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Ohio-breds clash in \$75,000 Babst-Palacios Memorial

For Immediate Release: April 25, 2019

by Kimberly Rinker, Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A field of six Ohio-registered 3-year-olds and up will break from the Belterra Park gate on Saturday afternoon, April 27 in the \$75,000 Edward Babst-Albert Palacios Memorial Handicap. The featured race is the seventh on the eight-race card, with an approximate post time of 3:30 pm.

Altissimo, making his 2019 debut and leading candidate for 2018 Ohio Horse of the Year honors, has been assigned high weight of 126 pounds for this six-furlong handicap sprint. The 6-year-old son of Noble Causeway-Great Goin Rose, by Albert The Great hails from the barn of Richard Zielinski, who conditions the bay gelding for his partner Nancy Lavrich, who co-bred Altissimo along with Niknar Farm.

A winner of 13 of 33 career starts, Altissimo has banked \$474,388 to date and is slated to be ridden by Christian Pilares. This identical combination romped to a wire-to-wire, sixth length triumph in this stake one year ago.

That was Altissimo's first stakes victory, and he followed that up with wins in \$75,000 Gentleman Memorial on June 9 at Belterra; the \$75,000 Honey Jay Stakes at Thistledown on Aug. 11; the \$75,000 Governor's Buckeye Cup on Aug. 25 at Thistledown; the \$150,000 Best of Ohio Sprint Stakes on Oct. 13 at Thistledown; and the \$75,000 Cardinal Handicap at Mahoning Valley on Nov. 3. He then finished a smart second by a head in the \$100,000 Dave's Friend Stakes at Laurel Park on Dec. 29.

Altissimo and arch rival **Mo Dont No** have switched places on the win-place-show podium throughout their respective careers. Crowned 2016 and 2017 Ohio Horse of the Year, Mo Dont No has also captured multiple divisional titles for owner Looch Racing Stable.

The \$866,520-winning son of Uncle Mo-Lilah, by Defrere is multi-talented, notching victories at distances from 5½ furlongs to 1¼ miles for owner Ron Paolucci Racing. Jeff Radosevich conditions Mo Dont No, who has won 17 of 33 career starts, along with eight seconds. Bred by Beechwood Racing Stable, Mo Dont No has two wins and two seconds in five starts over the Belterra dirt to date. Scott Spieth rides Mo Dont No, who'll be carrying 121 pounds postward.

Radosevich will also bridle up **Brown Buckeye**, a winner of \$109,400 lifetime for owner Ron Paolucci Racing. Bred by Bruce Tallisman, the 5-year-old son of Big Brown-Prizes, by Prized has five wins and a

third in six career starts. The dark bay or brown gelding finished third to Altissimo in the \$75,000 Honey Jay Stakes last year and makes his 2019 debut with Luis Rivera aboard carrying 120 pounds.

Mannford makes his first start for trainer-owner Claude Brownfield, III after cruising to victory at Mahoning Valley on April 10, besting his rivals by 5½ lengths at six furlongs. The son of Ready's Image-Fallseed, by Forest Wildcat has career earnings of \$195,243 from seven wins, six seconds and a trio of thirds in 23 starts. He was bred by the T/C Stable LLC of Ohio and brought at \$22,000 tag at the 2015 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Fall Yearling Sale, then later sold for \$70,000 at the 2016 Ocala Breeders 2-Year-Olds In Training Sale. Eddie Zuniga rides with 120 pounds.

Trainer Ivan Vasquez will tighten the girth on \$189,170-earner **Magna Man** for owner John Hoctel. This Magna Graduate gelding, who is out of the Miner's Mark mare Personal Notebook, has amassed six wins, eight seconds and five thirds in 29 career starts and captured a one-mile test at Mahoning Valley on April 3 in a near gate-to-wire effort for rider Sonny Leon, who is back aboard in the Babst-Palacios with 119 pounds. Magna Man is still trying for his first elusive stakes triumph.

Over Ice, a striking, 4-year-old grey by Overanalyze-Country Club Sue, by Tenpins, hails from Gary Johnson's barn. A winner of \$123,942 lifetime, Over Ice was bred by Ohio breeder Bruce Ryan, and has four wins, three seconds and two thirds to his credit, including a March 11 victory at Mahoning Valley in a distance event. Owned by Jerry Laria, the venerable gelding carries 116 pounds on his back, along with jockey DeShawn Parker.



Altissimo & jockey Christian Pilares look to be the prohibitive favorites in Saturday's \$75,000 Edward Babst-Albert Palacios Memorial Handicap at Belterra Park.