

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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

ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY 150 BEGINS SATURDAY AT CHURCHILL DOWNS WITH GRADE III, \$300,000 IROQUOIS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, Sept. 11, 2023) – The Road to Kentucky Derby 150 will begin Saturday at Churchill Downs where **Winchell Thoroughbreds** and **Three Chimneys Farm**'s impressive maiden special weight winner **Risk It** headlines a field of nine 2-year-olds that entered the 42nd running of the Grade III, \$300,000 Iroquois Stakes.

The Iroquois Stakes is the first of 37 races on the traditional Road to the Kentucky Derby where horses will attempt to qualify for the 150th Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) to be staged on Saturday, May 4, 2024. The Iroquois will award the top five finishers points on a 10-5-3-2-1 scale as the first of 21 "Prep Season" races.

Saturday's Iroquois, which was shortened in distance in 2023 from 1 1/16 miles to one-mile, will be run as Race 9 with a post time of 4:55 p.m. (all times Eastern). The first of 11 races will get underway at 12:45 p.m. The spectacular card will also feature the \$300,000 Pocahontas (GIII), the kickoff on the Road to the Kentucky Oaks. The other stakes on the program are the \$400,000 Locust Grove (GIII), \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) and \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society.

Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** will attempt to win his fourth-career Iroquois with his trainees Risk It and **Edified**. Risk It, a precocious 2-year-old son of Gun Runner, dominated a six-furlong maiden special weight contest on Aug. 19 at Saratoga by 4 ½ lengths under jockey **Tyler Gaffalione**. Risk It earned a solid 91 Brisnet speed rating for his debut win. Gaffalione will be back aboard in the Iroquois from post No. 8.

Asmussen's second entry in the Iroquois, **Courtlandt Farms**' Edified, broke his maiden on July 1 at Ellis Park by a widening 3 ½ lengths at odds of 9-1. The runner-up in that race, **Liberal Arts**, returned to break his maiden at Ellis Park and will once again face Edified in the Iroquois. Jockey **Ricardo Santana Jr.** will have the mount on Edified from post 4.

Asmussen previously won the Iroquois with **Lucky Player** (2014), **Astrology** (2010) and **Capt. Candyman Can** (2008).

Another visually impressive maiden special weight winner that entered the Iroquois is **Mellon Patch**'s **Patriot Spirit**. Trained by **Mike Campbell**, Patriot Spirit powered clear to a six-length victory on debut at Colonial Downs. The son of Constitution arrived to Churchill early Monday morning in preparation for Saturday's race. He'll once again be ridden by veteran **Jesus Castanon** from post 9.

Here is the complete field for the Iroquois from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Liberal Arts** (Cristian Torres, Robert Medina); **West Saratoga** (Rafael Bejarano, Larry Demeritte); **Union Roll** (Gerardo Corrales, Todd Pletcher); **Edified** (Santana, Asmussen); **Market Street** (Gabe Saez, Wayne Lukas); **Seize the Grey** (Jaime Torres, Wayne Lukas); **Gettysburg Address** (Flavien Prat, Brad Cox); **Risk It** (Gaffalione, Asmussen); and **Patriot Spirit** (Castanon, Campbell).

The Iroquois Stakes is part of the Breeders' Cup "Dirt Dozen" where the top three finishers will receive a partial credit towards their entry fees in the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile on Nov. 3 at Santa Anita.

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. Handicappers **Joe Kristufek**, **Scott Shapiro** and **Kaitlin Free** will provide additional insight and selections on the simulcast feed which can be viewed on TwinSpires or the Churchill Downs App on smart TVs.

Fans can also watch all of the races from Churchill Downs on FanDuel TV and the FanDuel+ app. Several FanDuel TV hosts and handicappers will be live on-site throughout the September Meet including **Andie Biancone**, **Christina Blacker**, **Caton Bredar**, **Matt Carrothers**, **Larry Collmus**, **Gabby Gaudet**, **Joaquin Jaime**, **Mike Joyce**, **Caleb Keller** and **Todd Schrupp**.

For more information about the Churchill Downs September Meet, visit www.ChurchillDowns.com.

ELLIS PARK DEBUTANTE WINNER HOT BEACH FACES ULTRA-COMPETITIVE FIELD IN POCAHONTAS INCLUDING KENTUCKY JUVENILE WINNER YOUALMOSTHADME – Saturday's 55th running of the \$300,000 Pocahontas (Grade III) features an ultra-competitive group of nine 2-year-old fillies including **Boarshorts Stables**' Ellis Park Debutante heroine **Hot Beach** and **Qatar Racing**, **Swinbank Stables**, **Steve Adkisson** and **Black Type Thoroughbreds**' Kentucky Juvenile winner **Youalmosthadme**.

