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Leona's Reward takes Classen; Tall Stack to Charlee's Magic

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by Kimberly Rinker, for the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

Leona's Reward ran down **True Cinder** in a dramatic stretch duel to capture the \$75,000 Dr. T. F. Classen Memorial on Saturday afternoon, May 5 at JACK Thistledown.

The six-furlong contest for Ohio-Accredited fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up saw the 5-year-old chestnut filly by Parents' Reward make her 2018 debut a winning one in 1:11.48.

Conditioned by Tim Hamm for the Blazing Meadows Farm and Michael Friedman, Leona's Reward was ridden to victory by Pablo Morales, upping her career earnings to \$470,856.

Leona's Reward, who left the gate at odds of 3/5, has now won 11 of 29 starts, including the 2017 editions of the \$75,000 Catlaunch Stakes, the \$75,000 Lewis Memorial Stakes, the \$75,000 Bobby Bricker Memorial Handicap and the \$75,000 Ohio Debutante Handicap.

True Cinder (Kevin Radke) held on for second at 2-1, with 7-1 **My Girl Friday** (Rex Stokes III) third, 6-1 **Blanconia** (Luis Colon) fourth and **Grizabella** (T.D. Houghton) fifth.

In the \$75,000 Tall Stack Stakes at Belterra Park that same afternoon, 3-1 **Charlee's Magic** prevailed after a four-horse stretch battle for rider Irwin Rosendo and trainer Mike Rone.

Owned by breeder Ron DeWolf, the 3-year-old Jump Start gelding got the best of 9-1 **Over Icce** (DeShawn Parker) and 4-5 favorite **Buster's Boy** (Walter De La Cruz), with 13-1 longshot **Dijkstra's Devil** garnering a fourth-place check in the field of seven.

The triumph by Charlee's Magic was fitting, as the gelding had finished second to Buster's Boy in their previous challenge, the \$75,000 Noonan Stakes. Charlee's Magic upped his career earnings to \$127,380 and now has three wins, two seconds and one third in six lifetime trips postward.

-30-

Photo of Leona's Reward winning the Dr. T. F. Classen on May 5 at JACK Thistledown by Jeff Zamaiko