News Release



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KINGSBARNS ACHIEVES GRADE I GLORY IN \$1 MILLION STEPHEN FOSTER

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 29, 2024) – Spendthrift Farm LLC's Kingsbarns, winner of last year's Grade II Louisiana Derby and this year's Grade III Ben Ali at Keeneland, collected the first Grade I of his career when he powered past leaders **First Mission** and **Skippylongstocking** leaving the far turn and drove home to win Saturday's 43rd running of the \$1 million Stephen Foster (Grade I) at Churchill Downs by 2 ½ lengths over **Pyrenees** while clocking 1 1/8 miles in 1:48.09.

Luis Saez rode the winner for Hall of Fame trainer Todd Pletcher and both collected their first wins in the prestigious Foster.

"We're extremely proud of this horse's effort and for the entire team behind him," Pletcher said. "Obviously winning a Grade I is a tremendous accomplishment. I think we've seen this year he's been able to settle better than when he was a 3-year-old and show that new dimension. He sat a perfect trip today and really kicked well when turning for home."

Kingsbarns tuned the tables on Pyrenees, who defeated the Foster winner six weeks ago by three-quarters of a length in the \$250,000 Pimlico Special (GIII).

The lofty \$601,260 first prize lifted the bay Kentucky-bred colt's earnings to millionaire status – \$1,559,060 from a record of 6-2-0 in nine starts.

The victory in the Stephen Foster, a Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In Classic Division" race, earned Kingsbarns a guaranteed spot in the starting gate for the \$6 million Longines Classic (GI), which is scheduled for Nov. 2 at Del Mar. Also, his connections will have all Breeders' Cup pre-entry and entry fees covered and could receive a travel award up to \$10,000.

Kingsbarns, at odds of 9-1, rewarded his backers with mutuels of \$21.90, \$9.20 and \$5.44. Pyrenees, with **Brian Hernandez Jr.** aboard, was second and returned \$12.10 and \$4.64 at odds of 10-1. Skippylongstocking, at 4-1, was another head back in third under **Jose Ortiz** and paid \$4.66 to show.

First Mission, the odds-on 4-5 betting choice was fourth and was followed by **Steal Sunshine**, 4-1 second choice **Disarm**, **Classic Causeway** and **Dreamlike**. **Happy American** was scratched and will run in Sunday's \$300,000 Hanshin (Listed) at Churchill Downs

First Mission, with Skippylongstocking tracking off his right hip, set a measured pace in the field of eight older horses with early fractions of :24.13, :48.38 and 1:11.86. Kingsbarns, who broke from post six, was content to relax just behind in fourth and in the clear down the backstretch. Kingsbarns began to advance around the final turn and grabbed the lead with a quarter mile to the finish. He was never threatened down the stretch on his way to Grade I glory.

"There wasn't a whole lot of speed in the race so I know we had to be closer to the pace," Saez said. "Around the far turn he really found his stride nicely and just took me from there. He fought hard down the entire stretch."

Kingsbarns is a 4-year-old son of Uncle Mo out of the Tapit mare Lady Tapit and was bred by **Parks Investment Group LLC**.

"We're all thrilled for winning a Grade I with this horse," said **Ned Toffey**, General Manager of **Eric Gustavson**'s Spendthrift Farm. "At Spendthrift Farm we are in the stallion making business and winning a Grade I obviously means we have to get a stall ready for him in the stud barn when he finishes his racing career."

SCYLLA RALLIES TO WIN GRADE II, \$500,000 FLEUR DE LIS, SURVIVES INQUIRY

Juddmonte's regally bred homebred **Scylla**, winner of the \$275,000 Shawnee (Grade III) four weeks ago, continued her ascent in the filly and mare division as the 4-year-old closed from last into a modest pace to defeat **Shotgun Hottie** by a neck and survive a stewards' inquiry and jockey's objection 'gwen route to a victory in Saturday's 49th running of the \$499,000 Fasig-Tipton Fleur de Lis (GII) at Churchill Downs.

Scylla, a full sister to \$3.7 million-earner **Tactius** and Ohio Derby (GIII) winner **Batten Down**, clocked 1 1/8 miles in 1:49.45 under **Javier Castellano**, who rode the winner for Hall of Fame trainer **Bill Mott**.

