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STANFORD OUT; FRAMMENTO IN; MUBTAAHIJ GETS THREE-EIGHTHS WORK FOR DERBY 141

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, April 30, 2015) – Churchill Downs stewards were notified Thursday afternoon that **Stonestreet Stables, Mrs. John Magnier, Michael Tabor and Derrick Smith's Stanford** would not run in Saturday's \$2,203,800 Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (GI). His defection enables **Mossarosa's Frammento** to secure the No. 20 spot in the starting gate and leave **Charles Fipke's Tale of Verve** as the lone also-eligible.

UAE Derby (GII) winner **Mubtaahij (IRE)** blew out three furlongs in :37.40 over a fast track after the morning renovation break at Churchill Downs as hopefuls for Saturday's Run for the Roses continue their preparations for the Grade I American classic.

Jockey **Christophe Soumillon** was aboard Mubtaahij for the work that was the 10th fastest of 15 at the distance.

With two days to go before the first leg of the Triple Crown, all indications point to a fast track for the Derby as well as for Friday's 141st running of the \$1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI). There is a slight chance of rain later Thursday with sunny skies forecast for Friday and Saturday with temperatures in the 70s at race time both days.

KENTUCKY DERBY NOTES

AMERICAN PHAROAH/DORTMUND – Because his colts **American Pharoah** and **Dortmund** are the first and second choices on the Kentucky Derby morning line, Hall of Fame trainer **Bob Baffert** spent time Thursday morning answering questions about a 1-2 finish. That ended up as a prime topic after the colts galloped 1 1/2 miles on the track

It has been 67 years since stablemates **Citation** and **Coaltown** made Derby history with their top-two finish in 1948. Baffert threatened to match that result in 1998 when **Real Quiet** was first and **Indian Charlie** was third.

"Turning for home they were 1-2. It was a really good feeling that I had," Baffert said. "**Victory Gallop** came and split us at the end. He could have easily won. He had a tough trip. I don't really think about that right now. We just want to get them up there and saddle them. Dortmund is tough getting the saddle on. The other horse is pretty quiet and relaxed, pretty professional."

Baffert never really got away from the subject as he discussed his two stars. **Kaleem Shah's Dortmund** is unbeaten in six starts, while **Zayat Stables' American Pharoah** has reeled off four straight wins after losing badly in this debut last summer. American Pharoah emerged as the Derby favorite with the apparent ease in which he posted an eight-length victory in the Arkansas Derby (G1) on April 11.

I don't know what was behind him in the Arkansas Derby," Baffert said. "Dortmund has been running against better horses. I think the California horses are pretty tough this year. I watch them work at Santa Anita. We know that Pharoah is a brilliant horse from what he did in California in the morning. But they are both good horses. They are pretty close."

After joking that he didn't know how it feels to win the Derby because it has been so long since he earned his third in 2002, Baffert said he was in a special situation with two standouts.

"It's incredible. I'm so fortunate," he said. "Something just worked out. I believe in fate and I believe that something really good is about to happen, or else it's going to be disappointing. It's something we just have to wait to see it happen. Destiny."

Baffert said the outcome will be determined by elements beyond his control.

"These horses have to get their trips," Baffert said. "Maybe Dortmund is the horse. We don't know. I don't know how good he is. And the farther the better it's going to be for him. He loves this track. He's tough. We know Pharoah is brilliant from what he's done. He gallops around there and he really hasn't had to break a sweat."

Baffert acknowledged that he hasn't seen either of his colts breathing hard or tired after training or a race.

"I'm sitting on these two outstanding individuals," he said. "So I feel like I've got the No. 1 and the No. 2 in the draft. I've got Winston and Mariota in my barn here."

Baffert was back to the first and second question and whether his horses could get the top two spots.

"I just want to get them around there. Turning for home, I'd love to see them 1-2. That's what I'd love to see. Then see what they're made of. Maybe there is another horse. Maybe **Carpe Diem** is better than them. Or somebody else. You don't know. That's why we have this race. I just hope to get a clear shot, not too much traffic and it's not disastrous. I've been here with disastrous trips."

BOLO – The California-based colt **Bolo** galloped a mile and three-eighths Thursday morning under exercise rider **Tony Rubalcava** during the 8:30 to 8:45 Derby/Oaks special training period. Trainer **Carla Gaines** looked on approvingly.

“He’s loving it here and having fun with all this Derby stuff,” the conditioner said about her son of the young Dynaformer stallion **Temple City**. “He likes the fact all the people are coming around and paying attention to him. Back at Santa Anita, nobody gives us a second look, except on race day. But he’s having his fun here and because of that I’m really liking it, too.”

Gaines scheduled a paddock schooling session during the races Thursday afternoon for Bolo.

CARPE DIEM/MATERIALITY/ITSAKNOCKOUT/STANFORD – The **Todd Pletcher** Quartet – they run, not sing – headed trackside shortly after the special Derby/Oaks training period had opened for business and turned in gallops of varying distances as they all move forward toward their dates with destiny at 6:34 p.m. Saturday at Churchill Downs.

