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Runners Sizzle in Best of Ohio Stakes at Mahoning

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by Kimberly Rinker, Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

Mahoning Valley Racecourse hosted five \$100,000 Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund (OTRF) Best of Ohio stakes on Saturday, Oct. 30, and despite less than ideal weather conditions, these events gave racing fans a delightful afternoon of excitement.



Ballroom Blitz

Best of Ohio Distaff

Ballroom Blitz captured the Best of Ohio Distaff for registered Ohio-bred fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up, besting six rivals handily over the one and one-eighth miles in 1:53.71 with jockey Gerardo Corrales in the irons. Bred and trained by Robert Gorham for owner Marion Gorham, this 3-year-old daughter by Alternation-Tangueray Miss, by Cowboy Call picked up her fourth career starts in 13 tries as the 4-1 choice, upping her career earnings to \$152,215.

“This filly is relatively young and as with most of the 3-year-olds, she’s been improving at this time of year,” said trainer Gorham. “The jockey gave her an excellent ride, so it was just a great day for her.”

Ballroom Blitz finished 7½ lengths ahead of 8-5 rival **Sally Strong** (Luis Rivera), with 7-1 **High Fire** (Luis Gonzalez) third.



Tantrum

Best of Ohio Juvenile Stakes

Tantrum picked up the victory in the Best of Ohio Juvenile Stakes, besting 10 Ohio-registered 2-year-olds rivals in impressive fashion. The freshman son of Speightster-Go Go Tammy, by Tiznow was making his sixth career start en route to his first stakes triumph for Winblaze LLC and trainer Tim Hamm.

“It was exciting to win a race for this partnership (of Winstar Farm and Blazing Meadows) from our first group of 2-year-olds together,” admitted trainer Tim Hamm. “Turning for home, Malcom (jockey Franklin) was able to find a hole, got him through it with a good trip, and the rest was history.”

Tantrum left the gate as one of a trio of Hamm starters, at 5-2 odds, and pushed his lifetime bankroll to \$122,454. **Rumble Strip Ron**, at 6-1, was second for Jose Bracho, with 7-1 **Hip Hip Horray** (Christian Pilares) third. The winner was clocked in 1:49.30 for the one and one-sixteenth mile contest.



Candlelight Hours

Best of Ohio John W. Galbreath Memorial

Candlelight Hours left no doubt she was much the best as she used come-from-behind tactics to capture the \$100,000 Best of Ohio John W. Galbreath Memorial for 2-year-old Ohio-registered fillies. The 9-1 winner captured the one and one-sixteenth mile contest in 1:49.75 as she notched career victory number two with T.D. Houghton riding.

James Jackson trains the robust chestnut filly, a daughter of Dominus-Nava, by Even the Score, who now has \$119,200 in her career coffers. She is owned and was bred by Elkhorn Oaks, Inc., the moniker of the Jackson family.

“It’s been a pleasure to be associated with Ohio program,” said winning owner and trainer James Jackson. “We’ve had great support and are just so happy to be a part of this.”

Winning jockey T.D. Houghton acknowledged the Jackson’s faith in him as well.

“I really appreciate the opportunity to ride this horse,” Houghton said. “They stuck with me through my rehab and getting back in the saddle and I couldn’t be more thankful that they still had faith in my ability to ride.”

Starlit Secret was second at 11-1 for rider Sonny Leon, with 4-1 **Squid** (Alex Canchari) third.



Altissimo

Best of Ohio Sprint

Altissimo became Ohio's newest millionaire as he captured the Best of Ohio Sprint, taking home first prize in front of ten other contestants in the six-furlong test in 1:11.19, with Erik Barbaran in the saddle. Owned by breeder Nancy Lavrich and Ronald Zielinski, and trained by Richard Zielinski, Altissimo now has \$1,114,204 in career earnings from 22 wins, nine seconds and six thirds in 52 lifetime starts. This game gelding, an 8-year-old son of Noble Causeway-Great Go in Rose, by Albert the Great, also captured this same stake in 2018 and 2019 and is both a multiple stakes winner and owns a graded stakes-placed title as well. He was the 5-2 favorite in this stake.

"He is my one horse in a million, our 15 minutes of fame every time we come to the racetrack," said winning owner Nancy Lavrich.

"Three years ago we set a million dollars as our goal with this horse and we got there today," said winning trainer Richard Zielinski.

Direct Deceit, the 11-1 choice, finished a strong second for jockey A.I. Diaz, with 7-2 **Diamond Dust** finishing third for rider Jose Bracho.

Best of Ohio Endurance

Forewarned captured the finale, the \$100,000 Best of Ohio Endurance, against 11 Ohio-registered 3-year-olds and up rivals, stopping the clock in the one and one quarter mile contest in 2:06.73 with Sonny Leon riding.

Owned by the Trin-Brook Stables, the 6-year-old son of Flat Out-Fortune Play, by Five Star Day picked up career victory number nine in 42 starts. Forewarned also has seven seconds and four thirds from 43 lifetime starts and now has \$687,633 in his bankroll for trainer Uriah St. Lewis. The 9-5 favorite was bred by Preston Stables.

“He broke a little slow today but I rushed him up and was able to get a good position and with the muddy trip, even though I had to use all my goggles, he got in a good spot to win the race,” said winning rider Sonny Leon.

“This horse has run in Grade I and Grade III all over the place and comes back here and gets right back to business,” said winning trainer Uriah St. Lewis.

The hard-trying **Wicked Warrior** was second for Ricardo Feliciano at 4-5 odds, with 50-1 longshot **To Win** (Angel Diaz) getting up for third.

The 8-year-old **Mo Dont No**, the sole millionaire in this field (\$1,129,535) will ply his wares against much younger starters, all with solid credentials. Mo Dont No, who has won multiple Ohio Horse of the Year titles, has garnered 21 wins, 13 seconds and five thirds in 56 lifetime starts. Trained by Gary Johnson for Irish Charm Thoroughbreds and Jerry Laria, this dark bay captured this same contest in 2017 and 2018.