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

FIRST MISSION LEADS ACCOMPLISHED FIELD OF NINE OLDER HORSES IN GRADE I, \$1 MILLION STEPHEN FOSTER

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 22, 2024) – Godolphin’s talented homebred **First Mission**, an impressive winner of the Alysheba Stakes (Grade II) on the Kentucky Oaks undercard, headlines a competitive field of nine older horses that entered next Saturday’s 43rd running of the \$1 million Stephen Foster Stakes (GI) at Churchill Downs.

Carded as Race 11 of 12, the Stephen Foster is the highlight of a stakes-filled program at Churchill Downs that also includes the \$500,000 Fasig-Tipton Fleur de Lis (GII); \$500,000 Wise Dan (GII); \$250,000 American Derby (Listed); \$250,000 Kelly’s Landing (Listed); and \$250,000 Tepin (Listed). First post is 12:45 p.m. (all times Eastern) and the field for the Stephen Foster will go to post at 6:03 p.m.

Run at 1 1/8 miles, the Stephen Foster is the marquee race of the Churchill Downs Spring Meet following Kentucky Derby Week. The Stephen Foster also is part of the Breeders’ Cup Challenge Series and is a “Win and You’re In Classic Division” race. The winner will earn a spot in the starting gate for the Nov. 2 Breeders’ Cup Classic (GI) at Del Mar with a free automatic entry to the race.

First Mission, a 4-year-old son of Street Sense, is based locally for trainer **Brad Cox**. The five-time winner has an impressive resumé with other graded stakes scores in the Lexington Stakes (GIII) at Keeneland and Essex Handicap (GIII) at Oaklawn Park. First Mission will be ridden in the Stephen Foster by **Florent Geroux** out of post No. 2.

Another talented runner in Saturday’s race is **Daniel Alonso**’s eight-time winner **Skippylongstocking**, who enters the Stephen Foster following a two-length score in the Oaklawn Handicap on April 20. Trained by **Saffie Joseph Jr.**, Skippylongstocking was highly regarded from a young age. As a 3-year-old, the son of Exaggerator won the West Virginia Derby (GIII) and Harlan’s Holiday Stakes (GIII). Last year, Skippylongstocking tallied graded stakes scores in the Challenger Stakes (GIII) and Charles Town Classic (GII). To begin his 5-year-old season, Skippylongstocking had a troubled journey in the Pegasus World Cup (GI) and pulled up halfway through the race. However, Skippylongstocking returned six weeks later and defended his title in the Challenger Stakes before his victory in the Oaklawn Handicap. Jockey **Jose Ortiz** will have the mount in the Stephen Foster from post 9.

The Stephen Foster field also includes trainer **Todd Pletcher**’s duo of 2023 TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby (GII) winner **Kingsbarns** and Pennsylvania Derby (GI) runner-up **Dreamlike**; **Winchell Thoroughbreds**’ 2023 Travers (GI) runner-up **Disarm**; **Alexandres**’ multiple graded stakes winner **Il Miracolo**; and Gulfstream Park Mile (GII) winner **Steal Sunshine**.

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

- **Pyrenees** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Cherie DeVaux)
- First Mission (Geroux, Cox)
- **Happy American** (Corey Lanerie, Neil Pessin)
- Disarm (Joel Rosario, Steve Asmussen)
- Dreamlike (Irad Ortiz Jr., Pletcher)
- **Classic Causeway** (Julien Lejaroux, Kenny McPeck)
- Kingsbarns (Luis Saez, Pletcher)
- Steal Sunshine (Paco Lopez, Bobby Dibona)
- Skippylongstocking (Jose Ortiz, Joseph)

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.

Saturday is the penultimate day of the 2024 Spring Meet. Fans can purchase tickets on www.churchilldowns.com. Admission gates will open at 11:30 a.m.

In addition to the stellar racing action, the winning connections of this year’s Kentucky Derby (Mystik Dan) and Kentucky Oaks (Thorpedo Anna) will be presented with their engraved trophies during a winner’s circle ceremony between races. Also, the trophies will be on display beforehand for guests to take photos.

JUDDMONTE'S BUDDING STAR SCYLLA HEADLINES GRADE II, \$500,000 FASIG-TIPTON FLEUR DE LIS – Juddmonte's impressive Shawnee Stakes (Grade III) winner **Scylla** will be in search of a second-straight graded stakes score at Churchill Downs when she faces five fillies and mares entered in Saturday's 49th running of the \$500,000 Fasig-Tipton Fleur de Lis (GII), one of six stakes contests on Stephen Foster Day.

The Fleur de Lis, run at 1 1/8 miles, was slated as the ninth race with a post time of 4:58 p.m. First post is 12:45 p.m.

Scylla, trained by Hall of Famer **Bill Mott**, remained based at Churchill Downs following her widening 3 1/4-length victory in the Shawnee Stakes, run three weeks ago on Stephen Foster Preview Day. The regally bred daughter of Tapit has never finished outside the top three positions in six career starts with four wins, one second and one third while banking purse earnings of \$414,835. Jockey **Javier Castellano**, who's been aboard Scylla in all six starts, will be back to ride in the Fleur de Lis from post No. 4.

