

# **THE DERBY DISPATCH**

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Brisnet Past Performances:

John Battaglia Memorial:<u>https://www.brisnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Battaglia25.pdf</u> Rebel: <u>https://www.brisnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Rebel25.pdf</u>

Inside the Kentucky Derby podcast: <u>https://www.kentuckyderby.com/horses/news/inside-the-kentucky-derby-john-battaglia-and-rebel-preview/</u>

# MAGNITUDE INJURY SHAKES UP DERBY TRAIL; REBEL, BATTAGLIA, HYACINTH ON DECK

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, Feb. 21, 2025)** – Dramatic shifts can happen in an instant on the Road to the Kentucky Derby. Just two days after **Magnitude** surged into early Derby favoritism with a dominant 9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-length victory in Saturday's \$500,000 Fasig-Tipton Risen Star Stakes (Grade II), earning a 105 Brisnet Speed Rating, trainer **Steve Asmussen** announced the colt will miss the Triple Crown trail because of a bone chip in his left ankle that requires surgery.

As Magnitude exits the Derby scene, the journey toward the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) presses on with three key prep races this weekend—two in the U.S. and one abroad—despite challenging winter weather conditions.

At Oaklawn, the \$1.25 million Rebel Stakes (GII), originally scheduled for Saturday, was postponed to Sunday due to wintry conditions in Hot Springs, Ark. The full field of 14 is headlined by Southwest Stakes (GIII) runner-up **Sandman**, California shippers **Madaket Road** and **Bullard**, along with local standouts **Speed King**, winner of the Southwest, and **Coal Battle**, who captured the Smarty Jones Stakes in early January.

Meanwhile, Turfway Park will host the \$175,000 John Battaglia Memorial (Listed) on Saturday night. The 1 1/16-mile race attracted an oversubscribed field of 14 3-year-olds, including **Godolphin**'s **First Resort**, winner of the Kentucky Jockey Club (GII), making his seasonal debut.

Internationally, the Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby resumes Sunday with the Hyacinth Stakes at Tokyo Racecourse. Likely favorite Luxor Cafe, owned by Koichi Nishikawa, will be ridden by Australian-based jockey Rachel King for trainer Noriyuki Hori.

With Derby qualifying points on the line and new contenders emerging each week, the Road to the Kentucky Derby continues to evolve with every race.

**SOUTHWEST STAKES WINNER SPEED KING RETURNS FOR \$1.25 MILLION REBEL STAKES – Triton Thoroughbreds' Speed King**, fresh off a front-running win in the Southwest Stakes (GIII), heads a full field of 14 3-year-olds entered in Sunday's \$1.25 million Rebel Stakes (GII) at Oaklawn.

Run at 1 1/16-miles, the race originally scheduled for Saturday, was postponed due to winter weather in Hot Springs, Ark. The Rebel offers qualifying points on a 50-25-15-10-5 scale toward the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI). Carded as Race 11 of 12, the Rebel Stakes field will go to post at 6:23 p.m. (all times Eastern).

Trained by **Ron Moquett**, Speed King secured 20 points with his Southwest score under jockey **Rafael Bejarano**. The son of Constitution also finished second in Remington's Springboard Mile in December, beaten a half-length by **Coal Battle**, who re-opposes in the Rebel. Bejarano will have the mount on Speed King from post No. 11.

One of Speed King's chief rivals in the Rebel is **D. J. Stable**, **St. Elias Stable**, **West Point Thoroughbreds** and **CJ Stables**' Sandman, who enters off a troubled trip in the Southwest. Ridden by **Cristian Torres** for trainer **Mark Casse**, Sandman was tabbed as the lukewarm 4-1 morning line favorite and will break from post 3.

