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## **IROQUOIS RUNNERS PREPARE TO JUMP ON ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, Sept. 12, 2024)** – As the Road to Kentucky Derby 151 gets underway Saturday at Churchill Downs with the \$300,000 Iroquois Stakes (Grade III), several contenders are turning heads during their final preparations to the first “Prep Season” race.

**Flying Dutchmen’s** undefeated **Owen Almighty** has been slated as the 5-2 morning line choice in the field of 12 2-year-olds following his convincing victory in the Ellis Park Juvenile one month ago. Among his challengers in the race are Bashford Manor Stakes winner **Politicallycorrect** and dazzling debut winner **Jonathan’s Way**.

Owen Almighty, trained by **Brian Lynch**, broke his maiden at first asking beneath the Twin Spires. The son of Speightstown remained in Kentucky over the summer where he gamely won the Ellis Park Juvenile.

“He showed up when he went to Ellis and won the Juvenile,” Lynch said. “I think (Politicallycorrect) is a nice horse so it gives you confidence going forward that he was able to beat a nice horse. We’re taking it one step at a time and when we won the race at Ellis that was just crossing the first bridge.”

**Chris Davis**, who trains Politicallycorrect for **Walmac Farm, Five Fillies Stable**, and **Ryan Ritt**, is optimistic about his colt’s chances following a runner-up finish to Owen Almighty in the Ellis Park Juvenile.

“Sometimes when you have precocious 2-year-olds, they’ll get a little more pumped up after they run. He’s done the opposite,” Davis said. “He’s very level-headed and has a great mind. He continues to develop and has gotten a lot out of his training at Turfway. It’s proven that horses training on the Tapeta can really run on any surface and he’s a good example of how you can handle dirt after training on it.

“I love his post in the Iroquois breaking from the outside going the one-turn mile. He’s 2-for-2 at Churchill already and I know there are some new shooters in the race, but he definitely has an experience edge.”

Among those “new shooters” is Jonathan’s Way, trained by **Phil Bauer** for **Rigney Racing**. The son of Vekoma impressed in his debut at Saratoga, overcoming a poor break to win by 4 ¼ lengths.

“We always thought highly of him going into his maiden race at Saratoga. He showed a ton of guts when he didn’t break well and still won easily,” Bauer said. “That’s just the type of horse he is. Like all young horses, he still has things to improve on but this race is in our backyard at Churchill. We got him back here a couple of weeks ago and his most recent work on Saturday gave us confidence to enter him in this spot.”

The Iroquois Stakes, run as Race 10 at 5:29 p.m., is a key stop on the Road to the Kentucky Derby that also provides entry fee credits toward the \$2 million FanDuel Breeders’ Cup Juvenile (GI) for the top three Breeders’ Cup-nominated finishers. It will be part of a blockbuster day of racing at Churchill Downs, featuring four other stakes races, including the \$300,000 Pocahontas (GIII), \$400,000 Fasig-Tipton Locust Grove (GII), \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) and \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society.

Here is the field for the Iroquois Stakes from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds):

- **First Resort** (Rafael Bejarano, Eoin Harty, 12-1)
- **Giocoso** (James Graham, Keith Desormeaux, 10-1)
- **Jack’s Time** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Kelly Von Hemel, 20-1)
- **Authentic Strike** (Luis Saez, Rodolphe Brisset, 12-1)
- **Owen Almighty** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Lynch, 5-2)
- **Strummin** (Cristian Torres, John Hancock, 12-1)
- **Sandman** (Jose Ortiz, Mark Casse, 6-1)
- **Magnitude** (Tyler Gaffalione, Steve Asmussen, 8-1)
- **Firmus** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Wayne Catalano, 20-1)
- **Jonathan’s Way** (Joel Rosario, Bauer, 9-2)
- **Mesero** (Corey Lanerie, Dale Romans, 15-1)
- **Politicallycorrect** (Florent Geroux, Davis, 6-1)

Free Brisnet past performances for the Iroquois: [Iroquois24.pdf \(brisnet.com\)](https://www.brisnet.com/iroquois24.pdf).

The September Meet kicks off Thursday, with 14 racing days through Sept. 29. Fans can enjoy Twilight Thursday, offering \$2 domestic beer, live music and food trucks. Gates open at 4 p.m., and tickets are available at [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com). Thursday will also double as Military Appreciation Day where military members with a valid ID will receive free general admission and discounted tickets on Millionaires Row and the Skye Terrace.

Saturday is College Day at Churchill Downs. In partnership with the KTA-KTOB, \$20,000 in scholarships will be awarded to full-time students with a valid college ID. Students who show a valid college I.D. will receive free admission.

For those unable to attend, [www.TwinSpires.com](http://www.TwinSpires.com) is the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs Incorporated and every race will be broadcasted on FanDuel TV.

For more information on the September Meet, visit [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com).

**PIGALLE ATTEMPTS TO BUILD OFF GROUPIE DOLL VICTORY IN FASIG-TIPTON LOCUST GROVE –** Claiborne Farm's **Pigalle** soared to her first stakes victory one month ago in the Groupie Doll Stakes (Listed) at Ellis Park and will attempt to build off that effort in Saturday's \$400,000 Fasig-Tipton Locust Grove Stakes (Grade II).

Trained by **Tom Drury Jr.**, Pigalle pulled a shocking 23-1 upset in the Groupie Doll under jockey **Luan Machado**. The homebred daughter of Blame is tabbed as an 8-1 longshot in the Locust Grove.

"She ran a huge effort in the Groupie Doll," Machado said. "She really responded late and dug in to win that day. I think that can give a horse a lot of confidence when they breakthrough with a victory like that."

Pigalle will break from post No. 5.

The Fasig-Tipton Locust Grove, run at 1 1/16 miles, is part of five stellar stakes on the Saturday program which also features the \$300,000 Iroquois (GIII), \$300,000 Pocahontas, \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) and \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society. First post is 12:45 p.m. and the Locust Grove will go as Race 7 at 3:53 p.m.

Here is the field for the Locust Grove from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds):

- **Musical Mischief** (Edgar Morales, Michael McCarthy, 8-1)
- **Free Like a Girl** (Luis Saez, Pomier, 7-2)
- **Taxed** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Randy Morse, 9-2)
- **Loved** (Tyler Gaffalione, Brendan Walsh, 5-1)
- **Pigalle** (Machado, Drury, 8-1)
- **Corningstone** (Julien Leparoux, Kenny McPeck, 15-1)
- **Shotgun Hottie** (Jose Ortiz, DeVaux, 2-1)
- **Hoosier Philly** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Tom Amoss, 8-1)

**DOWN THE STRETCH –** The 14-day September Meet kicks off Thursday with an eight-race card that begins at 5 p.m. Fans in attendance for the Twilight Thursday program will be able to enjoy \$2 domestic beer, live music and local food trucks. Thursday's program also dubs as Military Appreciation Day. Active and retired military members will receive free general admission and discounted Millionaire's Row tickets. ... Jockey **Axel Concepcion** has changed agents prior to the start of the September Meet. The former Eclipse Award-winning apprentice rider will be represented by **Liz Morris** who also books the mounts for **Jaime Torres**. Concepcion was previously represented by **Bryson Cox** who will continue to book the mounts for **Adam Beschizza**. ... Trainer **Kent Sweezy** will be stabled at Churchill Downs this fall with six stalls allotted in Barn 37. ... For more information about the Churchill Downs September Meet, visit [www.churchilldowns.com](http://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 and Race and Sports Book. [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com).

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