



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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EIGHT MEMBERS OF CHURCHILL DOWNS JOCKEY COLONY TO RIDE BELMONT STAKES PROGRAM

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, June 5, 2024) – Several key members of the Churchill Downs jockey colony are set to compete this weekend at Saratoga for the Belmont Stakes festival including Kentucky Derby (Grade I) winning rider **Brian Hernandez Jr.** and Preakness Stakes winning rider **Jaime Torres**.

“I’m so grateful to be aboard **Seize the Grey** again in the Belmont,” said Torres, who won his first-career Grade I event aboard the **D. Wayne Lukas** trainee in the Preakness Stakes. “Winning the Preakness was a moment I’ll never forget and (Seize the Grey) is doing great and ready for the Belmont.”

Seize the Grey pulled a 9-1 upset victory three weeks ago in the Preakness Stakes, holding off the late rally of Kentucky Derby 150 winner **Mystik Dan**, who was ridden by Hernandez. The duo will have a rematch in Saturday’s \$2 million Belmont Stakes (GI), the final jewel of racing’s Triple Crown.

Jockeys **Tyler Gaffalione** (Protective), **Florent Geroux** (Honor Marie) and **Luis Saez** (Dornoch) are also scheduled to ride in the 1 ¼-mile Belmont Stakes (GI). Carded as Race 12 at 6:41 p.m. (all times Eastern), the Belmont Stakes also includes Kentucky Derby runner-up finisher **Sierra Leone** who was tabbed as the 9-5 morning line favorite.

Other members of the Churchill Downs riding colony scheduled ride on Saturday’s Belmont Stakes undercard are **Jose Ortiz**, **Ricardo Santana Jr.** and **Cristian Torres**. Ortiz also will ride the Friday program at Saratoga.

Fans in attendance Saturday at Churchill Downs will be invited to stay after the final race to watch the Belmont Stakes on the Big Board. Churchill Downs’ 11-race program will begin at 12:45 p.m. and feature the \$225,000 Mighty Beau Stakes (Listed) in Race 10. The final race on the card will go to post at approximately 5:58 p.m.

FAMILY ADVENTURE DAY RETURNS SUNDAY – The lone Family Adventure Day of the Churchill Downs Spring Meet is Sunday, featuring more than 15 kid-friendly activities to go along with the nine-race program.

Among the activities for children under 12 to enjoy are face painting, sports inflatables and an obstacle course, game zone with cornhole, giant Jenga, checkers and tick-tac-toe, arts and crafts stations and Charlie’s Corner with soft play and toddler bounce area.

Children can also register for a chance to participate in stick horse races in the Churchill Downs Paddock from 11:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m.

General admission is \$9 for adults and up to two children are free with each paying adult. Gates open at 11:30 a.m. and first post is 12:45 p.m. Access to the Family Adventure Day activities will be inside the Paddock Gate.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.churchilldowns.com.

MULTIPLE STAKES WINNER NOTHING BETTER TABBED AS 7-2 MORNING LINE CHOICE IN \$225,000 MIGHTY BEAU – **Colts Neck Stables’** three-time stakes winner **Nothing Better** was tabbed as the slight 7-2 morning line favorite in the field of 11 turf sprinters that entered Saturday’s \$225,000 Mighty Beau (Listed) at Churchill Downs.

Trained by **Jorge Duarte Jr.**, Nothing Better is set to invade Churchill Downs from his owner’s Colts Neck, N.J.-based farm for his second start of the year. The veteran 7-year-old son of Munnings is a two-time winner of the Aqueduct Turf Sprint Championships and has tallied seven other victories from 26 starts. Jockey **Gerardo Corrales** will ride Nothing Better in the Mighty Beau from post No. 9.

Run at five furlongs on the Matt Winn Turf Course, the Mighty Beau Stakes will go as Race 10 with a post time of 5:27 p.m. (all times Eastern). Turf racing is scheduled to be conducted in Lane 2, 12 ft. from the inside rail. First post is 12:45 p.m.

Here is the complete field for the Mighty Beau from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds):

- **Mo Stash** (Rafael Bejarano, Vicki Oliver, 5-1)
- **Panther Island** (Julien Leparoux, Laura Cazares, 4-1)
- **Mischievous Rogue** (Luan Machado, Doug Cowans, 15-1)
- **Bad Beat Brian** (Chris Emigh, Brittany Vanden Berg, 8-1)
- **Ryvit** (TBA, Steve Asmussen, 15-1)
- **Kaufmaker** (Walter Rodriguez, Wesley Ward, 9-2)
- **Edge to Edge** (Mitchell Murrill, Chris Hartman, 12-1)
- **Yes I Am Free** (Rey Gutierrez, Laura Cazares, 10-1)
- Nothing Better (Corrales, Duarte, 7-2)
- **Charcoal** (Axel Concepcion, Tracey Wisner, 30-1)
- **Clear the Air** (Adam Beschizza, Will Walden, 10-1)

Kaufmaker was cross-entered in both the Mighty Beau and Friday's Intercontinental Stakes (GII) at Saratoga. Ward stated the mare is likely to scratch from the Mighty Beau and run in the Intercontinental.

ORTIZ FIVE WINS AWAY FROM 3,000-CAREER VICTORIES IN CONTINENTAL U.S. – Jockey **Jose Ortiz**, who leads the Churchill Downs Spring Meet rider standings with 24 victories, is five wins shy of his 3000th-career win in the continental U.S.

As of Wednesday morning, Ortiz had 2,995 wins from 16,217 starts plus 18 victories from Puerto Rico, according to industry-based statistics provider **Equibase**. Due to incomplete records from Puerto Rico, Ortiz' 18 wins from his native country are not included in his 2,995 listed wins, according to Equibase.

Ortiz began Wednesday's nine-race program from Churchill Downs with a three-win lead in the standings over **Tyler Gaffalione**. The duo was followed by **Luis Saez** (16 wins), **Florent Geroux** (14) and **Irad Ortiz Jr.** (13).

DOWN THE STRETCH – The start of a five-day racing week began Wednesday with a first post of 12:45 p.m. The nine-race card featured a \$135,318 carryover in the 20-cent Derby City 6 Jackpot that spanned Races 4-9. ... Turf racing is scheduled to be conducted in Lane 4 (36 ft. from the inside rail) on Thursday and Friday and in Lane 2 (12 ft.) Saturday and Sunday. Following more than one inch of rain in the Louisville area Tuesday afternoon, the lone turf race on Wednesday's card (Race 6) was moved to the main track and run at 5 ½ furlongs. ... For more information about the Churchill Downs Spring 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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