Derby Dispatch Friday, Feb. 21, 2025 Page 2 of 6

Trainer **Bob Baffert**, an eight-time Rebel winner, ships in **Madaket Road** following a third-place effort in the Robert B. Lewis Stakes. Fellow West Coast-based conditioner **Michael McCarthy**'s **Bullard**, who defeated Madaket Road in the Bob Hope Stakes at Del Mar, will try to rebound after finishing third in the San Vicente Stakes at Santa Anita.

The field for the Rebel Stakes from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds):

- Coal Battle (Juan Vargas, Lonnie Briley, 10-1)
- Admiral Dennis (Florent Geroux, Brad Cox, 12-1)
- Sandman (Torres, Casse, 4-1)
- Hypnus (Brian Hernandez Jr., Kenny McPeek, 10-1)
- Madaket Road (Irad Ortiz Jr., Baffert, 9-2)
- **Publisher** (Flavien Prat, Steve Asmussen, 20-1)
- **Dreaminblue** (Francisco Arrieta, Randy Morse, 15-1)
- Innovator (Tyler Bacon, Wayne Lukas, 15-1)
- Smoken Wicked (Tyler Gaffalione, Dallas Stewart, 8-1)
- Bullard (Umberto Rispoli, McCarthy, 5-1)
- Speed King (Bejarano, Moquett, 6-1)
- Brereton's Baytown (Joe Bealmear, Paul McEntee, 50-1)
- Tiztastic (Jose Ortiz, Steve Asmussen, 8-1)
- Hot Gunner (Harry Hernandez, Scott Young, 50-1)

\*Brereton's Baytown and Hot Gunner were not made early Triple Crown nominees but can do so with a \$6,000 late payment due by Monday, April 7.

**FIRST RESORT SET TO REJOIN ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY IN SATURDAY'S \$175,000 JOHN BATTAGLIA** – The Road to the Kentucky Derby rolls into Turfway Park Racing & Gaming on Saturday for the 43<sup>rd</sup> running of the \$175,000 John Battaglia Memorial where **Godolphin's** Kentucky Jockey Club (Grade II) winner **First Resort** leads an over-subscribed field of 12 3-year-olds plus two also-eligibles.

Run at 1 1/16 miles on Tapeta, the John Battaglia Memorial will go as the featured seventh race on the 10-race program with a post time of 8:55 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 5:55 p.m.

First Resort, a homebred son of Uncle Mo, has been training at Turfway Park through the winter in preparation for his 3-yearold debut. Under the care of **Eoin Harty**, First Resort stamped himself as a Kentucky Derby prospect with a 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-length victory in the Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) at Churchill Downs. Prior to that start, First Resort won his debut at Ellis Park by 3 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> lengths before finishing second in the Saratoga Special (GII). Jockey **Luis Saez**, who guided First Resort to victory in the Kentucky Jockey Club, retains the mount from post No. 9.

Among First Resort's challengers are several of Turfway Park's most accomplished 3-year-olds including J S Stables' Leonatus Stakes winner Baby Max; Rose Hill Farm, Vincent Colbert, John Trumbulovic and James Connor's Turfway Prevue winner Comin in Hot; and Aaron and Victoria Haberman's California Burrito, an eye-catching allowance winner over the Tapeta.

Several accomplished 3-year-olds are set to make their first start at Turfway, including **Three Diamonds Farm's Calling Card**, a New York-bred maiden special weight winner by 17 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> lengths; **Back Racing** and **Run for LaRoses' Maximum Promise**, who scored a 14 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-length maiden victory at Ellis Park; and **Mens Grille Racing**'s two-time stakes winner **Studlydoright**.

