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LOCAL DERBY HOPEFULS EAST AVENUE, JONATHAN'S WAY EYE BREEDERS' CUP JUVENILE FOR KEY PREP SEASON QUALIFYING POINTS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, Oct. 27, 2024) – Churchill Downs-based 2-year-olds **East Avenue** and **Jonathan's Way**, already prominent on the Road to the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, will vie for championship honors and crucial Derby qualifying points in Friday's Breeders' Cup Juvenile (Grade I) at Del Mar, aiming to secure their place in the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) next spring.

Owned by **Godolphin** and trained by **Brendan Walsh**, East Avenue has proven himself to be one of the favorites for the Breeders' Cup Juvenile. After debuting this summer with an eye-popping eight-length victory at Ellis Park, the powerful colt returned four weeks ago at Keeneland and dominated a strong field with a front-running, 5 ¼-length win in the Breeders' Futurity (Grade I), which earned him 10 Kentucky Derby qualifying points.

"It was a great work on Friday and a good set up for the Breeders' Cup," jockey **Tyler Gaffalione** said. "He does everything right and is so smooth and professional. We're very excited for next week and if everything goes smoothly, he'll be ready for a top effort in the Breeders' Cup. I was so excited to ride him in the Breeders' Futurity after working with him in the mornings. This horse has always shown tremendous talent, and Brendan has rarely called a horse special, so it means a lot for him to say that about East Avenue. I think since I started riding for him he's only said that about two horses: **Maxfield** and **Pretty Mischievous**."

Jonathan's Way, owned by **Rigney Racing** and trained by **Phil Bauer**, enters the Juvenile as another strong Kentucky Derby hopeful. The colt launched his Road to the Kentucky Derby campaign with a win in the Iroquois Stakes (GIII) at Churchill Downs on Sept. 14, marking his second victory from two starts. Jonathan's Way debuted in a maiden special weight at Saratoga, where he overcame a slow break to charge through the field and easily win by 4 ¼ lengths.

"In his final work for the Juvenile we just wanted to keep his fitness up," Bauer explained. "He encountered some unexpected company in the work but handled it well. His exercise rider, (**Santos Rivera**) did a great job keeping him focused and I liked how he responded and galloped out even with the workers to his inside. We just had him go an easy half-mile in :49.20.

"He's a push-button horse. I'm confident that whatever **Joel (Rosario)** asks, he'll handle. He has natural speed but can relax if needed. This is a championship race and we're up against the best. We've got to bring our best to get the job done."

East Avenue arrived at Del Mar on Saturday, with Jonathan's Way slated to join him on Monday. The Breeders' Cup Juvenile awards the most points of any Prep Season race on the Road to the Kentucky Derby with the top five finishers earning points on a 30-15-9-6-3 scale.

Post positions for the Breeders' Cup Juvenile will be drawn Monday. The field is also expected to include Champagne (GI) winner **Chancer McPatrick** and American Pharoah (GI) winner **Citizen Bull**.

The first opportunity for fans to bet on Kentucky Derby 151 arrives this week with Pool 1 of the Kentucky Derby Future Wager running Wednesday-Friday. The field for Pool 1 will be announced on Monday.

In other Derby News, the Euro/Mideast Road to the Kentucky Derby continued Friday with **Hotazhell** narrowly edging **Delacroix** by a scant nose in the Futurity Trophy Stakes (GI) over one mile on turf at Doncaster. **Wimbledon Hawkeye**, **Seaplane** and **Anno Domini** completed the top five. With the 2024 portion of the Euro/Mideast Road to the Kentucky Derby now concluded, the series will resume in late February with three final races leading up to the Kentucky Derby: the Road to the Kentucky Derby Condition Stakes at Kempton, the Patton at Dundalk and the UAE Derby (GII) at Meydan.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Live racing resumes at Churchill Downs on Sunday for the start of the 26-day Fall Meet. First post is 1 p.m. and the card features the \$200,000 Street Sense (Grade III) and \$200,000 Rags to Riches (Listed) on the Road to the Kentucky Derby and Oaks, respectively. ... Following dark days on Monday and Tuesday, racing will resume on a Wednesday-Sunday schedule with a daily first post of 1 p.m. For more information about the Fall Meet, 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 and Race and Sports Book. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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