



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Kevin Kerstein
Kentucky Racing Communications
Churchill Downs, Ellis Park, Turfway Park
(610) 420-6971 (mobile)
(502) 635-4712 (office)
Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com

COX HOPES HIGHLAND FALLS CAN TAKE STEP FORWARD AS 5-2 MORNING LINE CHOICE IN BLAME STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, May 30, 2024) – Godolphin’s improving 4-year-old colt **Highland Falls** will attempt to garner his first stakes victory as the 5-2 morning line choice in Saturday’s \$275,000 Blame (Grade III), the local prep for the \$1 million Stephen Foster (GI) at Churchill Downs on June 29.

Highland Falls, the recent runner-up to **Skippylongstocking** in the Oaklawn Handicap (GII), began his career on closing day of the 2023 Ellis Park season with a 9-1 debut victory in a maiden special weight contest. Since then, the son of Curlin won allowance contests at Churchill Downs and Fair Grounds before he tested stakes company for the first time in the Santa Anita Handicap (GI), finishing fourth to **Newgate**.

“We think very highly of this colt and hope he can establish himself as one of the top older horses in the country,” trainer **Brad Cox** said. “I thought he ran well in the Santa Anita Handicap where the pace didn’t really shape up all that fast. I thought in the Oaklawn Handicap he ran a credible race and improved out of the Santa Anita Handicap. We’re looking forward to Saturday’s race and hoping it kickstarts a big campaign for him.”

Run at 1 1/8 miles, the Blame Stakes will go as Race 10 of 11 with a post time of 5:27 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 12:45 p.m. Along with the Blame, the stellar afternoon of racing also will feature the \$275,000 Arlington (GIII), \$275,000 Regret (GIII), \$275,000 Shawnee (GIII), \$275,000 Aristides (Listed) and \$275,000 Audubon (Listed).

Here is the field for the Blame Stakes from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds):

- **Frosted Departure** (Julien Leparoux, Kenny McPeek, 15-1)
- Highland Falls (Florent Geroux, Cox, 5-2)
- War Campaign (Tyler Gaffalione, Phil Sims, 9-2)
- **Uncle Jake** (Joel Rosario, Carlo Vaccarezza, 30-1)
- Tapit Trice (Flavien Prat, Todd Pletcher, 3-1)
- **Dreamlike** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Pletcher, 4-1)
- **Classic Causeway** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Kenny McPeek, 30-1)
- **Last Samurai** (Cristian Torres, Eddie Milligan Jr., 20-1)
- **Cagliostro** (Jose Ortiz, Cherie DeVaux, 6-1)
- **Five Star General** (Corey Lanerie, Grant Forster, 30-1)
- **Trademark** (Martin Garcia, Vicki Oliver, 12-1)

Fans can watch and wager on all the action from Churchill Downs on www.twinspires.com, the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs Incorporated and the Kentucky Derby.

RIGNEY, BAUER POISED FOR BIG WEEKEND WITH STAKES RUNNERS ANGKOR, BUCHU, XIGERA – The powerful team of **Rigney Racing** and trainer **Phil Bauer** are poised for a big weekend at Churchill Downs with a trio of stakes entrants: **Angkor** (\$275,000 Aristides); **Buchu** (\$275,000 Regret); and **Xigera** (\$275,000 Shawnee).

“We’re really looking forward to a big weekend here at Churchill,” Bauer said. “I think we have a lot of live runners and the three we have in the stakes should run very well. We’ve targeted these races and think they will be good steppingstones for bigger races of their campaigns.”

Angkor, tabbed as the 4-1 second choice on the morning line in the six-furlong Aristides Stakes, will attempt to take down heavy 4-5 favorite **Skelly**.

“I like that we’re drawn to the outside of him,” Bauer said. “There’s no hiding how talented Skelly is and how fast he is. I think if we can run back to our last race, we can be very competitive. He likes it here at Churchill Downs where he’s won three races.”

In the Shawnee Stakes, the local prep for the \$500,000 Fasig-Tipton Fleur de Lis (GII) on June 29, Xigera was slated as the 2-1 morning line choice as she attempts to improve on her disappointing last-place finish in the Fasig-Tipton La Troienne (GI)

“The only excuse we can come up with last time was the sloppy track condition,” Bauer said. “She’s razor sharp and we’re expecting her to fire this weekend.”

In the Regret, Buchu began her 3-year-old season with a gutsy half-length score in the Appalachian Stakes (GII) at Keeneland then finished sixth, beaten only 2 ¼ lengths to **Dynamic Pricing** in the Edgewood (GII).

“This will be a good test for her going nine furlongs for the first time,” Bauer said. “The plan is definitely to keep her reserved early to save some energy for her late kick.”

Here are the fields for the Aristides Stakes, Shawnee Stakes and Regret Stakes from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds):

Aristides Stakes (Race 7, 3:51 p.m.):

- **Tejano Twist** (Rafael Bejarano, Chris Hartman, 5-1)
- **Closethegame Sugar** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Adam Rice, 10-1)
- Skelly (Ricardo Santana Jr., Steve Asmussen, 4-5)
- Angkor (Martin Garcia, Bauer, 4-1)
- **Payne** (Keith Asmussen, Steve Asmussen, 30-1)
- **Bourbon Heist** (Luis Saez, Ian Wilkes, 10-1)
- **Surly Furious** (Abel Cedillo, Glenn Wismer, 30-1)
- **Here Mi Song** (Tyler Gaffalione, Billy Stinson Jr., 6-1)

Shawnee Stakes (Race 8, 4:23 p.m.)

- **Magical Lute** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Ian Wilkes, 15-1)
- **Malloy** (Jaime Torres, Wayne Catalano, 30-1)
- **Wet Paint** (Flavien Prat, Brad Cox, 7-2)
- **Take a Stand** (Luis Saez, Vicki Oliver, 20-1)
- **Bellamore** (Tyler Gaffalione, Steve Asmussen, 8-1)
- Xigera (Leparoux, Bauer, 2-1)
- Scylla (Javier Castellano, Bill Mott, 5-2)
- **Hoosier Philly** (Edgar Morales, Tom Amoss, 6-1)
- **Hidden Connection** (Rey Gutierrez, Bret Calhoun, 12-1)

Regret Stakes (Race 9, 4:55 p.m.):

- **Way to Be Marie** (Florent Geroux, Rob Atras, 3-1)
- **Everland** (Abel Cedillo, Eric Foster, 20-1)
- **Gavea (GER)** (Julien Leparoux, Al Stall Jr., 30-1)
- **Dancing N Dixie** (Jose Ortiz, Mark Casse, 7-2)
- **Poolside With Slim (IRE)** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Rusty Arnold II, 8-1)
- Buchu (Martin Garcia, Bauer, 5-2)
- **Hello Hollywood** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Brian Lynch, 8-1)
- **Sassy Princess** (Flavien Prat, Brendan Walsh, 8-1)
- **Pin Up Betty** (Luis Saez, Mike Maker, 15-1)
- **Faith Understood** (Florent Geroux, Jonathan Thomas, 15-1)

DOWN THE STRETCH – Twilight Thursday will kick off the racing week at Churchill Downs with an eight-race card and first post of 5 p.m. The night featured \$2 domestic beer, live music from **The Leftovers** and local food trucks **Black Rock Grille**, **Celtic Pig**, **Ramiro’s Mexican** and **Sweet & Savory**. ... For more information about 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.