



## Ohio State Racing Commission

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# Stakes highlight Saturday Thistledown Program

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by Kimberly Rinker, for the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A trio of stakes, including the \$500,000 Grade III Ohio Derby, highlight the Jack Thistledown Saturday afternoon, June 24 program.

Two \$75,000 stakes for Ohio-bred runners are also featured: the J. William Petro Memorial Handicap and the George Lewis Memorial Stake. Post time for the nine-race card is 1:40 pm, ET.

The 38<sup>th</sup> running of the George Lewis Memorial Stake (Race 5) features seven Ohio-accredited foals, 3-year-olds and up, traveling one and 1/8 miles over the Cleveland dirt, with a 3:40 pm post.

**Plain Ol' Willard**, a multiple stakes-winning son of Pacific Waves, captured this stake in 2016, after finishing fifth in the 2014 edition and fourth in 2015. Owned by the M.Y. Stables and trained by Katheleen Lowry, the 7-year-old chestnut gelding has \$339,959 in his coffers from eight wins, three seconds and seven thirds in 45 starts. Bred by South River Ranch, Plain Ol' Willard is the oldest and richest competitor in the field, and will have Noel Vigil aboard.

**Buckeye Bullet**, a 4-year-old Dark Kestrel gelding, comes into the Lewis fresh off his sharp victory in the Rowland Memorial on May 13 at this same venue. Conditioned by Sharon Ruberto for the Ruberto Racing Stable, Buckeye Bullet has career earnings of \$176,339 from 13 starts and rarely finishes out of the money. This homebred has won all four of his 2017 starts to date. Luis Quinoes rides.

**Eightthehardway** is a multiple stakes winning son of Parents' Reward who finished second in the Rowland Memorial at Thistledown on May 13 to rival Buckeye Bullet. Trained by Richard Vickers for Paul Groves, Eightthehardway was bred by Blazing Meadows Farm and has a career bankroll of \$265,468 from seven wins, five seconds and six thirds in 30 lifetime trips postward. Irwin Rosendo will be in the saddle.

Trainer Ivan Vazquez sends out a pair of stakes winning chestnut geldings in the Lewis—the 5-year-old **Mound** and the 6-year-old **Geppetto**. Both were bred by Ronald Fields and both are owned by Scioto Farm. Mound has \$232,667 in career earnings with a 5-3-5 record from 41 starts, while Geppetto—who was fifth in the 2016 Lewis—has \$131,591 in his career coffers from 56 starts (4-4-4). Megan Fadlovich gets the nod on Geppetto, while T.D. Houghton rides Mound.

The multiple stakes winning **Leona's Reward** carries the silks of breeder Blazing Meadow Farm and co-owner Michael Friedman postward with Pablo Morales in the irons as the lone filly in this stake. Trained by Tim Hamm, the 4-year-old chestnut lass has earned \$210,546 for her connections from five wins, five seconds and a pair of third-place finishes in 21 career starts.

**Master Landon**, a 3-year-old Mixmaster gelding, will be trying for his first stakes triumph with Renzo Diaz in the irons. Trained by Jose Lopez for owner-breeder Bobby Rankin, Master Landon broke his maiden on April 13 at Belterra and owns a bankroll of \$20,239 from nine career starts, having finished out of the money just twice in his brief career.

The 15<sup>th</sup> running of the J. William Petro Memorial Handicap (Race 7) sees 12 Ohio-registered fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up, vie at one and 1/16 miles, with a 4:40 pm post time.

In this star-studded distaff field, multiple stakes winners **Justalittlesmoke**, **School Board Prez** and **Bold Cait** battle in a likely showdown.

Mast Thoroughbred's Justalittlesmoke is a 5-year-old Smoke Glacken mare conditioned throughout her career by Robert Gorham to the tune of \$677,870 and won the 2016 Petro Memorial. From 22 lifetime starts, she's scored 14 wins, six seconds and a pair of thirds en route to 11 stakes triumphs, including her June 3 victory in the \$75,000 Angenora Stakes at Thistledown. Bred and sold by the Belvedere Farm for \$22,500 at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Fall 2013 Yearling Sale, Justalittlesmoke will have regular rider T. D. Houghton in the saddle carrying high weight of 124 pounds.

School Board Prez, a 4-year-old daughter by Courageous Cat, hails from the Doug Matthews barn carrying the silks of owner/breeder John Royer. A winner of \$345,090 in her career, School Board Prez won a June 12 Thistledown allowance race in come-from-behind fashion for rider Pedro Cotto, Jr., who is back in the saddle for the Petro with 120 pounds. She has seven stake wins in 14 starts.

The 5-year-old Sun King mare Bold Cait has \$257,656 in career earnings for owners Ben Lyon and K. Reed. Bred by Donn Rowe, the multiple stakes winner captured a Mountaineer allowance race on April 19 and won this stake in 2015. She has nine wins, one second and one third in 19 career events and will carry 119 pounds with Edgar Paucar riding.

Looch Racing Stable's **Proper Discretion** is a stakes winning-filly who has never finished worse than third in 12 career starts, earning \$216,100 for her connections. Trained by Benny Feliciano, this daughter of Discreetly Mine won the \$75,000 First Lady Stakes last November and was third to Justalittlesmoke in this year's edition of the Angenora Stakes on June 3 at Thistledown. She has seven wins, two seconds and a trio of thirds, and has Ricardo Feliciano in the irons with 117 pounds.

The Grade III Ohio Derby features nine 3-year-olds, including these 2017 Kentucky Derby contenders: \$874,400-winner **Girvin**; **Irap** (\$772,600); **Fast and Accurate** (\$346,302) and **Untrapped** (\$259,658). Looch Racing Stables **Vibe** (\$93,6430), **Talk Less** (\$36,912) and two-time winner-in-as-many-starts **Game Over** (\$41,400) also spar, along with Big Chief Racing's **Sorry Erik** (\$107,110) and Maccabee Farm's **Hinton** (\$26,726). Post time for the Ohio Derby is set for 5:10 pm, ET.

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Photo Cutline: Plain Ol'Willard & Justalittlesmoke will each be looking for repeat triumphs in the \$75,000 George Lewis Memorial Handicap and \$75,000 J. Wm. Petro Memorial Stake respectively, on Saturday afternoon, June 24 at Jack Thistledown. **Photos by Jeff Zamaiko**