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Contact: Darren Rogers
Senior Director, Communications & Media Services
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(502) 636-4461 (office)
(502) 345-1030 (mobile)
Darren.Rogers@KyDerby.com

DETERMINED GUNITE PREVAILS IN \$160,000 MAXFIELD WITH GAFFALIONE UP

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, July 3, 2022) – Winchell Thoroughbreds’ homebred **Gunite** slipped through an opening along the inside rail at the top of the stretch and determinedly turned back late charges from **My Prankster** and **Hoist the Gold** to win Sunday’s first running of the \$160,000 Maxfield Overnight Stakes at Churchill Downs by a half-length. The victory gave jockey **Tyler Gaffalione** his ninth stakes win of the Spring Meet – the most since **Robby Albarado** won eight in 2005.

Gunite, the odds-on 4-5 favorite in the field of six 3-year-olds, clocked seven furlongs over a “fast” track in 1:23.08 for Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen**. As a 2-year-old, Gunite won the Grade I Hopeful at Saratoga.

Overtaxed dictated the pace through a first quarter mile in :23.08 and the half in :46.25 as Gunite tracked in third along the inside rail. As the field turned for the homestretch run, a tiring Overtaxed fanned out wide on the lead and opened an inside seam for Gunite to slip through. He grabbed the lead with his rail run with three-sixteenths of a mile left, and Gunite was resolute to hold off late runs from My Prankster, who rallied from last, and Hoist the Gold, who challenged with a four-wide move throughout the lane.

“He didn’t break as sharply today so I was in a bit of a tight spot at the rail up the backside,” Gaffalione said. “Turning for home I just bided my time and stayed at the rail and he kicked on well.”

Gunite paid \$3.80, \$2.40 and \$2.10. My Prankster, with **Rafael Bejarano** aboard, paid \$2.40 and \$2.40 as the 7-5 second betting choice. Hoist the Gold, a 30-1 longshot ridden by **Brian Hernandez Jr.**, was another head back in third returned \$5.

Tejano Twist, **Burninhunkoflove** and **Overtaxed** rounded out the field.

Gunite, a son of Gun Runner out of the Cowboy Cal mare Simple Surprise, improved his record to 3-3-1 in eight starts. The \$97,311 first prize boosted his career earnings to \$438,099. He was bred in Kentucky by his owner.

“We’re really happy to get him back in the winner’s circle,” Asmussen said. “He didn’t break as sharp today as we expected. Tyler got him in a good rhythm up the backside and we’re fortunate he was able to win today.”

In addition to the Maxfield, Gaffalione, who has already clinched his eighth Churchill Downs riding title, won the Grade III Old Forester Bourbon Turf Classic (**Santin**); Mamzelle (**Twilight Gleaming-IRE**); Grade III Winning Colors (**Sconsin**); Aristides (**Bango**); Blame (**Dynamic One**); Leslie’s Lady (**Wicked Halo**); Monomoy Girl (**Society**); and Tepin (Wicked Halo).

For Asmussen, it was his meet-leading fifth stakes win. The others were the Grade I La Troienne (**Pauline’s Pearl**); Grade I Churchill Downs (**Jackie’s Warrior**); Leslie’s Lady (Wicked Halo); Monomoy’s Girl (Society) and Tepin (Wicked Halo).

The Maxfield Stakes is named in honor of **Godolphin’s** eight-time winning horse. Maxfield was a two-time Grade I winner and won his career finale in last year’s \$750,000 Clark presented by Norton Healthcare (GI) at Churchill Downs.

L’L TOOTSIE WINS \$143,750 ANCHORAGE STAKES

Joel Politi’s Li’l Tootsie collected the first stakes win of her career when the 4-year-old filly grabbed the lead leaving the turn and drew clear in the stretch to beat **Roc’s Princess** by 3 ½ lengths in Sunday’s inaugural running of the \$143,750 Anchorage Overnight Stakes over one mile at Churchill Downs.

Ridden by **Edgar Morales** for trainer **Tom Amoss**, Li’l Tootsie, who previously raced in seven consecutive races at six furlongs, prompted the pace set by odds-on 3-5 favorite **The Mary Rose** – :23.12 and :45.99 – and inched clear inside the final furlong to stop the teletimer in 1:37.17 over a “muddy” track while defeating four other fillies and mares.

“I broke sharp out of the gate and I could tell I had a lot of horse beneath me,” Morales said. “I wasn’t too concerned about the stretch out in distance around the turn because she was traveling very comfortably. She took off in the stretched and galloped out very easily. I’ve been really thankful for the connections and Tom for giving me a lot of opportunities this meet.”

Li’l Tootsie paid \$8.40, \$4.20 and \$4.60 as the 3-1 second betting choice. Roc’s Princess, a 26-1 longshot under **Reylu Gutierrez**, edged **Will’s Secret** by a head for second and returned \$14.80 and \$7. Will’s Secret, ridden by **Jon Court**, paid \$5.20 to show.

It was another 9 ¾ lengths back to **Sylvia Q** in fourth and The Mary Rose faded another 8 ½ lengths back to last.

Lil Tootsie improved her record to 6-1-3 in 16 starts and the \$97,900 first prize jumped her earnings to \$458,974. She is a daughter of Tapiture out of the Dayjur mare Informative Style and was bred in Kentucky by **Davant Latham**. The Anchorage honors the suburb of Louisville, a heavily-shaded city in eastern Jefferson County, Kentucky.

MAXFIELD QUOTES

Tyler Gaffalione, (jockey, Gunite, winner) – “He didn’t break as sharply today so I was in a bit of a tight spot at the rail up the backside. Turning for home I just bided my time and stayed at the rail and he kicked on well.”

Steve Asmussen, (trainer, Gunite, winner) – “We’re really happy to get him back in the winner’s circle. He didn’t break as sharp today as we expected. Tyler got him in a good rhythm up the backside and we’re fortunate he was able to win today.”

ANCHORAGE QUOTES

Edgar Morales, (jockey, Li'l Tootsie, winner) – “I broke sharp out of the gate and I could tell I had a lot of horse beneath me. I wasn’t too concerned about the stretch out in distance around the turn because she was traveling very comfortably. She took off in the stretched and galloped out very easily. I’ve been really thankful for the connections and Tom (Amoss) for giving me a lot of opportunities this meet.”

Rey Gutierrez, (jockey, Roc’s Princess, runner-up) – “She tried really hard today. She wasn’t quite as good as the winner but ran a good race.”

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 saddling paddock and 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.

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