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OHIO THOROUGHBRED
RACE FUND

\$75,000 OTRF Stakes complement Ohio Derby

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by Kimberly Rinker, For the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A pair of \$75,000 Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund stakes will be contested on Saturday, June 23 at JACK Thistledown Racino, adding to an exciting program that features the \$500,000 Ohio Derby (Grade III).

The first stake for Buckeye-bred foals is the \$75,000 George Lewis Memorial, a one and 1/8-mile contest for Ohio-Accredited runners, 3-year-olds and up. The 39th running of this stake features a field of seven, as Race Five on the Thistledown program, with a post time of 3:10 pm, ET.

Leona's Reward, a multiple, stakes-winning daughter by Parent's Reward, and victress in this same stake in 2017, heads up the group. Trained by Tim Hamm for owner/breeder Blazing Meadows Farm and Michael Friedman, the 5-year-old chestnut distaff has won five of her last six starts, three of which were Ohio stakes. Most recently, she won the \$75,000 Classen Memorial at Thistledown on May 5 in her lone start of 2018, and now sports a bankroll of \$470,856 from 11 wins, five seconds and two thirds in 29 career starts.

Trainer Glenroy Brown will tighten the girth on **Eighthhardway**, a 6-year-old son by Parent's Reward-Natural Nine, by Cryptoclearance for owner Paul Groves. This brown gelding was second by a nose in the 2017 Lewis to the Leona's Reward, and was third in the 2016 edition of this stake. The two-time winner of the \$75,000 Ruff Kirchberg Handicap was bred by Blazing Meadows Farm and has eight wins, seven seconds and ten thirds in 41 starts, with \$368,448 in his coffers.

Jeff Radosevich sends out **Mobil Solution**, a sophomore gelding by Mobil-Perfect Solution, by Seeking the Gold for owner Gerald Silver. This youngster fittingly captured the \$75,000 Radosevich Memorial on Dec. 2, 2017 and will be trying for his second stakes victory in the Lewis. Bred by Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm, Mobil Solution has two wins, two seconds and two thirds in eight starts, with \$88,970 in his bank account.

Looch Racing Stable's **Funnel Cake** is the other lone 3-year-old in here. The son of Kettle Corn-Bluegrass Ellie, by Bluegrass Cat is conditioned by Anthony Rini and thus far has earned \$38,436 for his connections. He broke his maiden on July 22, 2017 at Belterra Park, then won a Mahoning allowance race on April 17 of this year, before finishing fifth in a Thistledown allowance on May 29. Bred by John Hicks, William Hart and William Martin, Funnel Cake sold for \$18,000 at the Keeneland January 2016 Mixed Sale, and then brought down the hammer for \$35,000 at the Keeneland September 2016 Yearling Sale.

Trainer Gary Johnson will saddle a pair of evenly-matched runners for the Irish Charm Thoroughbreds in the Lewis, both of whom are trying for their first stakes win. **Bubba J**, a 4-year-old Mobil gelding, has \$87,228 in earnings from four wins in 23 starts, while **Byer's Beware**, a 4-year-old Alicndor gelding, has \$75,829 from four wins in 19 efforts. The former was bred by Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm while the latter was bred by Larry Byer.

The \$75,000 J. William Petro Memorial Handicap, a one and 1/16th mile endeavor, has drawn a field of six, Ohio-registered fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up.

Leading the field of distaffs is **Nikki My Darling**, a stunning 4-year-old daughter by Creative Cause-Zamindarling, by Zamindar conditioned by Jeff Radosevich for Looch Racing Stable. This striking grey filly has amassed \$250,183 from seven wins and one third in 13 career starts, with 2017 victories in the \$75,000 Pay The Man Stakes, the \$75,000 Norm Barron Queen City Oaks, and the \$75,000 Southern Park Stakes. Bred by Sheltowee Farm and James Evans, Nikki My Darling brought \$100,000 at the Ocala Breeders' 2016 March Sale of 2-Year-Olds in Training, after having previously sold twice for \$47,000 at the Keeneland November 2014 Breeding Stock Sale and Keeneland September 2015 Yearling Sale.

