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HIT SHOW COLLARS COOKE CREEK IN GRADE II, \$500,000 LUKAS CLASSIC

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024) – **Hit Show** relaxed in fourth down the backstretch, tipped out four-wide around the final turn and edged past leader **Cooke Creek** inside the final eighth of a mile to win Saturday's 11th running of the \$500,000 Lukas Classic (Grade II) for 3-year-olds and up at Churchill Downs by a neck.

Hit Show stopped the teletimer in 1:50.44 for 1 1/8 miles over a "sloppy" track. **Florent Geroux** rode the winner for trainer **Brad Cox** and owner **Wathnan Racing**, the nom de course for the Emir of Qatar, **Sheikh Tamin bin Hamad Al Thani**.

Cooke Creek, a winner of three straight races, broke fast from the gate and led the field of eight older horses through early fractions of :23.62, :47.50 and 1:11.97. Hit Show, who was content to track from fourth in the early stages as the 3-1 second betting choice, began to move into contention when the field approached the final turn. He was tipped out wide by Geroux and caught Cooke Creek midway down the stretch. The two battled gamely inside the final furlong with Hit Show prevailing from the outside.

"That was a huge effort," Geroux said. "He had to battle late and really dug in to get his head in front. We were in a great spot early and I got to save a lot of ground. He has a lot of class. I think he's improving a lot this year."

Overall, Hit Show has won six of 13 starts with one second. The \$300,560 first prize boosted his career earnings past millionaire status at \$1,079,515.

This was Hit Show's third stakes win. Last year, he won the Withers (GIII) at Aqueduct on his way to qualifying for the Kentucky Derby where he finished fifth. In his previous start, Hit Show won the \$200,000 West Virginia Governor's Stakes (GIII) at Mountaineer.

"He ran great (Saturday night)," Cox said. "Florent gave him a perfect trip and he was able to save ground in the first turn and come home running. Once he tipped out he really came with a huge run. We'll talk about next steps with the owners and make a plan. Whether it be the Breeders' Cup or races here locally is still up in the air."

Hit Show returned \$8.56, \$4.40 and \$3.50. Cooke Creek, ridden by **Luis Saez**, paid \$4.72 and \$4.06 as the 4-1 third betting choice. It was another 3 1/2 lengths back to **Rattle N Roll** in third under **Brian Hernandez Jr.** who paid \$4.74 to show at 9-2 in his first start since the running fourth in last year's Lukas Classic.

Disarm, the 9-5 favorite, was fourth and was followed by **Warrior Johny**, **Bolzy**, **Stilleto Boy** and **Happy American**.

Hit Show, a gray or roan son of Candy Ride (ARG) out of the Tapit mare Actress, was bred in Kentucky by **Gary & Mary West Stables Inc.**

The Lukas Classic honors the iconic 89-year-old Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas**. The four-time winner of the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks and conditioner of 26 Eclipse Award-winning champions has been based at Churchill Downs' Barn 44 since 1989.

LUKAS CLASSIC QUOTES

Florent Geroux (jockey, Hit Show, winner): "That was a huge effort. He had to battle late and really dug in to get his head in front. We were in a great spot early and I got to save a lot of ground. He has a lot of class. I think he's improving a lot this year."

Brad Cox (trainer, Hit Show, winner): "He ran great tonight. Florent gave him a perfect trip and he was able to save ground in the first turn and come home running. Once he tipped out he really came with a huge run. We'll talk about next steps with the owners and make a plan. Whether it be the Breeders' Cup or races here locally is still up in the air."

Luis Saez (jockey, Cooke Creek, runner-up): "He ran huge. He battled and was just second best."

THREE TECHNIQUE SWEEPS PAST LEADERS TO WIN GRADE III, \$365,000 ACK ACK

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024) – In a compact field of four older horses, veteran **Three Technique** relaxed off the three pacesetters and collared the trio in deep stretch to easily win Saturday's 32nd renewal of the \$365,000 Ack Ack (Grade III) at Churchill Downs by 1 ½ lengths over **Tumbarumba**.