Run at one mile, the Pocahontas Stakes is the first race on the Road to the Kentucky Oaks and will award qualifying points to the top five finishers on a 10-5-3-2-1 scale toward the 150th running of the Longines Kentucky Oaks on Friday, May 3, 2024.

The Pocahontas Stakes will go as Race 7 of 11 with a post time of 3:50 p.m. Saturday's stakes bonanza will also feature the \$300,000 Iroquois Stakes (GIII), \$400,000 Locust Grove (GIII), \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) and \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society. First post is 12:45 p.m.

Hot Beach broke her maiden by two lengths in the Ellis Park Debutante under jockey **Declan Cannon**. The **Brian Lynch**-trained daughter of Omaha Beach defeated fellow Pocahontas rivals **Riperton** and Youalmosthadme one month ago in the seven-furlong race. Jockey **Flavien Prat** will pick up the mount on Hot Beach in the Pocahontas from post No. 9.

Chief among Hot Beach's rivals in the Pocahontas is Youalmosthadme, who returns to Churchill Downs where she demolished her rivals in the Kentucky Juvenile by 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ lengths. Trained by **Brad Cox**, Youalmosthadme stumbled badly at the start of the Ellis Park Debutante but recovered to finish third as the heavy 4-5 favorite. **Tyler Gaffalione**, who was in the saddle for the Kentucky Juvenile, will have the call in the Pocahontas from post 7.

Another intriguing filly that entered the Pocahontas is **MJM Racing's V V's Dream**, who finished second to future Grade I winner **Brightwork** in the Debutante Stakes at Ellis Park. Trained by **Kenny McPeek**, V V's Dream has been on the sidelines since her runner-up effort 10 weeks ago. Prior to the Debutante Stakes, V V's Dream convincingly won her debut at Churchill Downs by 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ lengths. Jockey **Brian Hernandez Jr.** will be aboard from post 6.

McPeek is not a stranger to winning the Pocahontas. The veteran conditioner previously won the race with **Fun and Feisty** (2022), **Daddys Lil Darling** (2016) and **Dothraki Queen** (2015).

Here is the complete field for the Pocahontas from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Empire Island** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Norm Casse); **Peignoir** (Luan Machado, Rodolphe Brisset); Riperton (Cristian Torres, Paulo Lobo); **Raining Sugar** (James Graham, Riley Mott); **Regal Rumor** (Mickaëlle Michel, Wayne Catalano); V V's Dream (Hernandez, McPeek); Youalmosthadme (Gaffalione, Cox); **Courbe** (Rafael Bejarano, Todd Pletcher); and Hot Beach (Prat, Lynch).

The Pocahontas Stakes is part of the Breeders' Cup "Dirt Dozen" series where the top three finishers will be awarded partial entry fees toward the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (GI) held on Nov. 3 at Santa Anita.

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GRADE I WINNER PAULINE'S PEARL RETURNS IN \$400,000 LOCUST GROVE – **Stonestreet Stables'** accomplished 5-year-old mare **Pauline's Pearl** tops a field of 11 entered in Saturday's 39th running of the Grade III, \$400,000 Locust Grove at Churchill Downs.

The 1 1/16-mile Locust Grove, which serves as a local prep toward the Breeders' Cup Distaff (GI), will go as the 10th race on the stakes-laden 11-race program. Post time is 5:26 p.m. The stellar afternoon of racing will also feature the \$300,000 Iroquois (GIII), \$300,000 Pocahontas, \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) and \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society. First post is 12:45 p.m.

Trained by **Steve Asmussen**, Pauline's Pearl gamely returned to the winner's circle in the \$400,000 Fleur de Lis (GII) where she dug in late to defeat **Bellamore** and **A Mo Reay** by three-quarters of a length. Prior to the Fleur de Lis, Pauline's Pearl was the half-length winner of the 2022 La Troienne (GI) at Churchill Downs. **Ricardo Santana Jr.** will have the mount in the Locust Grove from post No. 2.

The deep field in the Locust Grove also includes Grade I winner A Mo Reay; Groupie Doll Stakes winner **Falconet** and multiple graded stakes winner **Search Results**.

