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Accredited Stakes highlight Mahoning Saturday Program

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by Kimberly Rinker, for the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A pair of \$75,000 stakes for Accredited Ohio-bred runners will be contested on Saturday afternoon, Nov. 18 at Mahoning Valley Race Course.

The Glacial Princess—set as Race 4 with a 1:38 pm, ET post—features 2-year-old fillies battling over six furlongs; while the Ruff-Kirchberg Memorial Handicap spotlights eight geldings, 3-year-olds and up, vying at a distance of one and one-eighth miles as Race 6, with a 2:34 pm, ET post.

Mandi's Pride heads up the Glacial Princes for trainer Larry Smith and owner/breeder Richard Alderson and is the lone winner in this field of eight distaffs. This chestnut homebred, by Big Atlantic, out of the Pioneering mare Becky Becky won a maiden special weight on Oct. 7 in a 3½ length, wire-to-wire romp for rider Perry Ouzts, besting Glacial Princess rival Birdacious, before finishing sixth in the \$75,000 Emerald Necklace Stakes on Oct. 21 at Jack Thistledown. Mandi's Pride carries a bankroll of \$14,880 coming into her third lifetime start.

The aforementioned **Birdacious**, a roan daughter of Birdrun bred by Robin Murphy and owned by Preston Stables, has finished second twice in three career starts. Trained by Pavel Matejka, Birdacious was fourth in the Emerald Necklace where she made a nice rally but was simply outrun by the winning Pure Justice. She has \$12,670 in her coffers.

Silky Tassels, a bay daughter by Kettle Corn, out of the Holly Bull mare Miraculous Knight, brought a \$26,000 price tag at the Jan. 2017 Keeneland Sale and was a fast closing second in the Emerald Necklace Stakes with Luis Quinones in the saddle. Owned by the Sheltowee Farm and trained by Michael Evans, Silky Tassels has \$15,000 in her bankroll from that lone start.

Trainer-owner Michael Rone will tighten the girth on **No Truer**, a chestnut daughter by Alicindor-Be True, by Shakespeare. Bred by Larry Byer, No Truer was third in Emerald Necklace and has a nest egg of \$7,500 to her credit.

The field is rounded out by maidens **Linda N Michelle**, **Circle Will Run**, **Gift From Mom** and **Jigs A Rollin**.

Two previous Ruff-Kirchberg Memorial Handicap winners square off in this year's contest. **Geppetto**—the hard-knocking son of Mercer Mill captured the 2015 edition of this stake, while **Eightthehardway**, a Parent's Reward 5-year-old won last year version, besting Geppetto by 1¾ lengths.

Geppetto, who was claimed for \$7,500 on Sept. 19 by trainer Jeff Radosevich for the Loooch Racing Stable won his last start—a Mahoning \$10,000 claimer on Nov. 8—in a seven-length smash for rider Luis Rivera. This striking 6-year-old chestnut had not visited the winner’s circle since his 2015 Ruff-Kirchberg victory prior to this latest win, and with \$151,069 in career earnings from 63 starts, Geppetto appears well-poised for a repeat triumph in Saturday’s test.

Trainer Richard Vickers will bridle up Eightthehardway, who’ll be looking for his first win of 2017 in the Ruff-Kirchberg. While the bay gelding rarely misses a check—with \$61,255 in seasonal earnings and \$311,723 in career earnings—his last visit to the winner’s circle was in this same event one year ago. Bred by the Blazing Meadows Farm, Eightthehardway also won the 2016 Catlaunch Stakes.

Ol’ L B is another solid contender who hail from trainer Larry Smith’s barn for owners Smith Red Gate Farm and Mark D. Kuntz. This Alcindor 3-year-old had a three-race win streak intact before finishing eighth in the \$75,000 Horizon Stakes at Belterra on Aug. 13. Ol’ L B rebounded to finish a solid third in an optional claimer at the Cincinnati oval on Sept. 19 prior to this stake. Bred by Larry Byer, the bay gelding has \$77,481 in career earnings from three wins, two seconds and one third in nine starts.

Veteran **Mound** has only one victory to his credit in two years, but is another who grabs checks in most of his starts. A winner of \$241,596 from five wins in 49 starts, the chestnut Mercer Mill 5-year-old is conditioned by Ivan Vazquez fore owner/breeder Ron Field’s Scioto Farm.

Daggers Duel, Tico Thunder, Mobil At Last and **Risible** round out the Ruff-Kirchberg field.

Photo Cutline: Geppetto (#3) captures the \$75,000 Ruff-Kirchberg Memorial Handicap over rival Eightthehardway in the 2015 edition of this stake, which is set to be contested this Saturday, Nov. 18 at Mahoning Valley Race Course. **Photo by Brad Conrad**