School Board Prez, the richest female in the field with \$420,540 to her credit, is still looking for her first victory of the 2018 racing season. The homebred 5-year-old Courageous Cat lass has done nothing less than collect six stakes victories in 21 career starts: the \$75,000 Miss Ohio (2015); the \$75,000 Tah Dah Stakes (2015); the \$150,000 John Galbreath Stakes (2015); the \$75,000 Tomboy Stakes (2016); the \$75,000 Norm Barron Queen City Stakes (2016); and the \$75,000 Vivacious Handicap (2016). While she hasn't graced the winner's circle in just over a year, this gutsy mare—who is conditioned by Doug Matthews—rarely misses a substantial purse check for owner-breeder John Royer.

Proper Discretion is another in here with solid credentials—having garnered a bank account of \$354,111 from 11 wins, two seconds and a trio of thirds in 22 lifetime starts. Trained by Anthony Rini for Looch Racing Stable, the daughter by Discreetly Mine-Prizes, by Prized, Proper Discretion is a multiple stakes winner bred by Bruce Tallisman who won both the \$75,000 Diana Stakes and \$75,000 Scarlet & Gray Handicap in 2017, as well as multiple allowance races prior to this season.

Trainer Radosevich will also saddle **Flashy G**, a Notional 5-year-old with \$165,692 in career earnings, who mostly plies her wares in allowance events. Owned by Thomas Galvin and John Caufield, she's scored six wins, three seconds and five thirds in 28 lifetime starts, and will be trying for her first stakes triumph in the Petro Memorial. Bred by Daniel Yates, Flashy G was an \$11,000 yearling at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Fall 2014 Yearling Sale, then brought a \$22,000 tag at the Fasig-Tipton Texas 2-Year-Olds in Training Sale.

Marion Gorham's **Cali Dream** is a dark bay or brown 4-year-old filly by Cowboy Cal, out of the Afternoon Deelites mare Afternoon Dreams. A winner of \$138,972 in her career, most of her successes have come in allowance efforts thus far for trainer Robert Gorham. Bred by Robert Gorham & Mast Thoroughbreds, Cali Dream has five wins, three seconds and a trio of third-place finishes to date.

Mygirlfriday is a dark bay, 4-year-old filly by Lunarpal, out of the Strong Hope mare Girlish Figure, and as press time, was entered into both the Lewis & Petro Memorial. Trained by Jennifer Tooley for owner/breeder Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm, Mygirlfriday was third in the 2018 Classen to Leona's Reward and will be trying for her first stakes triumph in the Lewis. She has career earnings of \$99,499 from three wins, two seconds and four thirds in 17 lifetime starts.

The \$500,000 Ohio Derby (Grade III) for 3-year-olds features 12 runners, including the Mark Casse-trained **Flameaway**, who was second in the \$1 million Bluegrass Stakes and a disappointing 13th in the \$2 million Kentucky Derby, and **Lone Sailor** who was a solid fifth in the \$1.5 million Preakness to Triple Crown winner Justify for trainer Thomas Amoss. Top conditioner Steve Asmussen sends out **Title Ready**, who was second in the \$100,000 Sir Barton Stakes and **Dream Baby Dream**, who was second in the \$800,000 Sunland Derby. Another with a solid shot is **Core Beliefs**, who was a strong-finishing second in the \$350,000 Peter Pan Stakes at Belmont on May 12, and third in the Santa Anita Derby on April 7.

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Photo Cutline: Leona's Reward, shown here winning the \$75,000 Classen Memorial on May 5 at JACK Thistledown, is looking for her second stakes triumph of the year in Saturday's \$75,000 George Lewis Memorial. *Photo by Jeff Zaimako*