Three Technique, a 7-year-old son of Mr Speaker, ran one mile on a "sloppy" track in 1:36.77. **Rafael Bejarano** rode the winner for trainer **Jason Cook** and owners **Eric Grindley, David E. Miller, Howard F. Preuss** and **John Werner**.

The Ack Ack is a Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In" event for the \$1 million Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (GI). By winning the race, Three Technique will receive an entry-fee paid berth to the Nov. 2 race at Del Mar along with a travel stipend.

"This is unbelievable, and I wanted to win this race for a very long time," Cook said. "We'll sit down and talk about the plan after tonight. We are just enjoying every bit of this and honored to win this race. Two-turns is never really in his ballgame but neither was the mud until tonight."

Eight of the last 11 Ack Ack winners – **Pants On Fire** (2013), **Tapiture** (2015), **Tom's Ready** (2016), **Awesome Slew** (2017), **Seeking the Soul** (2018), **Mr. Money** (2020), **Senor Buscador** (2022) and **Zozos** (2023) – used the race as a springboard to the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile.

Breaking from post four in the one-turn mile, Three Technique let the others make the early running. Fred W. Hooper (GIII) winner Tumbarumba led the way from the rail with Triple Crown winner **Justify's** half-brother **Stage Raider** on his right hip chasing from second and **Cagliostro**, the Hanshin winner and 4-5 favorite, stalking from the outside. Three Technique was relaxed behind the trio down the backstretch and never too far behind.

Around the turn, the leaders raced shoulder to shoulder. Three Technique began to hit his best stride leaving the turn. He tipped out with a wide move down the center of the track and swept past the threesome with a little more than a sixteenth of a mile to go for the comfortable win.

"It's been a great run this week, winning my 4,500th race," Bejarano said. "They were battling on the lead in front of me. My horse doesn't show a lot of speed but I let the horses in front of me go and he settled really well. I could tell my horse started finding his best stride in mid-stretch and the leaders started getting tired. He was all heart and never stopped trying."

The first prize was \$255,000 and hiked Three Technique's bankroll over the million-dollar mark to \$1,186,237 with a record of 7-6-8 from 39 starts. It was his third career stakes win. In 2022, he won the \$159,800 Knicks Go Overnight Stakes at Churchill Downs on the Kentucky Derby undercard at odds of 36-1. A year later, Three Technique prevailed in the \$250,000 John A. Nerud (GII) at Belmont Park.

Three Technique paid \$12.58 and \$5.16 as the 5-1 third betting choice. There was no show wagering. Tumbarumba, ridden by **Luis Saez**, paid \$3.76. Cagliostro, under **Jose Ortiz**, was another two lengths back in third and was followed by Stage Raider.

The field was reduced to four when 4-5 morning line favorite scratched Saturday morning with a foot issue, according to trainer **Brad Cox**. Also, **Mufasa (CHI)** opted to run in the Vosburgh (GIII) at Aqueduct and won by 4 ¼ lengths, and **Big Blue Line** finished eighth of 11 in the John Henry Turf Championship (GII) at Santa Anita.

Three Technique, out of the Harlan's Holiday mare Nile in Rome, was bred in Kentucky by Omega Farm LLC and Bally Breeders..

The race is named in honor of **Cain Hoy Stable's** 1971 Horse of the Year **Ack Ack**, who is enshrined in the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame. In his only Churchill Downs appearance, Ack Ack won the 1969 Derby Trial in 1:34.40 which was a track record for one mile that has since been eclipsed.

ACK ACK QUOTES

Rafael Bejarano (jockey, Three Technique, winner): "It's been a great run this week, winning my 4,500th race. They were battling on the lead in front of me. My horse doesn't show a lot of speed but I let the horses in front of me go and he settled really well. I could tell my horse started finding his best stride in mid-stretch and the leaders started getting tired. He was all heart and never stopped trying."

Jason Cook (trainer, Three Technique, winner): "This is unbelievable and I wanted to win this race for a very long time. We'll sit down and talk about the plan after tonight. We are just enjoying every bit of this and honored to win this race. Two-turns is never really in his ballgame but neither was the mud until tonight."

Luis Saez (jockey, Tumbarumba, runner-up): "I think he just really didn't get over the ground well on the inside. He still ran a really good race but think it wasn't his day being on the inside and over the slop."

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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