

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## R DISASTER GOES GATE TO WIRE IN DERBY CITY DISTAFF

LOUISVILLE, KY (Saturday, May 2, 2026) – **Averill Racing** and **ATM Racing's R Disaster** took the lead out of the gate and then fended off a stretch challenge by **Ways and Means** by 2 ¼ lengths to win the 40th running of the \$1 million Derby City Distaff (GI) presented by Ford for fillies and mares Saturday afternoon.

Trained by **Saffie Joseph Jr.** and ridden by **Tyler Gaffalione**, R Disaster completed the seven furlongs over a fast main track in 1:20.94.

R Disaster quickly opened a daylight advantage through an opening quarter-mile in :22.77 with favored **Splendor** tracking in second. On the far turn, Ways and Means began to close in and narrowed the gap in the upper stretch only to have R Disaster kick away again.

R Disaster is a 5-year-old Florida-bred daughter of Awesome Slew out of the Gottcha Gold mare Making Havoc. In winning her third graded stakes, R Disaster improved her record to 16-9-6-1 and increased her earnings to \$1,327,015 with Saturday's \$558,000 check.

R Disaster returned \$16.26, \$5 and \$3.96. Ways and Means, ridden by **Jose Ortiz**, returned \$3.60 and \$2.98 with **Usha** getting third another 1 ¾ lengths back under **Juan Hernandez** and paying \$3.98 to show.

Favored Splendor was fourth another 6 ½ lengths back followed by **Autumn Evening**.

### DERBY CITY DISTAFF QUOTES

**Tyler Gaffalione (Jockey, R Disaster, winner)** – “This filly came here ready to run today. As soon as the gate popped open, she broke alertly, I was able to put my hands down and let her find her stride. She was traveling so easy that I knew (down the stretch), she was going to be able to find another gear. The rest of horses weren't much of a threat.”

**Saffie Joseph Jr. (Trainer, R Disaster, winner)** – “She ran her race last time in the Madison (GI). The pace was extremely fast last time – faster than we would have liked. We didn't originally intend to come back in this race, but she bounced out of her last work very well. So, we decided to enter and see what happens. We knew there were some Grade I-caliber fillies in this race but she was doing so well. Tyler gave her the perfect ride today.”

**Jose Ortiz (Jockey, Ways and Means, second)** – “It was a good race for my horse. She ran well. We just got outrun.”

### 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 simulcast wagering facility. [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com).

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