Other accomplished fillies and mares that entered the Fleur de Lis include **Gerald Bruno**, **Carl Deville**, **Chasey Deville Pomier** and **Jerry Caroom's** La Troienne (GI) runner-up **Free Like a Girl**; **Richard Bahde's** Black Eyed Susan (GII) heroine **Taxed**; and **Rigney Racing's** multiple graded stakes winner **Xigera**.

The complete field for the Fleur de Lis, from the rail out (with jockey and trainer):

- Free Like a Girl (Corey Lanerie, Pomier)
- **Shotgun Hottie** (Paco Lopez, Cherie DeVaux)
- Taxed (Brian Hernandez Jr., Randy Morse)
- Scylla (Castellano, Mott)
- **Oculta** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Chad Brown)
- Xigera (Julien Leparoux, Phil Bauer)

The Fleur de Lis is part of the Breeders' Cup Dirt Dozen series where the top three finishers in the race will receive a portion of their entry fees should they enter the Nov. 2 Breeders' Cup Distaff (GI) at Del Mar.

ARLINGTON STAKES WINNER OTTOMAN FLEET RETURNS IN GRADE II, \$500,000 WISE DAN – Godolphin's talented six-time winner **Ottoman Fleet (GB)** is set to take on a compact field of six turf specialists entered in Saturday's 35th running of the \$500,000 Wise Dan (Grade II) at Churchill Downs.

The Wise Dan, run at 1 1/16 miles on turf, was carded as Race 7 of 12 with a post time of 3:52 p.m. Along with the Wise Dan, the stellar day of racing features five other stakes contests led by the \$1 million Stephen Foster (GI). First post is 12:45 p.m.

In the Wise Dan, Ottoman Fleet will attempt to garner his second consecutive stakes victory at Churchill Downs following his one-length score earlier this month in the Arlington Stakes (GIII). Trained by **Charlie Appleby**, Ottoman Fleet's impressive resumé includes victories in the Fort Marcy Stakes (GII) at Belmont and back-to-back scores in the Earl of Sefton Stakes (GIII) at Newmarket. Jockey **Flavien Prat**, who rode Ottoman Fleet in the Arlington, will return for the mount in the Wise Dan and break from post No. 2.

Another talented horse that entered the Wise Dan is **C R K Stable's** Grade I winner **Exaulted**. Trained by **Peter Eurton**, Exaulted is set to make his 7-year-old debut in the Wise Dan. The California invader had a solid 6-year-old season, winning the Shoemaker Mile (GI) and American Stakes (GIII) at Santa Anita. Jockey **Juan Hernandez**, one of the leading riders on the Southern California circuit, is scheduled to ride Exaulted in the Wise Dan from post 6.

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

- **Strong Tide** (Manny Esquivel, Mike Lauer)
- Ottoman Fleet (GB) (Prat, Appleby)
- **Chasing the Crown** (Joel Rosario, Mike Maker)
- **Johny's Fireball** (Tyler Gaffalione, Norm Casse)
- **Win for the Money** (Jose Ortiz, Mark Casse)
- Exaulted (Hernandez, Eurton)

CLOSETHEGAME SUGAR TOPS FIELD OF EIGHT ACCOMPLISHED SPRINTERS IN \$250,000 KELLY'S LANDING – **Adam Rice** and **New York Mets** star pitcher **Edwin "Sugar" Diaz** will return to Churchill Downs and attempt to close the Spring Meet with another victory from their talented 4-year-old gelding **Closethegame Sugar** in Saturday's 14th running of the \$250,000 Kelly's Landing (Listed).

The 6 1/2 furlong Kelly's Landing field, which also includes Churchill Downs' co-all-time wins leader **Bango** along with Cigar Mile (GII) winner **Hoist the Gold**, will go to post at 5:31 p.m. in Race 10. First post on the stakes-laden card is 12:45 p.m.

Closethegame Sugar, trained by co-owner Rice, pulled an 18-1 upset in the Aristides Stakes (Listed) three weeks ago when he ran down heavy favorite **Skelly** in mid-stretch to win by one length under jockey **Irad Ortiz Jr.** Overall, the son of Girvin is a four-time winner including a turf victory in the Mahony Stakes last year at Saratoga. Ortiz will have the return-call from post No. 6.

While Closethegame Sugar's four victories from just seven starts are impressive, his Kelly's Landing rival Bango will be in search of his record-breaking 12th victory at Churchill Downs and 15th overall in his 36-race career. Owned and bred by **Fred and Debbie Schwartz' Tamaroak Partners**, Bango was victorious in last year's Kelly's Landing at Ellis Park, narrowly holding off **Marsalis** and **Miles Ahead**. Trained by **Greg Foley**, Bango is scheduled to make only his second appearance of his 7-year-old season in the Kelly's Landing with leading rider **Tyler Gaffalione** aboard from post 8.