Stephen Foster, Fleur de Lis, Wise Dan, Kelly's Landing, American Derby and Tepin Stakes Recaps and Quotes Saturday, June 29, 2024

Page 2 of 6

"This was the first start she went a mile-and-an-eighth and I thought she handled it very well to get the longer distance," Castellano said. "She's been one who's kept improving in each of her starts to get to the next level."

Free Like a Girl led the compact field of six fillies and mares through ordinary early fractions of :24.07, :48.83 and 1:12.84 with **Taxed** on her right hip, Shotgun Hottie stalking from the inside and **Occult**, **Xigera** and Scylla relaxing behind.

Midway through the final turn, Taxed poked her head in front and Scylla launched an eye-catching six-wide sweeping move into contention. At the three-sixteenths pole, Scylla briefly lugged in and brushed Xigera, who also made contact with Occult to her inside down the stretch. Scylla surged past Taxed nearing the sixteenth pole and held off Shotgun Hottie, who rallied up the rail.

Xigera's jockey Julien Leparoux made a claim of foul against Scylla and Castellano and Occult's rider Irad Ortiz Jr., but after an inquiry, Kentucky Horse Racing Commission stewards made no change to the order of finish.

"At the top of the stretch she came in a little bit but I corrected her left handed and she finished strongly to the wire," Castellano said.

Scylla paid \$3.82, \$2.52 and \$2.10 as the odds-on 4-5 favorite. Shotgun Hottie, with jockey **Paco Lopez** aboard, paid \$3.06 and \$2.66 as the 3-1 second betting choice. Taxed, at 13-1 under **Brian Hernandez Jr.**, was another length back in third and returned 4.10.

Occult, Xigera and Free Like a Girl rounded out the field.

Scylla, a daughter of Tapit out of the First Defence mare Close Hatches, improved her overall record to 5-1-1 in seven starts, and the \$306,210 first prize boosted her career earnings to \$721,045. She was bred in Kentucky.

"We had to sweat things out today with the inquiry but we are very proud to have won this race," said **Garrett O'Rourke**, General Manager for **Juddmonte Farms USA**. "She's a beautifully filly and getting better every time she runs. It's extra special with her dam being a champion in her own right and producing talented runners here for us. I'm not sure where we'll head next but we're extremely pleased seeing her win again."

This marked the second graded stakes win of Scylla's career. Previously, she won the Shawnee at Churchill Downs by 3 1/4 lengths in her stakes debut.

"Coming into this race we knew she'd have to run her best race of her career," said Mott's chief Kentucky assistant **Kenny McCarthy**. "There were some very nice horses in this field as to be expected in a Grade II. She handled the longer distance test very well. She's been great to have in our barn and keeps showing she can improve and step up to the next level of competition. I'm sure even bigger races are on the horizon."

OTTOMAN FLEET (GB) WINS AGAIN, TAKES DOWN GRADE II, \$500,000 WISE DAN

Godolphin's Ottoman Fleet (GB) from the international powerhouse stable of trainer Charlie Appleby won his second straight stakes over the Churchill Downs turf course when he went straight to the front and turned back a late charge from Chasing the Crown to easily win Saturday's 35th running of the \$465,000 Wise Dan (Grade II) at Churchill Downs by 1 ½ lengths.

Ridden by Flavien Prat, Ottoman Fleet (GB) completed 1 1/16 miles over the firm Matt Winn Turf Course in 1:41.26.

In his previous start four weeks ago, Ottoman Fleet (GB) defeated Chasing the Crown by one length with an authoritative late kick in the \$258,750 Arlington Stakes (GIII). This time, he went right to the front from the outset.

A multiple graded stakes winner in England and the United States, Ottoman Fleet (GB) broke from post 2 and asserted his way to the front when it appeared no others wanted to be on the lead. Ottoman Fleet (GB) set modest fractions of :23.63, :48.05 and 1:11.88 and had plenty of kick left for the stretch drive to the finish.

"I really wasn't expecting the pace scenario to be what it turned out to be," Prat said. "We sort of found ourselves on the lead and just went on with it. He was travelling so nicely that I just let him keep doing it on the front end. Turning for home he still had a lot left in the tank to kick clear at the wire."