Patti Krotenko was aboard for the spin by Blue Grass Stakes (GI) winner **Carpe Diem**, who pulled hard on the exercise rider as he went one time around the track. Florida Derby (GI) winner **Materiality** had exercise rider **Carlos Cano** as his partner and they toured a mile and three-eighths. Also covering 11 furlongs was **Stanford**, runner-up in the Louisiana Derby (GII), who had exercise rider **Isabelle Bourez** attached. Finally, **Ezequiel Perez** was the exercise pilot for **Itsaknockout** as they navigated a mile and one half.

Pletcher observed the gallops from the grandstand, then returned to his Barn 40 headquarters.

Wednesday evening, the four Pletcher horses drew their post position assignments and they came up Carpe Diem (#2), Materiality (#3), Stanford (#11) and Itsaknockout (#13). The No. 2 post for Carpe Diem, who is listed as the third betting choice in the race at 8-1, was considered especially problematic.

But Thursday morning Pletcher had his spirits lifted in that regard by an old friend.

“(Hall of Fame jockey) **Angel Cordero (Jr.)** stopped by this morning and told me not to worry about the two hole,” the trainer said. “He said he’d won out of the two twice, once with **Cannonade** (1974) and then with **Bold Forbes** (1976).”

Early Thursday afternoon, the connections of Stanford opted to pass on the Derby.

“We entered the horse in the race to see what sort of post he might draw,” Pletcher said. “We were on the fence as to whether or not to run him, but we thought we’d take a look. But after seeing the draw and talking to the owners, we decided it might be best to take him out and consider other options.”

“We’re thinking now that either the Peter Pan (at Belmont Park on May 9) or the Preakness (at Pimlico on May 16) might be better spots for him. The horse is fine. We’ll train him tomorrow morning and we’ll probably work him the morning of the Derby before we ship him to New York.”

“We didn’t wait to scratch him. We did it now to ensure that the also-eligibles would have their chance to run. We think him coming out now is for the best of all.”

DANZIG MOON – **John Oxley’s Danzig Moon** galloped 1 ½ miles after the renovation break under exercise rider **William Cano** for trainer **Mark Casse**.

The runner-up in the Blue Grass Stakes (GI) has made a favorable impression among onlookers in the mornings and has emerged as a bit of a buzz horse this week.

“I certainly hope he has (created a buzz),” Casse said. “I am not really a good predictor, but he was super this morning and he hasn’t had a bad day. I do know that in a 20-horse field, you have got to have some luck.”

“I have a tremendous amount of respect for the horses in the race, but if **American Pharoah** breaks a step slow, he is going to find himself in a situation that he has not faced before.”

Danzig Moon drew post position five for Saturday’s race.

“(Jockey) **Julien (Leparoux)** and I talked about it and the five is OK,” Casse said. “We need everything to go our way and that would have been harder from the outside.”

EL KABEIR – **Zayat Stables’ El Kabeir** galloped 1 3/8 miles under **Simon Harris** Thursday morning at Churchill Downs. The son of **Scat Daddy**, who arrived by van from New York in the early morning hours Monday, had walked two days before jogging around the track Wednesday.

“He looked good to me. He felt good to Simon,” said trainer **John Terranova**, who planned to school the Kentucky Derby entrant in the paddock for Thursday’s first race. “He gets over this track nicely. Simon said he jumped in the bridle a little bit, but that’s good to see.”

This year, El Kabeir has campaigned at Aqueduct, where he captured the Jerome and Gotham Stakes, finished second in the Withers and checked in third in the Wood Memorial.

“He’s never disappointed. He tries every time,” Terranova said. “I’m really happy with the post (No. 7) in relation to some of the others. Hopefully, we’ve got one who can have an impact here with a good, clean trip.”

FAR RIGHT – The vibe remained upbeat at the barn of trainer **Ron Moquett** Thursday morning, a day after **Far Right** drew the 20 hole for Saturday's Run for the Roses.

"I love him being on the outside," said exercise rider **Laura Moquett**, wife of the trainer, after **Far Right** jogged a mile and galloped a mile.

"The 20 is fine. If it had been one, two, three or four I would be concerned," majority owner **Harry Rosenblum** said. "It is all up to (jockey) **Mike (Smith)** now."

On the scene to watch **Far Right** train this morning was co-owner **Robert LaPenta**. While **Rosenblum** will be having his first Derby starter, it will be the seventh for **LaPenta**.

"The last starter I had was **Dialed In** in 2011," **LaPenta** said of the favorite that year who finished eighth. "My first Derby horse was **The Cliff's Edge** in 2004 and he lost two shoes in the race. The thing I remember most about that day was the monsoon with about three inches of rain in an hour."

