



Ohio State Racing Commission

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Freshmen spar in \$75,000 Loyalty Stakes

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by Kimberly Rinker, for the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A field of eight, Accredited Ohio-bred youngsters will vie in the \$75,000 Loyalty Stakes on Saturday afternoon, Sept. 9 at Belterra Park in Cincinnati, OH.

Set as the seventh race with a 4:44 post time, the Loyalty features 2-year-olds battling at a distance of six furlongs over the Belterra dirt. Accredited horses are those sired by a stallion standing in Ohio and out of an Ohio-based broodmare who has been registered with the Ohio State Racing Commission (OSRC).

Maggi Moss' **Funnel Cake**, a bay colt by Kettle Corn-Bluegrass Ellie, by Bluegrass Cat, will be making just his third lifetime start and comes into the Loyalty fresh off a sparkling victory in a five-furlong \$22,300 maiden special weight at Belterra on July 22.

Bred by John Hicks, William Hart and William Martin, Funnel Cake unseated jockey Perry Ouzts just prior to the start of that race, making a quick bolt before returning to the paddock where he was reunited with his rider. The mishap obviously didn't bother the gregarious colt, who was carrying 120 pounds, as he drew off to win by two lengths over the Belterra dirt when challenged in the stretch.

Trained by Thomas Amoss, Funnel Cake was a \$35,000 purchase at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky 2016 September Fall Sale, and has amassed \$14,880 thus far in his career. Ouzts is back in the saddle from post three with 118 pounds.

Challenging Funnel Cake for first prize is the \$18,000-winning **Play Ball**, a dark bay son of Alcindor—Aftertheballisover, by Bernstein. This homebred is conditioned by Ken Marshall for Thomas Cinalli and made his lone start a winning one, taking a \$30,000 six-furlong, maiden special weight by 3¼ lengths on Aug. 16 with jockey Rex Stokes, III aboard. The gelding broke from the gate first and never looked back, being hand-ridden to the wire and besting his rivals in 1:11.28. Stokes is aboard again as Play Ball has been assigned 118 pounds from post eight.

Freekson is an altered son by Mercer Mill—Batuka, by Bates Motel who has been assigned high weight of 122 pounds from post six. Trained and owned by Wayne Rice, this \$6,000 yearling purchase from the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky Fall 201 Sale will be making his first start over the Belterra dirt. Bred by Fair Winds Farm, Freekson has three starts under his belt, racing at Keeneland once and twice at Presque Isle Downs, without finishing on the board. Arienne Cox gets the nod aboard this well-bred gelding.

Breeder/owner Roger Braugh, Jr.'s **Lavaca** starts from the five post carrying 116 pounds with Cory Orm in the saddle. This dark bay son by Vaquero—Tropical Angel, by Tropical Storm has earned \$5,200 thus far in his brief career, from three starts at Belterra. Trained by Chuck Peery, Lavaca was fourth in his maiden special weight debut on May 20; then third in a similar event on June 8; and was a determined sixth in the \$75,000 Hoover Stakes on July 8.

Mobil Solution hails from the Jeff Radosevich Stable and has Dean Sarvis riding, with 116 pounds from post four. Bred by Mapleton Thoroughbreds and owned by Gerald Silver, the dark bay son by Mobil—Perfect Solution, by Seeking The Gold has \$3,300 in his coffers from two previous starts at Jack Thistledown. He was third in his debut on Aug. 2, then finished fifth in a maiden special weight at the Cleveland one-miler on Aug. 16 for these connections.

Buckeye Kitten starts from the rail slot for trainer Jeff Greenhill and owner William Shumaker. The bay gelded son by William's Kitten—War Queen, by War Chant first finished eighth in his debut at Monmouth Park on June 3 and was then fifth on July 22 and sixth on Aug. 24 in a pair of Belterra maiden special weights, earning a total of \$1,252 from those starts. Bred by the Eyes of a Child Stable, Buckeye Kitten will carry 116 pounds in the Loyalty with Euclyn Prentice, Jr., in the saddle.

Trainer Sharon Ruberto will tighten the girth on **Midnight Mikey**, a bay son of Dark Kestrel—Buckler, by Concerto. Owned and bred by the Ruberto Racing Stable, Midnight Mikey finished a respectable fourth in his debut to the winning Play Ball on Aug. 16. He'll start from post two with Ron Allen, Jr. in the irons, carrying 116 pounds.

Chillicothe, a dark bay colt by Kettle Corn—Scioto Bootski, by Storm Boot, makes his career debut in the Loyalty with Azael DeLeon up carrying 116 pounds from post seven for trainer Ivan Vazquez and owner Scioto Farm. He was bred by Ronald Fields.