Ottoman Fleet (GB) returned \$3.40, \$2.36 and \$2.10 for his Wise Dan victory as the odds-on 3-5 favorite. Chasing the Crown, who rallied from last under **Joel Rosario**, paid \$3.48 and \$2.48. **Strong Tide**, another 1 ½ lengths back in third under jockey **Emmanuel Esquivel**, paid \$4.66 to show.

"The pace certainly didn't help us today but he ran another solid race," said Chasing the Crown's trainer **Mike Maker**. "We were just second best again."

This marked the fifth graded stakes triumph for Ottoman Fleet (GB). Last year, he won the Group 3 Earl of Sefton at Newmarket and \$200,000 Fort Marcy (GII) at Belmont. In April, he defended his title in the Earl of Sefton but ran second in the Fort Marcy before winning the Arlington.

Ottoman Fleet (GB), a 5-year-old gelded son of Sea the Stars (IRE) out of the Motivator (GB) mare Innevera (FR), was bred in Great Britain by **SCEA Marmion Vauville** and **Alain Jathiere**.

Ottoman Fleet (GB) earned \$276,210 for the win, which improved his career earnings to \$1,088,717. He sports a record of 7-5-5 in 19 starts.

Stephen Foster, Fleur de Lis, Wise Dan, Kelly's Landing, American Derby and Tepin Stakes Recaps and Quotes Saturday, June 29, 2024 Page 3 of 6

"He's just a lovely horse that has done well in Europe and here in North America," said **Michael Banahan**, Director of Bloodstock Operations for Godolphin. "He got an easy lead and took what he could get. He galloped all the way to the wire. Being a half-million dollar race the money is nice as well. I'm sure Charlie is happy with that performance. It was a nice race for him. I'm not too sure what will be next for him but he'll join the team at Saratoga this summer and find a spot for him likely there."

Win for the Money, Exaulted and Johny's Fireball completed the order of finish.

CLOSETHEGAME SUGAR SHUTS DOWN RIVALS AGAIN IN \$250,000 KELLY'S LANDING

Closethegame Sugar, owned by trainer Adam Rice and New York Mets' closer Edwin Diaz's Sugar Diaz LLC, scored his second straight stakes win at Churchill Downs when he surged in the stretch to win Saturday's 14th running of the \$235,000 Kelly's Landing (Listed) at Churchill Downs by 1 ½ lengths over **Angkor**.

Ridden by **Irad Ortiz Jr.**, Closethegame Sugar clocked 6 ½ furlongs over a fast track in 1:14.89, which eclipsed **Bango**'s 2023 stakes record of 1:15.02 and was just .55 off **Love At Noon**'s 2001 track record of 1:14.34.

Four weeks ago, Closethegame Sugar defeated **Skelly** by one length in the \$260,000 Aristides (Listed).

The triumph for the Kentucky-bred was worth \$135,315 and boosted Closethegame Sugar's bankroll to \$507,865 with a record of 5-2-0 in eight starts.

Closethegame Sugar closed into a blistering pace set by **Ryvit** and **Anarchist**, who ran the first quarter mile in :21.93 and :43.98. Closethegame Sugar, who broke well and relaxed in third, swept past the tiring leaders at the top of the stretch with a three-wide move and drove clear down the lane as Angkor and **Hoist the Gold** chased him home to no avail.

"He's an extremely talented horse and has really come into his own switching to dirt," Ortiz Jr. said. "We had a beautiful trip today and he was very impressive."

Closethegame Sugar, who raced exclusively on turf or synthetic surfaces prior to this year, is a 4-year-old gelded son of Girvin out of the Magna Graduate mare Casual Cocktail. He was bred by the late Kentucky Gov. **Brereton C. Jones**.

"It's been a great meet here at Churchill and to cap it here in the Kelly's Landing with this horse is extremely special," Rice said. "He's been great since we switched him to dirt. When he was younger we thought he'd be able to handle it so we were confident when he switched surfaces earlier this spring. Today he had another great trip under Irad and finished up very strong."

Closethegame Sugar returned \$4.88, \$3.22 and \$2.92 as the 7-5 favorite. Angkor, at odds of 9-1 under **Jose Ortiz**, returned \$7 and \$5.08 and finished a half-length in front of Hoist the Gold who paid \$3.36 to show under **Luis Saez** as the 9-2 third choice.

Tejano Twist was fourth and was followed by Ryvit, Anarchist, Spankster and two-time Kelly's Landing winner Bango.