The Cliff's Edge was fifth to **Smarty Jones**. **LaPenta** also ran **Andromeda's Hero** (eighth in 2005), **Cool Coal Man** (15th in 2008) and **Ice Box**, the runner-up in 2010 to **Super Saver**. **LaPenta** also owned **Jackson Bend**, the 12th-place finisher in 2010 in partnership.

"**Andromeda's Hero** was about 10 away from getting third and **Ice Box** should have won," **LaPenta** said.

As for **Far Right**, the colt has met **LaPenta's** expectations.

"Definitely. I saw his race in the Delta Jackpot (GIII) and said, 'That's a Derby horse,'" **LaPenta** said. "He got checked badly in that race and then took off.

"I think he is a combination of **The Cliff's Edge** and **Jackson Bend**. 'Cliff' was a deep closer and **Jackson Bend** was fearless. This horse runs his race every time."

FIRING LINE – The sturdy California-based colt **Firing Line** galloped a mile and one half and schooled in the paddock under exercise rider **Humberto Gomez** Thursday morning during the special Derby/Oaks training period. Trainer **Simon Callaghan**, along with the colt's owner – **Arnold Zetcher** – and his wife **Ellen** were very interested observers.

The transplanted Englishman **Callaghan** has an immediate schedule planned for his son of the young **Lion Heart** stallion **Line of David**, a participant in the 2010 Kentucky Derby where he showed speed, but backed up late and finished well behind race winner **Super Saver**.

"We'll paddock school him today," the conditioner said, "then we'll gallop him tomorrow morning during the 5:45 to 6 period they have for Derby horses. I'll probably put him on the track Derby morning. I like to jog my horses a bit on race day."

Callaghan was asked about his colt's romping 14 ½-length victory in the Sunland Derby April 4.

"Well, as a trainer, you'd prefer to have an 'easy' race for your horse coming into one like this," he said. "We thought we could do well in that race, but we were a bit surprised by just how well he did. I've never had a horse win a stakes race by that far; maybe another kind of race, but not a stakes. It was a confidence builder for him and we're glad for that."

FRAMMENTO – **Mossarosa's Frammento** galloped 1 ½ miles after the morning renovation break under exercise rider **Juan Bernardini** for trainer **Nick Zito**.

Zito needed one defection by scratch time at 9 a.m. Friday to get a shot at a third Derby victory. He got that defection Thursday afternoon when the connections of **Stanford** opted to pass on the Derby.

"I got the call from the racing office this afternoon," **Zito** said. "We are all excited. We made it. Everybody is happy. He has been training great. I know we will have to break from the 20, but that is a lot better than Post Zero!"

Had **Frammento** finished third in the **Blue Grass Stakes (GI)** instead of fourth, he would have picked up 10 more qualifying points toward the Derby and been the 20th top point earner entered in the race.

"It has been frustrating, because he is a true distance horse," said **Zito**, who has won the Derby with **Strike the Gold** in 1991 and **Go for Gin** in 1994.

Corey Nakatani has the mount.

FROSTED – **Godolphin Racing's Frosted** had an educational and somewhat leisurely training session Thursday morning after leaving **Barn 42** on the **Churchill Downs** backstretch prior to the renovation break. The **Wood Memorial (GI)** winner visited the paddock as the tractors started grooming the racing surface for the Kentucky Derby and Oaks hopefuls' morning training session. When the track reopened **Frosted** schooled in the starting gate before galloping 1 3/8 miles under exercise rider **Rob Massey**.

"He's doing great," trainer **Kiaran McLaughlin** said. "We love our horse."

Frosted, who is rated at 15-1 in the morning line, will be the sixth Derby starter for **McLaughlin**, who saddled **Closing Argument** for a second-place finish in 2005.

"It's a lifelong dream, especially to be here with **Godolphin**. All 19 other owners deserve to win the race, but no one more than **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum** for his commitment and passion for the Thoroughbred industry. I mean, no one has done more for our game, so it would be great to win for him."

Frosted finished second behind **Upstart** in the Holy Bull (GII) at Gulfstream in his 3-year-old debut before turning in a baffling fourth-place finish in the Fountain of Youth (GII), in which he appeared to be on his way to a commanding victory in the stretch before stopping suddenly.

With no clue what caused Frosted to stop, McLaughlin made five changes before he ran in the Wood at Aqueduct.

"We started with the jockey and we cut back the blinkers a little bit. Probably the most important thing was we changed racetracks. Gulfstream was a deep, tiring and demanding track. So we changed his racetrack and changed his training. Then we did a procedure to cut the (throat) muscles back so (the horse) doesn't displace his palate so easily. It's not a big deal. It's done in his stall. It's quick and easy," McLaughlin said. "With all the changes, it all came together. He couldn't be doing any better."

Frosted rebounded from his Fountain of Youth disappointment to win the Wood Memorial (GI) going away by two lengths under **Joel Rosario**.

