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GUN PILOT ON TARGET IN CHURCHILL DOWNS PRESENTED BY FORD VICTORY

LOUISVILLE, KY (May 4, 2024) – Three Chimneys Farm’s Gun Pilot surged to the front at the eighth pole and drew off to a 2 ½-length victory over **Here Mi Song** to win the 89th running of the \$1 million Churchill Downs presented by Ford (GI) for 4-year-olds and up on Saturday afternoon.

Trained by **Steve Asmussen** and ridden by **Cristian Torres**, Gun Pilot completed the seven furlongs on a fast track in 1:21.95. It is the second win in the race for Asmussen, who saddled **Mitole** in 2019 and represents the first Grade I win for Torres.

Here Mi Song raced off to fractions of :22.66 and :44.87 with **Zozos** in closest pursuit and favored **Hoist the Gold** tracking in the three path in third. On the far turn, Torres has Gun Pilot on the move behind the top three.

At the top of the stretch, Gun Pilot moved back toward the inside and split Zozos and Hoist the Gold and took aim at the leader with clear sailing and pushed past at the eighth pole.

Gun Pilot returned \$12.68, \$7.20 and \$5.04. Here Mi Song, ridden by **Tyler Gaffalione**, returned \$18.86 and \$10.10 and finished a neck in front of Zozos, who paid \$4.58 to show under **Florent Geroux**.

It was another two lengths back to **Raise Cain**, who was followed in order by Hoist the Gold, **Mr. Wireless**, **Tejano Twist**, **Track Mate**, **Minnesota Ready** and **Three Technique**.

CHURCHILL DOWNS QUOTES

Cristian Torres (jockey, Gun Pilot, winner) – “I don’t know what to say. I’m really excited, I’ve been looking for this Grade One for a long time. I just come to ride. I study my races, I do my homework. I just come out here to do the best job that I can. I’m very happy that I finally got one. Gun Pilot is a great horse. The Asmussen team spotted him very well. He’s an easy horse to ride.”

Steve Asmussen (trainer, Gun Pilot, winner) – “This is so special. It is very special for Mr. (Goncalo) Torrealba (of Three Chimneys Farm). This is a special horse. I really believe in him. Cristian (Torres) believes in him too. Seven-eighths is a good distance for him. We wanted to make it simple for him today. Nothing special in the way of tactics. Get him out in the middle of the track and then let him do his close. It worked out perfectly.”

Tyler Gaffalione (jockey, Here Mi Song, second) – “I was proud of his effort; hard fought second. He battled back late to get back up. They said he has had trouble getting out of the gate in the past but today he broke alertly, put himself in a good spot, traveled well and I was proud of him.”

Florent Geroux (jockey, Zozos, third) – “He gave everything he had. He was a little bit short coming into the race and another two weeks would have been perfect. This race came up and it was a perfect opportunity for him so he showed up, ran good and it’s good for the future knowing he was not 100 percent cranked up. Next time, he can turn the tables on these horses.”

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 and Race and Sports Book. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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