The Kelly's Landing honors the **Summerplace Farm** runner who earned \$1,853,831 from a record of 10-3-2 in 27 starts for trainer **Eddie Kenneally** between 2004-09. The gelding won the six-furlong Aristides Handicap (Grade III) at Churchill Downs in 2005 by stopping the teletimer in a track record 1:07.55 (since eclipsed). His biggest victory came in the 2007 Dubai Golden Saheen at Nad Al Sheba in the United Arab Emirates. Kelly's Landing also won the 2006 Phoenix (GIII) at Keeneland and 2007 Mr. Prospector Handicap (GIII) at Gulfstream Park.

BRILLIANT BERTI LIVES UP TO NAME IN \$250,000 AMERICAN DERBY

Klein Racing's homebred **Brilliant Berti** lived up to his name with an impressive stakes debut and third straight win over Churchill Downs' Matt Winn Turf Course when he defeated First World War by 2 ¹/₄ lengths in the 109th running of the \$250,000 American Derby (Listed).

Brilliant Berti, winner of a maiden special weight on May 2 and a first-level allowance on June 7, ran 1 1/16 miles over firm turf in 1:41.92. **Brian Hernandez Jr.** rode the winner for trainer **Cherie DeVaux** and Louisville-based owner/breeder **Richard Klein**.

"This horse means the world to me because it's named after my father, Bert, and he was brilliant," Klein said. "Brian gave him a brilliant ride today and had him in a great spot. When he won the allowance race last time out at Churchill he got us excited for this spot. It's extra special winning a race like this with the meaning of the name behind this horse."

Green Light, an impressive 10 ½-length maiden winner last out, went to the front as expected as the odds-on 4-5 favorite and led the field of eight 3-year-olds through a first quarter mile in :24.10 with Freedom Principle, Lagynos and Penn Mile winner First World War stalking as Brilliant Berti raced mid-pack in the clear in fifth. First World War made a move down the backstretch to challenge Green Light at the half-mile maker in :48.63 and the pace quickened.

Leaving the final turn, Brilliant Berti swept three-wide to join the leading pair, struck the front with a furlong to run and drove clear late for the impressive victory.

"He's shown a lot of talent in just a few starts," Hernandez Jr. said. "He was able to settle off the pace nicely today and had a really big kick coming home."

Stephen Foster, Fleur de Lis, Wise Dan, Kelly's Landing, American Derby and Tepin Stakes Recaps and Quotes Saturday, June 29, 2024 Page 4 of 6

The victory was worth \$150,315 and increased Brilliant Berti's earnings to \$293,985 with a record of 3-0-0 in four starts.

"We could tell this spring this horse could have a lot of talent early in his career," DeVaux said. "We knew going into this race he loves this turf course, which can obviously help for any race. I thought he finished up very well and think he has a really nice future ahead of him in this division. Saratoga has some nice races for the 3-year-olds as well as Colonial and Ellis. We'll keep our options open and head to a stakes event at one of those spots."

Brilliant Berti, a Kentucky-bred son of Noble Mission (GB) out of the Langfuhr mare Believe in Bertie, paid \$13.16, \$7.38 and \$3.64 as the 5-1 third betting choice. First World War, with jockey **Frankie Dettori** aboard, paid \$4.84 and \$2.84 at odds of 4-1. Green Light, ridden by **Jose Ortiz**, was another length back in third and returned \$2.58.

Lagynos, Agate Road, Depiction, Freedom Principle and Moonlight completed the order of finish.

DANCING N DIXIE OVER THE TOP ON MO FOX GIVIN IN \$250,000 TEPIN

Dancing N Dixie rallied from the outside to edge **Mo Fox Givin** by a neck at the wire and won Saturday's fifth running of the \$233,418 Tepin Stakes (Listed) for 3-year-old fillies at Churchill Downs.

Trained by Mark Casse and ridden by Jose Ortiz, Dancing N Dixie completed one mile on firm turf in 1:36.04 for owners Gary Barber, Rocky Top Stables and LEMB Stables.

Previously, Dancing N Dixie finished third in three consecutive stakes events: the Florida Oaks (GIII), Appalachian (GII) and Edgewood (GII).