INTERNATIONAL STAR – **Ken** and **Sarah Ramsey's** Louisiana Derby (GII) winner and Road to the Kentucky Derby points leader (171) **International Star** walked the shedrow at trainer **Mike Maker's** barn.

"That's just part of his routine and part of a lot of my horses' routines to get a day off during the week," Maker said. "If they work on Saturday they get the Thursday off."

Maker pointed to graded stakes-winning female sprinter **Thank You Marylou** as an example of another Ramsey horse in his barn that follows the same pattern.

"It's just the way I train," Maker said. "I don't know if there's any [benefit]."

In some situations a day of walking can raise eyebrows, as it can be a sign that something is amiss. However, it is not unusual for some trainers to give their horses one day off per week. Asked point blank by a reporter if International Star was dealing with any physical issues, Maker responded with a definitive, "No."

The trainer relayed that International Star will gallop Friday shortly after the track opens for training.

"He's razor sharp and rarin' to go," Maker said. "Show up at 5:45 tomorrow and he'll put all your questions to bed."

KEEN ICE – **Donegal Racing's** **Keen Ice** galloped strongly for two miles Tuesday under exercise rider **Faustino Aguilar** for trainer **Dale Romans** after the renovation break.

"He loves to train," Romans said. "He never gets tired. That's the key. If the big boys don't win, we've got the best shot of the rest."

That Keen Ice will be breaking from the No. 14 post position, the last spot in the main gate, might be advantageous, Romans said. "He gets us a little space between that horse (**Frosted**) to the outside of us in case we break out a little bit," Romans said. "But it's a good, clean spot, and we're not going to be in there too long."

The trainer said he had yet to study the entire draw in detail. "The draw, it looked like it was in interesting set-up, with some of the speed way inside and way outside," he said. "It's interesting how it's going to unfold. I'll sit down and look at it a lot harder this afternoon. It doesn't matter where we are. This horse is going to fall out of the back of it. Let them go on with the front and try to run them all down."

MR. Z – After walking Wednesday, **Zayat Stable's** **Mr. Z** returned to the track Thursday for a routine gallop under exercise rider **Edvin Vargas** for trainer **D. Wayne Lukas**.

Lukas said that Wednesday's draw has given him a hint at how the race might unfold. Specifically, he said, the early running might be favorable for Mr. Z, who'll break from the 17-hole. **American Pharoah**, the favorite, drew No. 18.

"The thing about it that I think is significant is American Pharoah and Mr. Z are truly the only quicker horses on the outside," Lukas said. "**Far Right** (No. 20), obviously isn't. Then you've got to go all the way down to the 10-hole (**Firing Line**) to get a quicker horse."

"And so, we're going to have a pretty good run down that outside, I think, being able to dictate what we want to do. And then the other horses who've got speed are inside a little bit, and it's going to compromise them. It's going to be a jam on the clubhouse turn right here. The race is always won or lost right here."

During the renovation break, Lukas entertained visitors to his barn with racing stories, including one about how jockey **Donna Barton**, who worked horses for him, had a feel for the 1995 Derby. Lukas ran **Thunder Gulch**, who was a 21-1 shot, and the 3-1 favored entry of **Timber Country** and the filly **Serena's Song**.

"She worked all three of them on a Tuesday morning," Lukas said. "We were coming back. I said: 'Donna, you just had the best seat in the house on all three. Which one has got the best chance to win the Derby?' She said, 'This one right here, Thunder Gulch.' And I said, 'Better than Timber Country?' She said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'You're sure?' She said, 'This is the one you'll get it done with.' I said, 'Well, you're going against a champion.' Sure enough, he gets it done."

Thunder Gulch won by 2 1/4 lengths over **Tejano Run**, and Timber Country was third.

MUBTAAHIJ – **Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Maktoum's** UAE Derby (GII) winner **Mubtaahij (IRE)** had an easy three-eighths breeze timed in :37.40 with jockey **Christophe Soumillon** aboard.

"It was a very easy work just to stretch his legs," trainer **Mike de Kock** said. "It just gets them breathing a little bit deeper, gets the blood oxygenated, lets them stretch and get the circulation going into the muscles."

Churchill Downs clockers also noted the first eighth of a mile in :13.20 and a half-mile gallop-out time of :52.40.

"I just told [Christophe] to let him stretch his legs out over the last 400 and just enjoy himself," de Kock said.

An easy blowout 48 hours prior to race day is part of the standard operating procedure in de Kock's barn.

"I always do it, or nine times out of 10, I'll blow them out," de Kock said. "Some of them a little bit harder, some of them a little less, depending on the horse."

Based on his behavior and appearance at Churchill Downs this week, if Mubtaahij doesn't run big in the Kentucky Derby it won't be because of the much-discussed daylong ship or the unfamiliar surroundings.

"He goes out there to work and he doesn't flinch, he doesn't balk, he doesn't sweat up, he doesn't behave like an idiot," de Kock said. "He's doing everything right."

The Irish-bred son of Dubawi is doing everything right and now that he's acclimated the question for handicappers should be the same as with the other 19 entrants – is he good enough?

