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SUGOI GOES ALL THE WAY IN GRADE III, \$241,250 LOUISVILLE STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, May 18, 2024) – The recent \$50,000 claim of **Sugoi** for owners **Paradise Farms Corp.** and **David Staudacher** paid immediate dividends when he took a field of nine turf marathoners gate-to-wire in Saturday night's 87th running of the \$241,250 Louisville Stakes (Grade III) at Churchill Downs.

Trained by **Mike Maker**, Sugoi covered 1 ½ miles over the Matt Winn Turf Course in 2:30.37 under jockey **Julien Leparoux**.

It was a brief scramble out of the gate to make the front in the Louisville Stakes but following an initial quarter-mile of :25.63, Sugoi was able to make an uncontested lead. Leparoux carefully rationed Sugoi's speed through a moderate half-mile time of :50.25 and six-furlong clocking of 1:15.81. While Sugoi comfortably rated on the front end, heavy 2-5 favorite **Bold Act (IRE)** was forced four-wide on the first turn and three-wide on the second turn. As the field in the Louisville turned for home, Sugoi was able to dig in on the lead while opening a half-length margin over **Strong Tide** and **Bold Act** who raced second and third, respectively. In deep stretch, Sugoi kept finding more on the lead and was able to hold off the charge of **Strong Tide** and late-closing kick of **The Grey Wizard (IRE)** for a 1 ¼-length victory.

"I've wanted to claim (Sugoi) this winter at Turfway but I was out-shook on him," Maker said. "I knew he was a talented horse and I was looking forward to having him do what he did tonight – rate on the front end of a turf marathon. This race opens the door to several options including the July 20 United Nations (GII) (at Monmouth) and he's still eligible for the Claiming Crown."

Sugoi rewarded his backers by paying \$2 mutuel returns of \$41.50, \$13.76 and \$9.26. **Strong Tide**, sent off at odds of 40-1 under jockey **Manny Esquivel**, returned \$26.46 and \$14.90. **The Grey Wizard**, ridden by **James Graham**, paid \$6.54.

Bold Act finished a half-length behind **The Grey Wizard** and was followed by **Utah Beach**, **King Curlin**, **Reckoning Force**, **Quadra Island** and **Guntown**.

The Louisville Stakes was Sugoi's 10th-lifetime victory from 27 starts. The 7-year-old son of **Karakontie (JPN)** has now banked purse earnings of \$577,433.

Racing will continue Sunday beneath the Twin Spires with a nine-race card and first post of 12:45 p.m.

For more information about live racing from Churchill Downs, 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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