The complete field for the John Battaglia Memorial from the rail out (with jockey and trainer):

- Spirit Rags (Santo Sanjur, Marcelino Salas)
- Shan (Albin Jiminez, Ed Moger Jr.)
- Studlydoright (Xavier Perez, John Robb)
- Calling Card (Gerardo Corrales, Mike Maker)
- California Burrito (Irving Moncada, Tom Drury Jr.)
- **Banks** (Adam Beschizza, Joe Sharp)
- Baby Max (Abel Cedillo, Kelsey Danner)
- King of Ashes (Declan Cannon, Brendan Walsh)
- First Resort (Saez, Harty)
- Coming in Hot (Edgar Morales, John Ennis)
- Brereton's Baytown (Marshall Mendez, Paul McEntee)
- Maximum Promise (Luan Machado, Kenny McPeek)
- AE: Special Caliber (Evin Roman, Michel Douaihy)
- AE: **Maitre D** (Evin Roman, Doug O'Neill)

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\*Spirit Rags, Banks, King of Ashes, Brereton's Baytown and Special Caliber were not made early Triple Crown nominees but can do so with a \$6,000 late payment due by Monday, April 7.

The John Battaglia Memorial will award the top five finishers qualifying points on a 20-10-6-4-2 scale toward a spot in the starting gate for the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI).

The Road to the Kentucky Derby returns to Turfway Park on Saturday, March 22, for the \$777,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII), a key stop in the Championship Series.

**TWO TIME WINNER LUXOR CAFE TOPS HYACINTH STAKES** – Luxor Cafe, a two-time winner most recently victorious in the Jan. 11 Kurochiku Sho at Nakayama Racecourse, leads a competitive field of 14 3-year-olds in Sunday's Hyacinth Stakes at Tokyo Racecourse.

The about one-mile contest is the third leg of the Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby and will be run as Race 9 with a post time of 12:25 a.m. ET.

The Hyacinth awards qualifying points on a 30-15-9-6-3 scale to the top five finishers with several Triple Crown nominees including: **Danon Figo**, **Ecoro Azel**, **Happy Man**, **On the Move**, **Promised Gene**, **Poulsen**, **Taisei Dorado** and **Vilja Lied**.

More information: https://en.netkeiba.com/race/newspaper.html?race\_id=202505010809

## **REBEL QUOTES**

- Admiral Dennis (trainer Brad Cox): "I hope to see a really hot pace that he can close into. Two back in the Gun Runner, he didn't get away well, he sat behind a soft pace. There was not a lot of change in position in that race. We ran him last time trying to get him a confidence booster. It was a very similar pace scenario. He did range up four wide around the turn, ran well enough."
- **Coal Battle (trainer Lonnie Briley):** "I want him to come from off the pace. He'll break pretty sharp, he always does, and then you'll have to grab him. I'm sure they'll go 46 and change, low 47, they'll be hummin' pretty good. I hope it plays out for him so he can make his run."
- Sandman (trainer Mark Casse): "He got a good post. The weather's been a little hit and miss. Hopefully, we get a good racetrack. We're in these preps, trying to figure out where we fit in. And when you get a bad racetrack, it kind of skews all that. As a horse trainer, you can take winning or losing. It's just you want a fair shot, a good assessment. ... I went in saying to everybody, we're going to find out whether he's a man or a boy. And overcoming what he overcame and to be able to run as well as he did, I think he showed he's a man. But that was only one test. We still have a few more."
- **Speed King (co-owner Ted Bowman):** "I think there's a lot of speed on the inside. We were in the 9 (hole) last time looking at the speed and we went ahead and went. Still don't feel like we have to go to the lead. We think he'll rate and we'll just see how it develops. If no one goes, we'll go."

## JOHN BATTAGLIA MEMORIAL QUOTES

- Baby Max (trainer Kelsey Danner): "He's doing well coming into the race. Turfway is probably the best surface I've ever trained on summer or winter, I think it's consistent and safe. I've kept most of my better horses on it all year. ... He's been impressive so far in his career and looking forward to another top effort on Saturday."
- First Resort (jockey Luis Saez): "I'm looking forward to getting back aboard him. He was very impressive last time out. He acted very professional when he was a 2-year-old so I'm sure he's matured even more over the winter."