"I suppose he is a mystery," de Kock said. "He hasn't run in North America. The whole Carnival thing is a mystery and the horses he ran against. It's hard to get a handle on him – why he can, why he can't."

OCHO OCHO OCHO – **DP Racing LLC's** Delta Jackpot (GIII) winner **Ocho Ocho Ocho** took the morning off to simply walk the shedrow one day after an easy three-furlong breeze in :38.40.

"He walked really, really good," Cassidy said, mocking the intense interest in his horse's every step. "His stride was really good. He's quite happy, within himself. No issues from the breeze yesterday. It wasn't much of a breeze but it was a breeze. We're good to go."

Ocho Ocho Ocho will gallop Friday and walk the morning of Kentucky Derby 141.

Cassidy had been extremely relaxed since arriving at Churchill Downs, even when his horse was assigned the dreaded one-hole at Wednesday's post position draw. Jockey **Elvis Trujillo** will have to make a quick decision out of the gate whether to gun for the lead or risk having to fight for position as 19 other horses are moving toward him looking to save ground into the first turn.

For Cassidy, who will turn 70 this year, the draw is a part of the game he can't control and therefore shouldn't worry about – "it is what it is," he has said repeatedly about breaking from the rail – but Trujillo and his agent, **Tom Knust**, are a bit more concerned.

Cassidy: "The agent called me from California and said, 'What post did we get?' I said, 'The one.' I thought he fainted. I told him, 'Well you don't have to ride the horse, don't worry about it.'"

The trainer insists they still intend to hold back and hopefully settle in the second flight of horses.

"I've got to think **Carpe Diem** and a couple of those others are going to go but I don't want to go with them, or sit behind," Cassidy said.

TALE OF VERVE – **Charles Fipke's Tale of Verve**, the surprise Derby entrant who is second on the also-eligible list, galloped a mile-and-three eighths Thursday under exercise rider **Emerson Chavez**.

Understanding that at least two horses much be scratched before 9 a.m. Friday in order for Tale of Verve to draw into the Derby field, trainer **Dallas Stewart** already has a Plan B in case the colt doesn't run. "We'll look at the Preakness; we'll look at the Belmont," he said.

Stewart said that the idea to consider the Derby for Tale of Verve was hatched in a conversation with Fipke after the colt won a mile-and-three sixteenths maiden race April 23 at Keeneland.

"If you don't get in, you get your money back on Friday, so it doesn't cost you anything to enter," Stewart said. "Then you have to think about if you want to run or not. I train horses. And I train them to run. So that's my job. I told (Fipke) that his horse has the talent, and he'll be finishing."

Tale of Verve has one win, one second and two thirds, all against maidens, in six career starts.

"I always believed in the horse," Stewart said. "If you go back to his first race (Oct. 24 at Keeneland), he got left in the gates with **Rosie (Napravnik)**. It was only (about) seven furlongs. But he went the last quarter in like 21-and-change. I was just blown away by it."

Tale of Verve finished third that day. "Then I ran him long," Stewart said. "He ran OK first time long. He was third here (on Nov. 29). Then I took him down to the Fair Grounds."

Troubled trips cost Tale of Verve in his first two races in New Orleans, Stewart said. "Then he just started developing. The races were just too short for him. He was always finishing, but the race was over. It wasn't his fault he wasn't winning."

Tale of Verve displayed his stamina in his victory at Keeneland. "I thought he ran terrific. He came back. He was not blowing. He was not exerted," Stewart said.

TENCENDUR – **Phil Birsh**'s big **Warrior's Reward** colt went out for a routine gallop under exercise rider **Blair Golen** Thursday morning with the rest of the Derby and Oaks runners.

The New York-bred, who will be ridden by **Manny Franco**, is part of a record number of three New Yorkers in the field.

Trainer **George Weaver** was impressed when Tencendur turned in a breeze of :48 after arriving from the farm last summer, but it took time for the slow-developing colt, who measures 17 hands, to get to the races.

"He was a colt that worked significantly better in company than he did by himself," Weaver said. "Following that initial breeze he went through a growing stage and stages where everything didn't go well. He didn't stay on a weekly work pattern. He had a few small things and then got sick. One thing led to another and it ended up being December before he made his debut.

"We always like him early on, but no matter how much you like them, the performance in the afternoon is the measuring stick. He ran third in his first race and then broke his maiden. When he ran fourth in the Withers (GIII) and got beat three lengths, he jumped up. To me, that was a sign that, though he was still green in his mind, he might have a chance to make it here."

Tencendur made another big step forward on April 4 with a second-place finish in the Grade I Wood to earn a trip to the Derby.

"He's getting better with every race," Weaver said "I think the racing does more for him than anything. We still need to work him in company, but he's learned a lot as far as being a racehorse and will continue to improve as the year goes on."

