaks (GIII) third-place finisher completed a five-furlong breeze Friday morning in 1:00, with jockey **Julien Leparoux**.

JUST F Y I – Reigning juvenile filly champion **Just F Y I** had another routine day on Saturday. **George Krikorian's** homebred galloped about 1 1/2 miles after going through the Churchill Downs paddock with trainer **Bill Mott** saying he plans to give the daughter of Justify one more move on Sunday in advance of the Kentucky Oaks (GI).

LEMON MUFFIN - Among the reasons Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas** is emboldened about **Lemon Muffin's** chances in the Kentucky Oaks (GI) is the clear preference she has for the Churchill Downs surface.

On Saturday, the Honeybee Stakes (GIII) winner flaunted how much she enjoys her time beneath the Twin Spires when she blazed five furlongs in :58.20 in her final major work in advance of the nation's top race for 3-year-old fillies. Breaking off solo during the 7:30 a.m. training period, Lemon Muffin posted splits of :11.20, :22, and :33.80 with a gallop out in 1:14.

While the main track has been playing fast, Lukas wanted to get a stronger move into his Oaks contender to make sure her fitness is on point coming off a lackluster seventh-place finish in the Fantasy Stakes (GII) on March 30.

"She worked really strong. I wanted a strong work out of her because her performance the last time, I didn't think she got a lot out of it," Lukas said. "She went in 58 and 1 and that's probably going to be a bullet work this morning. The track is playing very well."

Owned by **Aaron Sones** and **Julie Gilbert**, Lemon Muffin came out of the Fantasy with what Lukas believes might have been a minor illness that impacted her run that day.

"She was flat last time, a little under the weather," Lukas said. "But she really has responded well. And I think she has a real affinity for this surface. She loves it out here. (That time today) was by herself, no prompt, no workmate. She loves it here."

LESLIE'S ROSE/CANDIED - Trainer **Todd Pletcher** sent his two Kentucky Oaks hopes to the racetrack Saturday morning during the special 7:30-7:45 training period. Exercise rider **Joel Osorio** handled **Leslie's Rose**, who is assured a spot in the \$1.5 million Oaks starting gate. Exercise rider **Carlos Quevedo** was the man for **Candied**, who will need two defections from the fillies under consideration for the Oaks to make the main body of the race.

Both fillies covered approximately a mile and a quarter in a good gallop.

POWER SQUEEZE - **Lea Farms'** Kentucky-bred **Power Squeeze** galloped Saturday morning in her first appearance on the track since arriving late Thursday night from Gulfstream Park.

Trainer **Jorge Delgado** is arriving in Louisville on Sunday.

REGULATORY RISK/WAYS AND MEANS - While her male counterparts were stealing focus during the 7:30 a.m. training session on Saturday, **Klaravich Stables' Regulatory Risk** put in a strong effort of her own when she breezed four furlongs in :49.60 in preparation for her expected start in the Kentucky Oaks (GI).

In a solo move, jockey **Jose Ortiz** guided Regulatory Risk through splits of :12.60, and :25 before galloping out in 1:01.60 and 1:14 flat.

"She did a little lighter piece of work," trainer **Chad Brown** said of the Gazelle Stakes (GIII) runner-up. "She's

been in steady work up in New York and up there in the winter really developing, and she's come pretty far forward. She's not one of the main contenders in here but we decided to come down because she has come forward so much, she could get a piece of this race, which would make her pretty valuable. So we're going to give her a shot in there."

As Regulatory Risk was finishing her last major move, stablemate **Ways and Means** -- also owned by Klaravich -- had a walk day after blazing through a four-furlong move in :46 1/5 on Friday.

"She came out of it well," Brown said of Ways and Means. "Luckily the track cooled off. It was such a fast work but I will say, once I got to seeing the work over a few times and some of the other fast works yesterday, it seemed the track was very, very fast. I don't think it's going to hurt her. She's an extremely rare talent herself."

TAPIT JENALLIE - **Willis Horton Racing's Tapit Jenallie** walked the shedrow on Saturday for trainer **Eddie Milligan Jr** in preparation for the Oaks. She worked a half-mile Thursday with jockey **Manny Esquivel**, in 49 2/5 seconds. She's expected to be out on the track Sunday.

THORPEDO ANNA - **Brookdale Racing, Mark Edwards, Judy Hicks and Magdalena Racing's Thorpedo Anna** walked the shedrow on Saturday, a day after she completed her final major workout for the Longines Kentucky Oaks for trainer **Kenny McPeck**.

"She's doing fine," McPeck said. "High energy, that's her. Both **Mystik Dan** and she schooled twice in the paddock this week. She got a little nervous at Oaklawn, with its tight stalls. It was all new scenery to her, because she had been at Fair Grounds all winter. She had been at Oaklawn only for about 72 hours. But here, this is home track for both horses."

On Friday, jockey **Brian Hernandez Jr.** guided her to a five-furlong work in 59.40 seconds. She has won three of her four starts with Hernandez, most recently the Fantasy (GII) at Oaklawn Park in her first start this year.