## HOW TO WATCH THE REBEL

- "America's Day At The Races" will feature live, on-site coverage of Oaklawn's Rebel Stakes Day from 3-6 p.m. on FS2
- FanDuel TV
- Stream live on TwinSpires.com, the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs Incorporated and the Kentucky Derby.

## HOW TO WATCH THE JOHN BATTAGLIA MEMORIAL

- FanDuel TV will feature live, on-site coverage at Turfway Park from Matt Carothers
- Stream live on TwinSpires.com, the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs Incorporated and the Kentucky Derby.

**KEY RACES TO WATCH TO WATCH** – This weekend there are several races around the world that could have implications on the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks. Here are some of the key races:

#### Friday

- MEY R2 (9:05 a.m.), \$218,000 Al Bastakiya, 3yo, 1 3/16 M
- MEY, R4 (10:15 a.m.), \$218,000 UAE Oaks (GIII), 3yo f, 1 3/16 M
- OP, R7 (4:44 p.m.), MSW, 3yo f, 1 1/16 M
- TP, R7, (8:55 p.m.), \$175,000 Cincinnati Trophy, 3yo f, 1 M (AW)

#### Saturday

- KAR, R3 (8:20 a.m.), \$1.5 million Saudi Derby (GIII), 3yo, 1 M
- LRL, R8 (3:27 p.m.), \$100,000 Miracle Wood, 3yo, 1 M
- GP, R9 (4:43 p.m.), MSW, 3yo, 1 1/8 M
- TP, R7 (8:55 p.m.), \$175,000 John Battaglia Memorial (Listed), 3yo, 1 1/16 M (AW)

#### Sunday

- OP, R1 (1 p.m.), MSW, 3yo, 1 1/16 M
- AQU, R5 (2:27 p.m.), MSW, 3yo, 1 1/8 M
- OP, R9 (5:07 p.m.), \$500,000 Honeybee (GIII), 3yo f, 1 1/16 M
- OP, R11 (6:23 p.m.), \$1.25 million Rebel (GII), 3yo, 1 1/16 M
- TP, R9 (8:15 p.m.), MSW, 3yo, 1 M

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – The Road to the Longines Kentucky Oaks Championship Series continues Sunday at Oaklawn with the \$500,000 Honeybee (GIII) featuring heavy 7-5 morning line favorite **Muhimma**. The Honeybee will go as Race 9 at 5:07 p.m. On Friday, eight fillies are entered in the \$218,000 UAE Oaks (GIII) at Meydan Racecourse, which will go as Race 4 at 10:15 a.m. ...

The Road to the Kentucky Oaks Prep Season concludes Friday night at Turfway Park with the \$175,000 Cincinnati Trophy headlined by highly-regarded maiden special weight winner **Girl Math**. The Cincinnati Trophy will go as Race 7 at 8:55 p.m. ...

Trainer **Brendan Walsh** did not have any immediate explanation for **East Avenue**'s puzzling 10<sup>th</sup>-place performance in the Risen Star. The Grade I winner is tentatively scheduled to continue the Road to the Kentucky Derby, according to Walsh. ...

Risen Star runner-up **Chunk of Gold** returned to Turfway Park on Sunday. Trainer **Ethan West** stated the colt is likely to return to Fair Grounds for the March 22 Louisiana Derby (GII) but will continue to monitor the likely fields for that race and the \$777,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII), held the same day at Turfway Park....

Jerome Stakes winner **Cyclone State** leads a field of 10 3-year-olds entered in Saturday's \$1.5 million Saudi Derby (GIII), which will go as Race 3 at 8:20 a.m. Fans can watch the Saudi Derby, which will be run on the undercard of the \$20 million Saudi Cup, on **FS1**....

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Churchill Downs' Spring Meet stall applications are due by Monday, March 3 with the stable area reopening Tuesday, March 18. Stall application: <a href="https://www.kentuckyderby.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2025/01/Spring-Stall-app-2025.pdf">www.kentuckyderby.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2025/01/Spring-Stall-app-2025.pdf</a>...

**ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY LEADERBOARD** – Here are the Top 20 horses on the Road to the Kentucky Derby Leaderboard:

<b>Position</b>	Horse	Trainer	<u>Resume</u>	Possible Next Start	Points
1	Citizen Bull	Bob Baffert	1 <sup>st</sup> – Robert B. Lewis 1 <sup>st</sup> – Breeders' Cup Juvenile 1 <sup>st</sup> – American Pharoah	April 5 Santa Anita Derby	60
2	Getaway Car	Bob Baffert	1 <sup>st</sup> – Sunland Derby 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Los Al Futurity 2 <sup>nd</sup> – American Pharoah 4 <sup>th</sup> – Breeders' Cup Juvenile	ТВА	36
3	Built	Wayne Catalano	1 <sup>st</sup> – Gun Runner 2 <sup>nd</sup> - Lecomte 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Risen Star	ТВА	35
4	Speed King	Ron Moquett	1 <sup>st</sup> – Southwest 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Springboard Mile	Feb. 22 Rebel or March 29 Arkansas Derby	25
5	Chunk of Gold	Ethan West	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Risen Star	March 22 Louisiana Derby	25
6	Coal Battle	Lonnie Briley	1 <sup>st</sup> – Smarty Jones 1 <sup>st</sup> – Springboard Mile	Feb. 22 Rebel	20
7	Burnham Square	Ian Wilkes	1 <sup>st</sup> – Holy Bull	March 1 Fountain of Youth	20
8	Disco Time	Brad Cox	1 <sup>st</sup> – Lecomte	March 22 Louisiana Derby	20
9	Captain Cook	Rick Dutrow Jr.	1 <sup>st</sup> – Withers	April 5 Wood Memorial	20
10	John Hancock	Brad Cox	1 <sup>st</sup> – Sam F. Davis	March 22 Louisiana Derby or March 29 Florida Derby or March 29 Arkansas Derby	20
11	Gaming	Bob Baffert	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Breeders' Cup Juvenile 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Los Al Futurity	ТВА	18
12	Poster	Eoin Harty	1 <sup>st</sup> – Remsen 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Sam F. Davis	April 5 Wood Memorial	16
13	Jonathan's Way	Phil Bauer	1 <sup>st</sup> – Iroquois 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Kentucky Jockey Club	ТВА	15
14	Owen Almighty	Brian Lynch	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Sam F. Davis 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Iroquois	April 5 – Lafayette	15
15	Tiztastic	Steve Asmussen	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Street Sense 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Southwest 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Kentucky Jockey Club	Feb. 22 Rebel	14
16	Sandman	Mark Casse	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Southwest 5 <sup>th</sup> – Iroquois	Feb. 22 Rebel	14
17	Ferocious	Gustavo Delgado	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Breeders' Futurity 4 <sup>th</sup> – Holy Bull 5 <sup>th</sup> – Breeders' Cup Juvenile	March 1 Fountain of Youth or March 29 Florida Derby	12
18	Omaha Omaha	Michael Gorham	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Jerome 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Withers	March 15 Virginia Derby	11
19	Chancer McPatrick	Chad Brown	1 <sup>st</sup> – Champagne	March 8 Tampa Bay Derby	10
20	East Avenue	Brendan Walsh	1 <sup>st</sup> – Breeders' Futurity	TBA	10

# UPCOMING ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY RACES

March 1 (nine weeks out) – \$415,000 Fountain of Youth (GII), 1 1/16 miles, Gulfstream Park (Top 5 points: 50-25-15-10-5) Known possible starters (with trainer): Burnham Square (Ian Wilkes); *Ferocious (Gustavo Delgado)*; *Gate To Wire (Todd Pletcher)*; Keep It Easy (Dale Romans); *River Thames (Todd Pletcher)*; Sovereignty (Bill Mott)