UPSTART -- **Ralph M. Evans** and **WinStar Farm**'s **Upstart** turned in an energetic 1 3/8 miles gallop under **Vicki King** at Churchill Downs Thursday morning in preparation for a start in Saturday's Kentucky Derby.

"I think he loves the surface. I don't know that he's ever moved this well," trainer **Rick Violette** said. "He really floats over it. The cold weather certainly is a big plus, getting out of the 90-degree heat in Florida."

Upstart was rated at 15-1 in the morning line after drawing the No. 19 post in the Derby field of 20. **Jose Ortiz** has the mount.

"My first comment," Violette said, "was: for the next three days, as a coach, I have to convince my jockey it's the best place to be. But that only worried me for 30 seconds because I got a call and he watched the draw from New York and said 'Don't worry about a thing,'

"**I'll Have Another** won from the 19; **Big Brown** won from the 20; the auxiliary gate has been pretty productive. It's a little farther out there, but that's one of the things we haven't dealt ourselves. It's dealt to us, and we have to adjust to it."

WAR STORY – **Looch Racing Stables**, **Glenn Ellis** and **Christopher Dunn**'s **War Story** jogged a mile and galloped a mile after the morning renovation break with exercise rider **Marvin Orantes** aboard for trainer **Tom Amoss**.

"His training has lightened up two days before the race," said Amoss, who planned a paddock schooling session this afternoon. "He is fit and ready. We want to keep him on his toes but not get over the top."

Amoss, who got his trainer's license in 1988, attended his first Derby in 1979.

"That was **Spectacular Bid**'s Derby," Amoss said. "He was a great horse with a capital G. He didn't really get his due until he was a 4-year-old. It was a shame he didn't win the Belmont."

Amoss said the first Derby he remembered watching was **Secretariat** in 1973.

"But the one that really got me hooked was 1978 with **Affirmed** and **Alydar**," Amoss said. "You had a young kid (**Steve Caution**) who was about my age riding Affirmed and, if you root for the underdog, how could you not pull for Alydar in the Belmont?"

KENTUCKY OAKS NOTES

ANGELA RENEE/ESKENFORMONEY – The two Longines Kentucky Oaks-bound fillies out of the **Todd Pletcher** barn were up and at them early Thursday morning at Churchill Downs, heading out at 6 a.m. for gallops under the lights at the big Louisville oval.

Exercise rider **Adele Bellenger** was at the controls on **Angela Renee** and they went for a mile and one-quarter gallop. The pilot for **Eskenformoney** was **Carlos Cano** and he covered one mile in their exercise.

Pletcher has secured the services of two of racing's top riders for his fillies – Hall of Fame jockey **John Velazquez** for Angela Renee and America's current leading rider for purses won in **Javier Castellano** for Eskenformoney. The trainer was asked what his conversations with those two would be like in the paddock prior to the Oaks.

"I don't get too much into detail with riders, especially riders like them," he said. "They both have ridden these horses before, so that has to be considered. I'm not the kind of trainer that's going to tell a jockey to be fifth at this or that pole. Too many things happen too fast in a race to be thinking like that. If I talk to a rider it might be to remind them of a special quirk – maybe saying that his horse has a short burst and he'll need to save that punch for as long as he can – something like that. It's likely to be more general than specific."

Pletcher has saddled 16 horses previously in the Oaks and has won it three times – with **Ashado** in 2004, **Rags to Riches** in 2007 and **Princess of Sylmar** in 2013.

BIRDATTHEWIRE – Several partners in **Forum Racing's Birdatthewire** were watching as the Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII) winner galloped Thursday under exercise rider **Faustino Aguilar** for trainer **Dale Romans**.

Paul Murans, a principal partner, said the Forum group comprises people from throughout the country and "came together from all walks of life." Murans, who lives in Indianapolis, played on the Southwest Missouri State basketball team that was eliminated by Duke in the Sweet Sixteen in 1999.

Forum has four horses with Romans, who is a 20 percent owner of Birdatthewire. Murans is confident that Birdatthewire will be a serious contender will be competitive in a strong Oaks field.

"She proved herself, I think, in her last race, the (Gulfstream Park) Oaks, the things she had to go through, with jockey fighting with her on the backside," he said. "I thought the race was over for her at that point. I didn't think she was going to be able to recover from that. ... That was the biggest eye-opener we've had with her, and she's been training lights out. She's dead fit. She can't be any fitter than she is now. She's healthy. She's happy. ... "It's about as good an Oaks field as you could ask for. There's tons of talent. There are four or five horses that could easily win this thing."

CONDO COMMANDO – Trainer **Rudy Rodriguez** had to keep a tight hold on **Condo Commando** Thursday morning during parts of a spirited gallop.

The speedy filly owned by **Michael Dubb, Bethlehem Stable** and **The Elkstone Group** wanted to run fast when she was on the track and Rodriguez made sure that she didn't do too much the day before the race.

"She's pretty good," he said. "You don't want her to gallop nice and easy. That's the way she's been galloping. So far, so good."

