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LADY ROCKET WIRES COMPETITIVE FIELD IN GRADE III CHICAGO

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 25, 2022) – Lady Rocket went straight to the front and turned back late charges by **Sconsin** and **Bell's the One** to win Saturday's 32nd running of the \$200,000 Chicago Stakes (Grade III) at Churchill Downs by 2 ¾ lengths.

Ricardo Santana Jr. rode Lady Rocket to victory for trainer **Brad Cox** and co-owners **Frank Fletcher Racing Operations** and **Marshall Gramm's Ten Strike Racing**. She ran seven furlongs over a fast track in 1:21.62.

The victory was worth \$121,330 and boosted Lady Rocket's earnings to \$699,588 with a record of 7-3-2 in 14 starts.

This was the 5-year-old mare's fourth stakes win and second against graded stakes company. Last fall, she won the \$250,000 Go For Wand Handicap (GIII) at Aqueduct by nine lengths.

Lady Rocket, who finished third in the Grade II Ruffian at Belmont seven weeks ago, got away from the gate fast from post 3 in the field of seven fillies and mares and rattled off an opening quarter mile in :22.67 and a half-mile in :45.36 as **Kalypso** and **Bayerness** attempted to keep up.

Into the turn, Lady Rocket opened up a 1 ½-length advantage as 2-1 favorite Sconsin, who was tracking from fourth, ranged into contention. Sconsin appeared to come within a length at the top of the stretch with a three-wide move but Lady Rocket had plenty left and spurred clear down the stretch for the win.

"We were impressed she was able to hold her speed this afternoon at seven furlongs," Cox said. "I think she may be best at 6 ½ furlongs and Ricardo gave her a little bit of a breather up the backside and I think that helped her holding off some really nice fillies and mares that were in this field."

Lady Rocket paid \$9.80, \$4.20 and \$3.20 as the 7-2 fourth betting choice. Sconsin, under **Mitchell Murrill**, returned \$4.20 and \$2.80. Bell's the One, who rallied up the rail for third 1 ½ lengths back of the runner-up with **Corey Lanerie** aboard at 7-2, paid \$2.80 to show.

Four Graces, Bayerness, **Pennybaker** and Kalypso completed the order of finish.

"Her best weapon is her speed and she broke well from the gate and took me right to the front," Santana Jr. said. "She relaxed on the front end and was able to save energy before the stretch. I was looking over for Corey (Lanerie) on Bell's the One because I know he likes to come up the rail. So I wanted to make sure she didn't sneak up on us with (Sconsin) closing on the outside. She was able to hold off everyone."

The next target for Lady Rocket is likely the \$500,000 Ballerina Handicap (GI) for fillies and mares over seven furlongs at Saratoga on Aug. 28, according to Cox.

Lady Rocket is a daughter of Tale of the Cat out of the Eskendereya mare Allons Danser and was bred in Kentucky by **La Ciega LLC & Tale of the Cat Syndicate**.

Racing at Churchill Downs returns Sunday with a nine-race program that begins at 12:45 p.m. There is a jackpot carryover of \$56,406 in the 20-cent Derby City 6, which covers Races 4-9.

There are only seven racing days left at the Spring Meet. Closing day is Monday, July 4.

CHICAGO QUOTES

Ricardo Santana Jr. (jockey, Lady Rocket, winner) – “I got to work her last week and get to know her a little bit before I got on her today. Her best weapon is her speed and she broke well from the gate and took me right to the front. She relaxed on the front end and was able to save energy before the stretch. I was looking over for Corey (Lanerie) on Bell’s the One because I know he likes to come up the rail. So I wanted to make sure she didn’t sneak up on us with (Sconsin) closing on the outside. She was able to hold off everyone.”

Brad Cox (trainer, Lady Rocket, winner) – “We were impressed she was able to hold her speed this afternoon at seven furlongs. I think she may be best at 6 ½ furlongs and Ricardo (Santana Jr.) gave her a little bit of a breather up the backside and I think that helped her holding off some really nice fillies and mares that were in this field.”

Greg Foley (trainer, Sconsin, runner-up) – “She was a little bit closer than was probably ideal because there wasn’t much speed in the race. (Pennybaker) didn’t break well and (Kalypso) didn’t really pressure Lady Rocket as much as we thought she would. I think she ran a solid race and we’ll bring her back to get them next time.”

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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