Here is the complete field for the Locust Grove from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Soul of an Angel** (Ajhari Williams, Gerald James); Pauline's Pearl (Santana, Asmussen); **Le Da Vida (CHI)** (Vince Cheminaud, Ignacio Correas IV); Search Results (Tyler Gaffalione, Chad Brown); **Misty Veil** (James Graham, Mike Maker); **Hidden Connection** (Cristian Torres, Bret Calhoun); A Mo Reay (Flavien Prat, Brad Cox); **Fannie and Freddie** (Corey Lanerie, Al Stall Jr.); **Music Street** (Declan Cannon, Whit Beckman); Falconet (Gerardo Corrales, Todd Pletcher); **Royal Take Charge** (Rey Gutierrez, Al Stall Jr.).

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TOP SPRINTER BANGO WILL ATTEMPT TO TIE ALL-TIME CHURCHILL DOWNS WINS RECORD IN LOUISVILLE THOROUGHbred SOCIETY – **Tamaroak Partners'** crack sprinter **Bango** will attempt to notch his record-tying 11th win beneath the historic Twin Spires in Saturday's third running of the \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society Stakes.

The six-furlong Louisville Thoroughbred Society was tabbed as Race 4 on the 11-race program. First post is 12:45 p.m. and the Louisville Thoroughbred Society will go at 2:13 p.m. Saturday's spectacular card at Churchill Downs also features the kickoff of the Road to the Kentucky Derby and Road to the Kentucky Oaks with the \$300,000 Iroquois (GIII) and \$300,000 Pocahontas (GIII), respectively. The other supporting stakes are the \$400,000 Locust Grove and \$300,000 Open Mind.

In the Louisville Thoroughbred Society Stakes, Bango would tie **Ready's Rocket** with a victory. Trained by **Greg Foley**, Bango hasn't finished worse than second in his last seven starts. As a 6-year-old, Bango has recorded victories in the St. Matthews Stakes and Kelly's Landing. Jockey **Tyler Gaffalione** will be back aboard Bango in the Louisville Thoroughbred Society from post No. 4.

The compact field in the Louisville Thoroughbred Society also includes **The Scherr Boys'** Mighty Beau winner **Necker Island**; **Godolphin's** multiple graded stakes placed **Strobe** and **Kueber Racing's** recent allowance winner **Gulfstream Way**.

Here is the complete field for the Louisville Thoroughbred Society in order of post positions (with jockey and trainer): **Baytown Bear** (Jane Elliot, Paul McEntee); **Awesome Aaron** (Rafael Bejarano, Troy Green); **Strobe** (Florent Geroux, Brad Cox); **Bango** (Gaffalione, Foley); **Gulfstream Way** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Norm Casse); and **Necker Island** (Mitchell Murrill, Chris Hartman).

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MULTIPLE GRADED STAKES WINNER WICKED HALO LEADS FIELD IN \$300,000 OPEN MIND – Winchell Thoroughbreds' multiple graded stakes winning-sprinter **Wicked Halo** headlines a field of six fillies and mares that entered Saturday's 14th running of the \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) at Churchill Downs.

Run at six furlongs, the Open Mind is one of five stakes events on the Saturday card. The Open Mind will go as Race 6 of 11 with a post time of 3:18 p.m. The other stakes on the card are the \$400,000 Locust Grove (GIII), \$300,000 Iroquois (GIII), \$300,000 Pocahontas (GIII) and \$300,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society. First post is 12:45 p.m.

Eight-time winner Wicked Halo drew post No. 2 in the Open Mind. Trained by **Steve Asmussen**, Wicked Halo has been the mark of consistency throughout her 15-race career. The daughter of Gun Runner has only finished off the board once and has banked purse earnings of \$1,297,700. Wicked Halo's résumé includes victories in the Prioress (GII), Raven Run (GII) and Twin Bridges Stakes which she won seven weeks ago at Ellis Park. Jockey **Tyler Gaffalione** will be back aboard Wicked Halo in the Open Mind.

Chief among Wicked Halo's rivals in the Open Mind is **Mr. and Mrs. Tsunebumi Yoshihara's** five-time winner **Yuugiri**. Trained by **Rodolphe Brisset**, the speedy Yuugiri set the pace in the 2022 Longines Kentucky Oaks (GIII) but faded to 13th. Following the Oaks, Brisset cut Yuugiri back in distance to one-turn and has notched victories in the Carousel Stakes at Oaklawn and Saylorville Stakes at Prairie Meadows. Jockey **Flavien Prat** has the mount from the rail.

Here is the complete field for the Open Mind from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): Yuugiri (Prat, Brisset); Wicked Halo (Gaffalione, Asmussen); **Fire On Time** (Martin Garcia, Dale Romans); **More Than Vows** (Rafael Bejarano, Brian Lynch); **Ten Rings** (Joe Talamo, Jeff Engler); and **Sharp Hero** (Julien Leparoux, Bradley Ross).

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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.

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