Rodriguez is pleased with the way Condo Commando has done things this week.

"I'm very happy with the way she's coming to the race," he said. "She looks strong. She's feeling good. She's healthy."

Rodriguez said there is no need to do a lot of handicapping because of his filly's running style. He said he would be happy to see her on the lead and expects that she will be there.

"I don't want to change anything," he said. "(Jockey **Joel**) knows the filly. Come and catch me. It's a very good field. Very good horses. I don't need to look again. I know what they did. Hope for the best. Hopefully she breaks good and takes it from there."

FOREVER UNBRIDLED – Trainer **Dallas Stewart** said he isn't visualizing a specific trip for **Charles Fipke's Forever Unbridled** after she breaks from the rail in the Kentucky Oaks. All he wants for her is room to run in the stretch.

"You want a clean trip the last quarter-mile, even if she's down inside," Stewart said. "We know she won't be on lead. She's just a grinder. Just needs a good, clean trip the last part of it and finish strong. She needs to finish strong. ... It'll be a lively pace, for sure. It (the opening half-mile) might be 47 (seconds) or 46-and-change. "She's ready to go. She's in the race. She's got a good rider (**Mike Smith**). I think she's feeling good. We'll take it like that."

Forever Unbridled galloped a mile-and-three-eighths Wednesday under exercise rider **Emerson Chavez** at about 6 a.m.

I'M A CHATTERBOX/LOVELY MARIA – **Grayson Farm's** Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) winner **I'm a Chatterbox** and **Brereton Jones' Ashland Stakes (GI)** heroine **Lovely Maria** each jogged five furlongs and galloped five furlongs under trainer **Larry Jones**, the same as they did the previous morning. As Jones put it earlier this week, his goal for the final days leading up to Friday's Kentucky Oaks is to "get the feel-good" into them.

"They had a good morning and all is well," Jones said as he went from stall to stall clipping the manes of his star fillies. "They'll walk tomorrow and then tomorrow afternoon we'll take them over there and try to run them."

I'm a Chatterbox seeks to become the latest in a remarkable line of fillies that have pulled off the Fair Grounds Oaks and Kentucky Oaks double in the last decade. Six of the past 10 winners of the marquee 3-year-old filly race in New Orleans have gone on to wear the garland of lilies at Churchill Downs (the Fair Grounds Oaks was not run in 2006 when the meet was canceled in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, although that year's Kentucky Oaks winner, **Lemons Forever**, trained by Fair Grounds mainstay **Dallas Stewart**, could very well have added one more to the list).

"We're going to try to carry on the Fair Grounds tradition," Jones said. "That's what we're banking on. I see no rhyme or reason for it, as far as why the fillies do so well compared with the colts. They should all do well because it's a very good track and they all come off of it sound and ready to run when you come out of there. That track's very kind and they try really hard to keep it that way."

Fair Grounds Oaks-Kentucky Oaks winners this century: **Ashado** (2004), **Summerly** (2005), **Proud Spell** (2008), **Rachel Alexandra** (2009), **Believe You Can** (2012) and **Untapable** (2014).

INCLUDE BETTY – Brereton Jones and **Timothy Thornton's Include Betty** is "very happy" and "looks good" the morning prior to the Kentucky Oaks, according to jockey **Rosemary Homeister Jr.**, who has been checking in frequently on her mount this week. Homeister was especially pleased about drawing post No. 3 for the peppermint-addicted Include filly.

"I really like it since she'll be coming from off the pace," Homeister said. "I don't have to waste any ground trying to get over out of the gate. It looks like there's going to be plenty of pace in the race and there are only maybe three closers, like she is. Hopefully I'll be able to save some ground but if not she likes to come around anyway. You want to try to save as much ground as you can and make that one big run."

MONEY'SONCHARLOTTE – George and **Lori Hall's Money'soncharlotte** jogged a mile under exercise rider **Jesus Gomez**, with trainer **Kelly Breen** alongside on a pony before 6:30 Thursday morning.

"That's it. We're done," Breen said. "She won't go to the track in the morning."

Money'soncharlotte earned her way to the Oaks with a third-place finish in the Gazelle (GII) behind Oaks rivals **Condo Commando** and **Puca**. That came after a dismal showing in the Davona Dale (GII) in which she was 10th, beaten 37 ¼ lengths.

"In the Davona Dale, she broke bad that day on a speed-biased track," Breen said. "(Jockey) **Edgar (Prado)** came back and said she never had a chance. You can just draw a line through that."

Breen was asked what he would like to see in Friday's race to enhance the chances of his filly.

"There figures to be a good pace up there and a lot of them are the favorites," Breen said. "So if they could help me out a little, that would be nice."

OCEANWAVE – Gary and **Mary West's Oceanwave** galloped 1½ miles at Churchill Downs Thursday in preparation for a scheduled start in Friday's Kentucky Oaks.

