

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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RECENT GRADE III WINNER CHOP CHOP RETURNS IN \$250,000 KEERTANA STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, May 19, 2024) – Selective LLC's recent Bewitch Stakes (Grade III) winner **Chop Chop** leads a field of seven talented fillies and mares entered in Saturday's 11th running of the \$250,000 Keertana Stakes (Listed) at Churchill Downs.

Run at 1 ½ miles on the Matt Winn Turf Course, the Keertana sets the stage for a rematch between the top four finishers from Keeneland's Bewitch Stakes held one month ago. Chop Chop finished 2 ¼ lengths clear of runner-up **Atomic Blonde (GER)** in the Bewitch, marking a successful return to turf after 13 months competing on either the dirt or Tapeta. The third and fourth place finishers of the Bewitch, **Vegara** and **Tower Bridge**, respectfully, are also entered in the Keertana.

Trained by **Brad Cox**, Chop Chop emerged as one of the top prospects on the Road to Kentucky Oaks 149 following her game runner-up finish to **Wonder Wheel** in the Alcibiades (GI) as a 2-year-old. In her 3-year-old season, Chop Chop went on to finish second to **The Alys Look** in the Silverbulletday Stakes before her disappointing fifth-place effort in the Rachel Alexandra (GII). Following that start, Cox briefly switched Chop Chop back to turf, where she finished third in the Allen "Black Cat" LaCombe Memorial. Chop Chop would compete on dirt in her next three starts before switching to Tapeta for her next four.

Jockey **Axel Concepcion** will pilot Chop Chop in the Keertana from post No. 2.

Atomic Blonde, trained by **Christophe Clement** and owned by **West Point Thoroughbreds**, Clement and **Winters Equine**, will seek redemption against Chop Chop in the Keertana. A former Group III winner in Italy, Atomic Blonde arrived in North America in early 2023. Since then, the daughter of The Grey Gatsby finished third in both the Sheepshead Bay (GII) and Orchid (GIII). The Keertana will be the second start of Atomic Blonde's 5-year-old campaign where she'll be ridden by Churchill Downs leading rider **Tyler Gaffalione** out of post 4.

Here is the complete field for the Keertana Stakes from the rail out (with jockey and trainer):

- **Heavenly Appointed** (Kevin Gomez, Graham Motion)
- Chop Chop (Concepcion, Cox)
- Tower Bridge (Brian Hernandez Jr., Cherie DeVaux)
- Atomic Blonde (Gaffalione, Clement)
- Vegara (Jose Ortiz, Graham Motion)
- **Sand and Sea** (Rey Gutierrez, Riley Mott)
- **Holey Foley** (Frankie Dettori, Brian Lynch)

Carded as Race 10 of 11, the Keertana is set to take place in Lane 2 on the Matt Winn Turf Course, positioned 12 feet from the inner rail. First post is 12:45 p.m. (all times Eastern) and the featured Keertana will go at 5:27 p.m.

For more information, visit www.churchilldowns.com.

SEIZE THE GREY SET TO RETURN TO CHURCHILL DOWNS A PREAKNESS STAKES WINNER – Hall of Fame trainer **Wayne Lukas** took Baltimore by storm Saturday when his trainee **Seize the Grey** captured the \$2 million Preakness Stakes (Grade I), the second jewel of racing's Triple Crown. Lukas reported Seize the Grey will return back to his base at Churchill Downs on Monday to begin preparing for the Belmont Stakes (GI) on Saturday, June 8 at Saratoga Race Course.

Ridden by local rider **Jaime Torres**, Seize the Grey was victorious two weeks ago at Churchill Downs in the Pat Day Mile presented by SAP (GII). The talented gray son of Arrogate defeated Kentucky Derby (GI) winner **Mystik Dan** by 2 ¼ lengths in the Preakness, with fellow Churchill Downs-based colt **Catching Freedom** finishing a close third.

Torres, 25, became a mainstay in the Churchill Downs jockey colony eight months ago when he clinched his first victory beneath the historic Twin Spires aboard **Our Keepsake**, trained by Lukas. Originally from Puerto Rico, Torres relocated to the U.S. about two years ago and started working for **Saffie Joseph Jr.** in South Florida. Since then, Torres became a finalist for the for the Outstanding Apprentice Jockey at the 2023 Eclipse Awards, finishing third to **Axel Concepcion** and **Sofia Vives**.

Torres is scheduled to ride Thursday at Churchill Downs.

DOWN THE STRETCH – The 20-cent Derby City 6 Jackpot was hit Saturday night for a whopping \$135,040. The jackpot will start over Sunday, beginning in Race 4. ... **Paradise Farms Corp.** and **David Staudacher's** Louisville Stakes (GIII) winner **Sugoi** earned a career-best 101 Brisnet Speed Rating for his victory in Saturday night's 1 ½-mile turf marathon. The 7-year-old son of Karakontie (JPN) is possible to compete in the July 20 United Nations Stakes (GII) at Monmouth Park, according to trainer **Mike Maker**. ... **Winchell Thoroughbreds' 2023 Matt Winn Stakes (GIII)** hero **Disarm** made a winning return to the races following nearly nine months on the sidelines, winning a second-level allowance event Saturday night. Trained by **Steve Asmussen**, Disarm earned an 83 Brisnet Speed Rating. ... Following three dark days, live racing from Churchill Downs will resume Thursday for the start of a five-day race week with daily first posts of 12:45 p.m. The special nine-race Memorial Day card, featuring the \$250,000 Winning Colors (GIII) will be drawn Wednesday. ... For more information about 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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