March 1 (nine weeks out) – \$300,000 San Felipe (GII), 1 1/16 miles, Santa Anita (Top 5 points: 50-25-15-10-5) Known possible starters (with trainer): Barnes (Bob Baffert); Journalism (Michael McCarthy); Rodriguez (Bob Baffert); Romanesque (Bob Baffert)

March 1 (nine weeks out) – \$300,000 Gotham (GIII), one mile, Aqueduct (Top 5 points: 50-25-15-10-5) Known possible starters (with trainer): *Gate To Wire (Todd Pletcher);* Sacrosanct (Brad Cox); Sand Devil (Linda Rice)

March 8 (eight weeks out) – \$400,000 Tampa Bay Derby (GIII), 1 1/16 miles, Tampa Bay Downs (Top 5 points: 50-25-15-10-5) Known possible starters (with trainer): Chancer McPatrick (Chad Brown); *Gate To Wire (Todd Pletcher)*; Patch Adams (Brad Cox)

March 15 (seven weeks out) - \$500,000 Virginia Derby, 1 1/8 miles, Colonial Downs (Top 5 points: 50-25-15-10-5) Known possible starters (with trainer): Omaha Omaha (Michael Gorham); *Surfside Moon (Chucky Lawrence)*; Test Score (Graham Motion)

March 22 (six weeks out) – \$1 million Louisiana Derby (GII), 1 3/16 miles, Fair Grounds (Top 5 points: 100-50-25-15-10) Known possible starters (with trainer): *Built (Wayne Catalano);* Chunk of Gold (Ethan West); Disco Time (Brad Cox); *Instant Replay (Brad Cox); John Hancock (Brad Cox)* 

March 22 (six weeks out) - \$777,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII), 1 1/8 miles (Tapeta), Turfway Park (Top 5 points: 100-50-25-15-10)

March 29 (five weeks out) – \$1 million Florida Derby (GI), 1 1/8 miles, Gulfstream Park (Top 5 points: 100-50-25-15-10) Known possible starters (with trainer): *Ferocious (Gustavo Delgado)*; *John Hancock (Brad Cox)*; *River Thames (Todd Pletcher)*; Tappan Street (Brad Cox)

March 29 (five weeks out) – \$1.5 million Arkansas Derby (GI), 1 1/8 miles, Oaklawn (Top 5 points: 100-50-25-15-10) Known possible starters (with trainer): *Caldera (Wayne Lukas); Getaway Car (Bob Baffert); Instant Replay (Brad Cox); John Hancock (Brad Cox); Speed King (Ron Moquett)* 

April 5 (four weeks out) – \$750,000 Wood Memorial (GII), 1 1/8 miles, Aqueduct (Top 5 points: 100-50-25-15-10) Known possible starters (with trainer): Captain Cook (Rick Dutrow Jr.); *Getaway Car (Bob Baffert); McAfee (Rick Dutrow Jr.);* Poster (Eoin Harty); *Surfside Moon (Chucky Lawrence)* 

April 5 (four weeks out) – \$1.25 million Blue Grass (GI), 1 1/8 miles, Keeneland (Top 5 points: 100-50-25-15-10) Known possible starters (with trainer): *Caldera (Wayne Lukas)* 

April 5 (four weeks out) – \$750,000 Santa Anita Derby (GI), 1 1/8 miles, Santa Anita (Top 5 points: 100-50-25-15-10) Known possible starters (with trainer): Baeza (John Shirreffs); Citizen Bull (Bob Baffert); *Getaway Car (Bob Baffert)*;

## April 12 (three weeks out) - \$400,000 Lexington (GIII), 1 1/16 miles, Keeneland (Top 5 points: 20-10-6-4-2)

Note: The possible fields for upcoming Kentucky Derby Championship Series races are fluid as owners and trainers vie for points. Known possible horses mentioned to be under consideration for each race are based on published news reports and other sources. Horses listed in *italics* are possible for multiple races.

## 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. www.ChurchillDowns.com.