"She's doing good. She's ready to go," trainer **Wayne Catalano** said.

Catalano has enjoyed success with fillies during his careers, most notably **Dreaming of Anna**, **Stephanie's Kitten** and **She Be Wild**.

"Tomorrow is going to be a test for this filly. She's shown progress in every race. She stacks up pretty good. Tomorrow we'll see how she compares with the other ones," said Catalano, whose trainee finished second in both the Honeybee (GIII) and Fantasy (GIII) at Oaklawn Park following less than ideal trips.

PUCA – Donegal Racing's Puca galloped 1 3/8 miles Thursday morning at Churchill Downs to the satisfaction of trainer **Bill Mott**.

"She's doing good. We're happy with her," Mott said.

Puca broke her maiden by 16 lengths before finishing a troubled sixth in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (GI) last fall. This season, she finished fourth in the Davona Dale (GII) at Gulfstream and second behind **Condo Commando** in the Gazelle (GII). The daughter of **Big Brown** drew the No. 14 post for Friday's Oaks.

"A lot of it is about the trip. The trip is important. We drew the 14 hole, so we're going to have to get lucky. We might get hung out wide on both turns," Mott said. "I would hope there was enough pace for her to close into."

"I think they all have to step up if they want to win this race. She could very well do that. She was fourth and then second; she could be going the right way."

SARAH SIS – With owner **Joe Ragsdale** from Tulsa, Okla., looking on, Oaks hopeful **Sarah Sis** galloped 1 ½ miles after the renovation break with exercise rider **Jesus Esquivel** aboard for trainer **Ingrid Mason**.

This is Ragsdale's first time at Churchill Downs since 2003 when he came for Derby Weekend and watched **Funny Cide** get the roses.

"We are just blessed to be here," Ragsdale said. "I have been an owner for two and a half years and am very fortunate to have this filly. There are people who have been in the game for 20, 25 years who are more deserving of this than me."

Sarah Sis was a \$20,000 purchase last year at Ocala.

"Ingrid picked her out," said Ragsdale, who has six horses under Mason's care. "She has a good eye for a horse and I trust what she says."

Mason said that Sarah Sis would tack-walk the shedrow in the morning and that all the heavy lifting was done for the Oaks.

"She is doing well," Mason said. "I just hope she gets a clean trip and likes the distance. With a 14-horse field, the clean trip is huge."

SHOOK UP – Exercise rider **Mike Callaham** said he likes how **Regis Racing's Shook Up**, the Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) runner-up, has been training for the Kentucky Oaks.

Callaham, a 25-year-old former jockey who has been working for trainer **Steve Asmussen** for 5 1/2 years, has been getting on Shook Up since she arrived at Churchill Downs after the conclusion of the Fair Grounds meet. "I feel like she's been training really well," Callaham said. "She's relaxed a lot here. I feel like she's just kind of chilled out, been very happy and she's just been taking things in stride. Her works have been much nicer and more relaxed. In New Orleans, they were a little bit on the edge, a little keen and rank at times. But she's really relaxed nicely. I'm really happy."

Callaham said he thinks Shook Up will be able to deal with breaking from the inside (No. 2). "I think she'll be able to get away fine, and post position only means so much," Callaham said. "Once you come out of the gate, it's anybody's game."

A bullet workout on April 19, five furlongs in 59 seconds, displayed Shook Up's natural speed. "She did that very easily, in hand, just exactly what Steve wanted," Callaham said. Callaham galloped Shook Up on Thursday in the second set after the track opened.

STELLAR WIND – Kentucky Oaks favorite **Stellar Wind**, owned by **Hronis Racing**, was on the track at 5:45 a.m. for an easy gallop around the Churchill Downs oval under **Ricardo Peniche**. Trainer **John Sadler** left town soon after for a visit to Lane's End Farm in Versailles, Ky., near Lexington, to see the stallions, including his former charge **Twirling Candy** and Stellar Wind's sire **Curlin**.

Even while the Santa Anita Oaks (GI) winner impressed in her final work in California and thrived in the mornings at Churchill Downs, pundits have raised questions about Sadler's ability to ship and win outside of the Golden State. "That's pretty much the random results of races," Sadler said. "We've won some big races out of town. The last few years we haven't, really, but there have been variables like weather. You would have to take them one by one but we ran some horses in the Derby here one year where there was the slop, they hated the track. That's what they have to write about but I don't think it means anything."

Churchill Downs, the world's most legendary racetrack, has conducted Thoroughbred racing and presented America's greatest race, the Kentucky Derby, continuously since 1875. Located in Louisville, the flagship racetrack of Churchill Downs Incorporated (NASDAQ: CHDN), which offers year-round simulcast wagering at the historic track. Churchill Downs will conduct the 141st running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands on May 2, 2015. The track's 2015 Spring Meet is scheduled for April 25-June 27. The track has hosted the Breeders' Cup World Championships a record eight times. Information about Churchill Downs can be found on the Internet at www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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