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**PURSE FOR GRADE I STEPHEN FOSTER ON JUNE 27 DOUBLED TO \$2 MILLION;
'SUMMER SHOWDOWN' FOR TOP OLDER HORSES WILL AIR ON NBCSN, PEACOCK**

LOUISVILLE, KY. (Wednesday, May 20, 2026) – The purse for Churchill Downs' marquee race for older horses, the Grade I Stephen Foster on Saturday, June 27, has been doubled from \$1 million to \$2 million.

Billed as the "Summer Showdown," the 45th running of the 1 1/8-mile dirt race for 4-year-olds and up will be broadcast on **NBCSN** and **Peacock** from 4:30-6:30 p.m. (all times Eastern).

Five of the world's elite dirt horses have already expressed interest in running in this year's Stephen Foster: reigning Horse of the Year and 2024 Kentucky Derby (GI) winner **Sovereignty** (10-6-3-0—\$6,079,050) and Pennsylvania Derby (GI) winner **Baeza** (10-2-3-3—\$1,717,200) from the barn of trainer **Bill Mott**; Dubai World Cup (GI) winner **Magnitude** (13-7-2-1—\$8,544,365) for trainer **Steve Asmussen**; and recent Oaklawn Handicap (GII) winner **White Abarrio** (26-11-3-3—\$8,445,170) and Pegasus World Cup (GI) winner **SkippyLongstocking** (38-14-4-7—\$5,893,650) for trainer **Saffie Joseph Jr.**

"Stephen Foster Day has grown tremendously over the last several years attracting some of the world's best horses, and this purse boost helps solidify our closing weekend as a must-see premier racing event," said **Mike Anderson**, President of Churchill Downs Racetrack. "Firmly positioned in late June with lucrative prize money on the line, the Stephen Foster is an ideal summertime race for the best Thoroughbreds to compete at historic Churchill Downs. We truly believe horsemen and women, as well as horse racing fans around the world, will enthusiastically respond to this Summer Showdown."

All-sources wagering for last year's Stephen Foster Day was an event record \$20.7 million, up \$1.9 million or 10% from the 2024 Stephen Foster card that handled \$18.8 million.

In addition to the two-hour broadcast on NBCSN and Peacock, **FanDuel TV** will televise the entire Stephen Foster Day program, which features seven stakes events on the 12-race program that begins at 12:45 p.m.

Other stakes races to be run on June 27 are **\$500,000 Fasig-Tipton Fleur de Lis (GII)** for fillies and mares at 1 1/8 miles; **\$500,000 Wise Dan (GII)** for 4-year-olds and up at 1 1/16 miles on turf; **\$275,000 Bango (GIII)** for 3-year-olds and up at 6 1/2 furlongs; **\$275,000 Anchorage (Listed)** for fillies and mares at 1 1/8 miles on turf; **\$275,000 American Derby (Listed)** for 3-year-olds at 1 1/16 miles on turf; and **\$275,000 Tepin (Listed)** for 3-year-old fillies at one mile on turf.

Stephen Foster Purse Raised to \$2 Million

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Nominations for the Stephen Foster close Wednesday, June 10. Owners will pay \$20,000 to enter and \$20,000 to start, which equates to 2% of the total purse. First prize is 53% of the purse – estimated at more than \$1 million – after 1.5% percent is paid to each of the sixth through last place finishers. Second place will receive 22.5%, third at 12.5%, fourth at 7% and fifth at 5%.

The \$2 million purse includes \$100,000 from the Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund.

Both the Stephen Foster and Fleur de Lis are Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In" races, which means the winners are guaranteed a spot in the starting gate for the \$7 million Longines Classic (GI) and \$2 million Longines Distaff (GI), respectively, on Oct. 31 at Keeneland. Also, the connections of both winners will have all Breeders' Cup pre-entry and entry fees covered and could receive a travel award up to \$10,000.

Four horses have used victories in the Stephen Foster as part of their resumés in Horse of the Year campaigns: **Black Tie Affair** (1991), **Saint Liam** (2005), **Curlin** (2008) and **Gun Runner** (2017). In addition, two Foster runner-ups were crowned Horse of the Year: **Mineshaft** (2003) and **Wise Dan** (2012).

Victory Gallop owns the stakes record for 1 1/8 miles of 1:47.28 established in 1999 when he cruised to a five-length victory over **Nite Dreamer**, **Littlebitlively** and 1997 Kentucky Derby winner **Silver Charm**.

Last year's Foster was one of the best races of 2025 when **Mindframe**, winner of the \$1 million Churchill Downs (GI) on the Kentucky Derby undercard, defeated Breeders' Cup Classic (GI) winner and Champion 3-Year-Old Male **Sierra Leone** by one length. Oaklawn Handicap (GII) winner **First Mission** was third, Kentucky Derby 150 (GI) winner **Mystik Dan** was fourth and Dubai World Cup (GI) winner **Hit Show** was fifth.

To purchase tickets to Stephen Foster Day at Churchill Downs, please visit: <https://www.churchilldowns.com/visit/spring-meet/stephen-foster-day/>.

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 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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