WHERE'S MY RING - Trainer **Val Brinkerhoff** reported that all was quiet and well at Barn 30 with his 3-year-old filly **Where's My Ring**, who is owned by **Michael McMillan** and has a date this coming Friday in the \$1.5 million Kentucky Oaks. The daughter of Twirling Candy only had a walk day Saturday following her handy :46.60 drill Friday morning during the special Oaks/Derby training period.

The veteran horseman did have to deal with a touch of anxiety throughout the morning, however, concerning his scheduled rider for the 1 1/8-mile test. Veteran New York jockey **Jose Lezcano** had the call for the Oaks following his winning ride in the Gazelle (GIII) at Aqueduct in her most recent effort April 6. But Lezcano was involved in a spill in New York on Friday and Brinkerhoff was needing to hear positive news on the medical front from the rider's agent.

After having to consider two other riding possibilities over the course of the morning, Brinkerhoff finally got good news from the Lezcano folks that he had been cleared to ride and was planning on being in Kentucky for his Friday engagement.

ALSO ELIGIBLES: Courtlandt Farm's Our Pretty Woman, currently No. 15 on the Oaks preference list, galloped about 1 ½ miles at 5:30 a.m. Saturday with **Wilson Fabian** in the irons. She'd need one defection to make the Oaks field.

SHAPING UP: THE KENTUCKY OAKS – Here are the horses (with trainers) that are qualified for the Longines Kentucky Oaks and those on the also-eligible list (in alphabetical order with AEs listed last in preference order):

Everland (Abel Cedillo, Eric Foster); **Fiona's Magic** (TBA, Bo Yates); **Gin Gin** (Florent Geroux, Brad Cox); **Into Champagne** (Julien Leparoux, Ian Wilkes); **Just F Y I** (Junior Alvarado, Bill Mott); **Lemon Muffin** (Keith Asmussen, Wayne Lukas); **Leslie's Rose** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Todd Pletcher); **Power Squeeze** (Daniel Centeno, Jorge Delgado); **Regulatory Risk** (Jose Ortiz, Chad Brown); **Tapit Jenallie** (Manny Esquivel, Eddie Milligan); **Tarifa** (Flavien Prat, Brad Cox); **Thorpedo Anna** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Kenny McPeck); **Ways and Means** (Tyler Gaffalione, Chad Brown) and **Where's My Ring** (Jose Lezcano, Val Brinkerhoff).

Also-Eligible: **Our Pretty Woman** (Joel Rosario, Steve Asmussen); **Candied** (Luis Saez, Todd Pletcher).

KENTUCKY DERBY MEDIA PORTAL – The Kentucky Derby Newsfeed will be providing a media portal to access high quality video and audio files. Files are 1080 HD and will be uploaded on a daily basis.

This service is available via any web browser. To access, type the following into your web browser address bar:

kyderby.hammondcg.com

When you get to the media portal page, you will be prompted to enter credentials to access & download training footage, b-roll, color, interviews and press conferences.

Username: kyderby2024
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Please tag your footage with the following: **CREDIT: CHURCHILL DOWNS**

For further information, inquires or to report technical difficulties, please contact Jesse B. Kelsey, Vice-President of Hammond Communications Group, Inc. at (859) 492-5768 or at jkelsey@hammondcg.com.

KENTUCKY DERBY MORNING WORKS PROGRAM AIRS DAILY – The Kentucky Derby Morning Works Show will air daily through Thurby and feature Churchill Downs' expert handicappers **Joe Kristufek**, **Kaitlin Free**, **Tony Calo** and **Kevin Kilroy** along with an array of popular industry figures such as former leading rider **Rosie Napravnik** and Churchill Downs Track Announcer **Travis Stone**.

The 20-minute program will be streamed live on @KentuckyDerby on YouTube, Facebook and X.

KENTUCKY DERBY, OAKS MORNING WORKOUTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – Continuing through Wednesday, Churchill Downs will be open free-of-charge daily from 7-10 a.m. so guests can watch the nation's top 3-year-old Thoroughbreds train toward their engagements in this year's Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks.

Horses train on Churchill Downs' main track daily from 5:15-10 a.m. There will be an exclusive training window only for Derby and Oaks participants from 7:30-7:45 a.m. following the 7-7:30 a.m. renovation break. Those horses will be identified by special saddle towels which include their names: yellow saddle towels for Derby horses and pink saddle towels for Oaks contenders.

Guests can enter Churchill Downs through the Clubhouse Gate and should park for free in the nearby Yellow Lot for convenient entry. Guests will be directed to Sections 115-117 to watch the morning workouts.

On Sunday and Monday, fans can enjoy a premium breakfast in Millionaires Row or the Stakes Room for Dawn at the Downs. Tickets and more information can be found on www.KentuckyDerby.com/DerbyWeek.

The 150th runnings of the \$1.5 Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I) and \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) will be held Friday, May 3 and Saturday, May 4, respectively. Opening Night of Derby Week and the 44-day Spring Meet is Saturday.

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