Pipsy (IRE) set the pace and led the field of eight 3-year-old fillies through early fractions of :23.83 and :47.76. The closers, including Dancing N Dixie who raced in seventh down the backstretch, began to make their moves around the far turn. Mo Fox Givin found open seam in deep stretch and spurted to the front nearing the sixteenth pole but it was Dancing N Dixie, who made a sweeping wide move in the stretch and rallied home strongly for the over-the-top win at the wire.

"She's a very nice filly and got unlucky in her last two starts," Ortiz said. "She kept finding more the more I asked her."

Dancing N Dixie paid \$11.78, \$4.66 and \$2.96 as the 9-2 third betting choice. Mo Fox Givin, with **Joel Rosario** up, returned \$7.46 and \$4.90 at odds of 10-1. **Kathynmarissa**, ridden by **Irad Ortiz Jr.** at odds of 7-1, was another half-length back in third and returned \$4.74.

Poolside With Slim (IRE), the 2-1 favorite, was fourth and was followed by Just Better, My Brazilian Girl, Simply in Front and Pipsy (IRE). Dozen Diamonds, Kodiac Wintergreen (IRE) and Voodoo Magic (FR) were scratched.

With her win Saturday, Dancing N Dixie, a gray or road Florida-bred daughter of Neolithic out of the Uncaptured mare Foolhearted Woman, improved her record to 3-0-3 in 10 starts with purse earnings of \$320,550. Saturday's victory was worth \$135,315.

Dancing N Dixie was bred by Freddie Hyatt.

The Tepin is named after the brilliant two-time Eclipse Award-winning turf mare in 2015-16, who was trained by Casse.

"It's obviously so special for the entire team winning a race in honor of Tepin who was in our care," said Casse's Kentucky assistant **Allen Hardy**. "Dancing N Dixie definitely seems to appreciate firmer ground and really kicked home well. I think the last two starts she ran well but definitely appreciated the ground more today to run her best effort."

STEPHEN FOSTER QUOTES

Luis Saez (jockey, Kingsbarns, winner): "There wasn't a whole lot of speed in the race so I know we had to be closer to the pace. Around the far turn he really found his stride nicely and just took me from there. He fought hard down the entire stretch."

Todd Pletcher (trainer, Kingsbarns, winner): "We're extremely proud of this horse's effort and for the entire team behind him. Obviously winning a Grade I is a tremendous accomplishment. I think we've seen this year he's been able to settle better than when he was a 3-year-old and show that new dimension. He sat a perfect trip today and really kicked well when turning for home."

Stu Hampson (assistant trainer, Kingsbarns, winner): "It was a huge performance today. Back as a 3-year-old he sort of was head-strong but as he's gotten older and more mature he's really rounded into himself. I think we've seen that this year in his four starts. Obviously winning a Grade I is a tremendous accomplishment. He'll head up to Saratoga after this race and Todd (Pletcher) and the Spendthrift team will plot a course backwards from the Breeders' Cup Classic (GI)."

Ned Toffey (general manager of Spendthrift Farm, Kingsbarns, winner): "We're all thrilled for winning a Grade I with this horse. At Spendthrift Farm we are in the stallion making business and winning a Grade I obviously means we have to get a stall ready for him in the stud barn when he finishes his racing career."

Stephen Foster, Fleur de Lis, Wise Dan, Kelly's Landing, American Derby and Tepin Stakes Recaps and Quotes Saturday, June 29, 2024 Page 5 of 6

Brian Hernandez Jr. (jockey, Pyrenees, runner-up): "He ran a huge race today. I think he's going to be a lot of fun this summer and into the fall. He's really still learning and coming into his own. I think the extra distance will only help him."

Cherie DeVaux (trainer, Pyrenees, runner-up): "We beat Kingsbarns last time but he beat us today. I think Pyrenees ran a huge effort today. I think the longer the better for him."

Florent Geroux (jockey, First Mission, fourth): "No excuse. He had everything his own way. We're obviously very disappointed in his effort."

FLEUR DE LIS QUOTES

Javier Castellano (jockey, Scylla, winner): "This was the first start she went a mile-and-an-eighth and I thought she handled it very well to get the longer distance. She's been one who's kept improving in each of her starts to get to the next level. At the top of the stretch she came in a little bit but I corrected her left handed and she finished strongly to the wire."