Another accomplished sprinter that entered the Kelly's Landing is **Dream Team One Racing Stable's** Hoist the Gold who, at the close of his 4-year-old season, won the Cigar Mile Handicap (GII) at Aqueduct. Trained by **Dallas Stewart** and ridden in the Kelly's Landing by **Luis Saez**, Hoist the Gold was last seen when he finished third to **National Treasure** and **Post Time** in the Metropolitan Handicap (GI) on Belmont Stakes Day at Saratoga. Hoist the Gold, who was supplemented to the Kelly's Landing with a \$2,250 payment by his connections, drew post 5.

Here is the complete field for the Kelly's Landing from the rail out (with jockey and trainer):

- **Anarchist** (Antonio Fresu, Doug O'Neill)
- **Spankster** (Joe Bealmear, Jade Cunningham)
- **Ryvit** (Cristian Torres, Steve Asmussen)
- **Tejano Twist** (Rafael Bejarano, Chris Hartman)
- Hoist the Gold (Saez, Stewart)
- Closethegame Sugar (Irad Ortiz Jr., Rice)
- **Angkor** (Jose Ortiz, Phil Bauer)
- Bango (Gaffalione, Foley)

PENN MILE WINNER FIRST WORLD WAR FACES WIDE-OPEN CAST IN \$250,000 AMERICAN DERBY – Qatar Racing and Hunter Valley Farm's three-time winner and recent Penn Mile (GIII) hero **First World War** returns to Churchill Downs against a wide-open group of eight 3-year-olds that entered Saturday's 109th running of the \$250,000 American Derby (Listed).

The American Derby at 1 1/16 miles on turf is part of a stakes six pack on Saturday's Stephen Foster Day program. First post is 12:45 p.m. with the American Derby going as Race 9 at 4:58 p.m.

Trained by **Brendan Walsh**, First World War defeated **Aspenite** by a scant nose three weeks ago in the Penn Mile under world-class jockey **Frankie Dettori**. Earlier this season, the son of War Front switched from dirt to turf in the Kitten's Joy (GIII) at Gulfstream where he successfully defeated seven foes by a half-length. Dettori will return to ride First World War in the American Derby and the duo will break from post No. 7.

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

- **Green Light** (Jose Ortiz, Rodolphe Brisset)
- **Moonlight** (Tyler Gaffalione, Todd Pletcher)
- **Freedom Principle** (Luis Saez, Jose Garoffalo)
- **Lagynos** (Cristian Torres, Steve Asmussen)
- **Agate Road** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Todd Pletcher)
- **Depiction** (Joel Rosario, Cherie DeVaux)
- First World War (Dettori, Walsh)
- **Brilliant Berti** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Cherie DeVaux)

Turf racing Saturday at Churchill Downs is scheduled to be contested in Lane 1 on the Matt Winn Turf Course.

RECENT PENN OAKS WINNER POOLSIDE WITH SLIM (IRE) SET TO TACKLE 10 3-YEAR-OLD FILLIES IN \$250,000 TEPIN STAKES – Bo Bromagen II, Patrick Lewis and Sandra Bromagen's gutsy Penn Oaks winner **Poolside With Slim (IRE)** is set to take on 10 fellow 3-year-old fillies that entered in Saturday's \$250,000 Tepin Stakes (Listed) at Churchill Downs.

The talented field of grass specialists that entered the Tepin Stakes will go to post at 6:32 p.m. for the finale on the 12-race program. First post is 12:45 p.m. for Stephen Foster Day.

Poolside With Slim, trained by **Rusty Arnold II**, was victorious three weeks ago in the Penn Oaks when she gamely held off the charge of **Nice as Pie** as the 9-5 favorite. The regally bred daughter of Churchill (IRE) will be ridden by Churchill Downs' leading rider **Tyler Gaffalione** from post No. 5.

Another stakes winner entered is **Woodford Thoroughbreds' Soaring Softly Stakes (GIII) heroine Pipsy (IRE)**. Trained by **Will Walden**, Pipsy made her stateside debut in the May 12 Soaring Softly at Aqueduct where she rallied from 10 lengths off the early pace to defeat nine rivals by a half-length under **Flavien Prat**. Previously based in Ireland, Pipsy has won three of her four starts with her only blemish coming on debut, finishing second at The Curragh Racecourse. Prat will be back on board for the Tepin from post 8.

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

- **Simply in Front** (Luis Saez, Eddie Kenneally)
- **Mo Fox Given** (Joel Rosario, Ron Moquett)
- **Kathrynmarissa** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Rick Dutrow Jr.)
- **Voodoo Magic (FR)** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Cherie DeVaux)
- Poolside With Slim (IRE) (Gaffalione, Arnold)
- **My Brazilian Girl** (Luan Machado, Kathleen Wadsworth)
- **Kodiac Wintergreen (IRE)** (Florent Geroux, Arnold)
- Pipsy (IRE) (Prat, Walden)
- **Dancing N Dixie** (Jose Ortiz, Mark Casse)
- **Dozen Diamonds** (Rafael Bejarano, Vicki Olivier)
- **Just Better** (Frankie Dettori, Steve Asmussen)

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ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK

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