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\$75,000 Catlaunch Stakes Honors Beloved Ohio-bred

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Saturday's \$75,000 Catlaunch Stakes at JACK Thistledown features a competitive field of eight of the Buckeye State's finest Accredited foals, 3-year-olds and up, honoring the memory of one of the best Ohio-breds to ever look through a bridle.

The Catlaunch, now in its fifth season, is a one and one-sixteenth mile test set at Thistledown on Sept. 15, with a post time of 4:20 pm, ET, for the featured seventh race.

Catlaunch was a revered, Ohio-bred son of Noble Cat-Skilaunch, by Relaunch foaled March 18, 2001. A multiple Ohio Horse of the Year, Catlaunch was bred by Ron Fields and owned by his Scioto Farm Supply company and trained by Ivan Vazquez throughout his career.

The venerable gelding broke his maiden in October 2003 as a 2-year-old and went on to win 40 of 108 starts, scoring at distances from six furlongs to 1¼ miles, including 22 stakes. He also amassed 22 second-place finishes and notched show money a total of 15 times in his career, and was a perineal fan favorite at Thistledown, as well as at the now-defunct River Downs and Beulah Park.

Catlaunch won the Babst/Palacios Memorial three times; the Ruff/Kirchberg Memorial three times; the H. M. Rowland Memorial Handicap five times and was second once (at age 11); the Sydney Gendelman Memorial four times (last time at age 12); the George Lewis Memorial three times; and the Governor's Buckeye Cup and Best of Ohio Endurance twice each. He was named 2006 Ohio-Accredited Male Horse of the Year and 2006 and 2007 Ohio Handicap Horse of the Year.

Catlaunch continued to race through his 13th year before being retired in 2014, when he was sent to live out his days at Old Friends in Georgetown, KY, after earning \$1,122,309 for his connections. Sadly, earlier this Spring, the 17-year-old Catlaunch was humanely euthanized due to a chronic neurological disorder.

When he passed, Old Friends founder and President Michael Blowen told the Paulick Report that "Catlaunch, with his warm personality and good looks, was a favorite among all of our volunteers and farm staff.



Catlaunch in his paddock at Old Friends in Georgetown, KY. *Photo by Rick Capone*

This year's Catlaunch Stakes features multiple stakes winners **Eighththehardway**, a \$420,988-earning 6-year-old Parent's Reward gelding; recent \$75,000 Horizon Stakes winner **Mobil Solution**, a 3-year-old son of Mobil-Perfect Solution trained by Jeff Radosevich; **Leona's Reward**, a winner of \$508,356 lifetime for Blazing Meadows Farm; the Mike Rone-trained and owned **True Cinder**, winner of the \$75,000 Buckeye Native and \$75,000 Angenora Stakes earlier this season and nearly \$400,000 in career earnings.

Bidacious, Funnel Cake, Rosco P. Coltrane and **Kalydar** are all looking for their first stakes triumph in the Catlaunch.