Kenny McCarthy (assistant trainer, Scylla, winner): "Coming into this race we knew she'd have to run her best race of her career. There were some very nice horses in this field as to be expected in a Grade II. She handled the longer distance test very well. She's been great to have in our barn and keeps showing she can improve and step up to the next level of competition. I'm sure even bigger races are on the horizon."

Garrett O'Rourke (general manager Juddmonte Farms USA, Syclla, winner): "We had to sweat things out today with the inquiry but we are very proud to have won this race. She's a beautifully filly and getting better every time she runs. It's extra special with her dam (Close Hatches) being a champion in her own right and producing talented runners here for us. I'm not sure where we'll head next but we're extremely pleased seeing her win again."

WISE DAN QUOTES

Flavien Prat (jockey, Ottoman Fleet, winner): "I really wasn't expecting the pace scenario to be what it turned out to be. We sort of found ourselves on the lead and just went on with it. He was travelling so nicely that I just let him keep doing it on the front end. Turning for home he still had a lot left in the tank to kick clear at the wire."

Michael Banahan (director of bloodstock operations for Godolphin, Ottoman Fleet, winner): "He's just a lovely horse that has done well in Europe and here in North America. He got an easy lead and took what he could get. He galloped all the way to the wire. Being a half-million dollar race the money is nice as well. I'm sure (trainer) Charlie (Appleby) is happy with that performance. It was a nice race for him. I'm not too sure what will be next for him but he'll join the team at Saratoga this summer and find a spot for him likely there."

Mike Maker (trainer, Chasing the Crown, runner-up): "The pace certainly didn't help us today but he ran another solid race. We were just second best again."

KELLY'S LANDING QUOTES

Irad Ortiz Jr. (jockey, Closethegamesugar, winner): "He's an extremely talented horse and has really come into his own switching to dirt. We had a beautiful trip today and he was very impressive."

Adam Rice (trainer, Closethegamesugar, winner): "It's been a great meet here at Churchill and to cap it here in the Kelly's Landing with this horse is extremely special. He's been great since we switched him to dirt. When he was younger we thought he'd be able to handle it so we were confident when he switched surfaces earlier this spring. Today he had another great trip under Irad (Ortiz Jr.) and finished up very strong."

Stephen Foster, Fleur de Lis, Wise Dan, Kelly's Landing, American Derby and Tepin Stakes Recaps and Quotes Saturday, June 29, 2024 Page 6 of 6

Phil Bauer (trainer, Angkor, runner-up): "I thought he was in a good spot out in the clear and followed the winner to his inside. We just couldn't quite close into the margin of him late. He ran well."

AMERICAN DERBY QUOTES

Brian Hernandez Jr. (jockey, Brilliant Bertie, winner): "He's shown a lot of talent in just a few starts. He was able to settle off the pace nicely today and had a really big kick coming home."

Cherie DeVaux (trainer, Brilliant Bertie, winner): "We could tell this spring this horse could have a lot of talent early in his career. We knew going into this race he loves this turf course, which can obviously help for any race. I thought he finished up very well and think he has a really nice future ahead of him in this division. Saratoga has some nice races for the 3-year-olds as well as Colonial and Ellis. We'll keep our options open and head to a stakes event at one of those spots."

Richard Klein (owner, Brilliant Bertie, winner): "This horse means the world to me because it's named after my father, Bert, and he was brilliant. Brian (Hernandez Jr.) gave him a brilliant ride today and had him in a great spot. When he won the allowance race last time out at Churchill he got us excited for this spot. It's extra special winning a race like this with the meaning of the name behind this horse."

Frankie Dettori (jockey, First World War, runner-up): "I got him to settle up as nicely as I could but the winner just had a stronger late kick than we did. He galloped out well but we were just second best to him today."

TEPIN QUOTES

Jose Ortiz (jockey, Dancing N Dixie, winner): "She's a very nice filly and got unlucky in her last two starts. She kept finding more the more I asked her."

Allen Hardy (assistant trainer, Dancing N Dixie, winner): "It's obviously so special for the entire team winning a race in honor of Tepin who was in our care. Dancing N Dixie definitely seems to appreciate firmer ground and really kicked home well. I think the last two starts she ran well but definitely appreciated the ground more today to run her best effort."

Joel Rosario (jockey, Mo Fox Given, runner-up): "It was a huge effort but such a bummer to run second. She ran great and just got run down late."

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.