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OTRF Stakes highlight Holiday Weekend

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by Kimberly Rinker, For the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A pair of \$75,000 Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund stakes at opposite ends of the Buckeye State highlight the weekend's racing action.

On Saturday, Sept. 1, the fifth running of the \$75,000 Scarlet And Gray Handicap at Jack Thistledown will be contested, featuring a field of five, Ohio-Registered fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up, at six furlongs. This featured event is poised as the fifth race on the program, with a post time of 3:40 pm, ET.

On Sunday, the inaugural running of the \$75,000 Miss Southern Ohio has seven Ohio-Accredited fillies and mares, 3-year-olds and up, competing at one and one-sixteen miles on the turf. Post time for the sixth race feature is 3:50 pm, ET.

Loooch Racing Stable's **Proper Discretion** is the likely favorite in the Scarlet And Gray. This multi-talented, 5-year-old stakes winning daughter by Discreetly Mine—Prizes, by Prized has career earnings of \$416,361 and will be trying for her second stakes triumph of 2018—having won the \$75,000 Petro Memorial on June 23 at this same venue. Trained by Anthony Rini, Proper Discretion was bred by Bruce Tallisman and captured this same stake in 2017.

Southern Mischief will also carry the Loooch silks postward as she tries for her second victory of the season. Trained by Jeff Radosevich, this Into Mischief 4-year-old filly has \$152,760 in her coffers typically finds her best spot in allowance events, although she did win the \$75,000 First Lady Stakes last November at Mahoning Valley. She was bred by Greg Justice and the Justice Farm of Ohio.

La Nina Bronca hails from the Larry Smith barn for owner Hillburn Racing Stable. Bred by Meadow Springs Farm of Ohio, this hardy, 7-year-old mare is by Cactus Ridge, out of the Known Fact mare Facts of Love, and goes for her second victory of the 2018 racing season as well. A winner of \$177,570 in her career, La Nina Bronca last won a Belterra allowance on June 28 in commanding fashion. She finished fourth in this same stake last season.

Trainer James McDonald will tighten the girth on **Striking Lass**, a 6-year-old Canadian Frontier mare with a bankroll of \$253,822. Bred by Lowell Allen and owned by Antonia Flores, this lovely chestnut comes into this race with five consecutive victories under her belt this season in the optional claiming ranks at Thistledown, stepping up into stakes company for the first time.

Last but not least, **Ali Blue** rounds out this competitive field for trainer Tim Hamm and owners Duncan Lloyd and Blazing Meadows Farm. This homebred, 4-year-old Bluegrass Cat filly has a pair of back-to-back wins to her credit over the Cleveland one-miler, with career earnings of \$184,080. She finished fifth in this same race last year to Proper Discretion. Her best efforts thus far have come at the Allowance level.

In the \$75,000 Miss Southern Ohio Stakes, **Leona's Reward**, who is quickly closing in on half-a-million dollars earned lifetime (\$493,356), is the standout in the field of seven. This Parent's Reward homebred 5-year-old, trained by Tim Hamm for Blazing Meadows Farm and Michael Friedman is a multiple stakes-winner with triumphs in the \$75,000 Classen Memorial, \$75,000 Bricker Memorial and \$75,000 Ohio Debutante Handicap, to name just a few. Leona's Reward has 11 wins, five seconds and five thirds in 32 lifetime starts.

The owner-trainer partnership of Raymond Donald and Ivan Vazquez team up with a pair of Kentucky Dane daughters—the hard-trying 7-year-old **Hope's Frog Song** and the 5-year-old **Mom Genes**. The former is a stakes-placed \$204,603 earner, while the latter has \$129,488 in career earnings and is looking for her first win of the season. The homebred Hope's Frog Song has five wins, nine seconds and seven thirds from 51 starts, while Mom Genes has two wins, six seconds and six thirds in 31 starts.

The lone 3-year-old in the field, **Birdacious**, is a hard-trying daughter of Birdrun who was bred by Robin Murphy. Trained by Pavel Matejka for the Preston Stable's, Birdacious broke her maiden on July 29 at Belterra and was a solid third in the \$75,000 Horizon Stakes to Mobil Solution on Aug 12. A winner of \$51,200 to date, she has the lone win, along with three seconds and one third in seven career starts.

Grizabella is a 4-year-old Lunarpal lass conditioned by Mark Doering for owners Jeff Gardella and David Doering. This winner of \$107,143, who was bred by Dr. George Mapleton, is seeking an elusive first victory of the season in this stake.

Shes My Girl is another trying for her first seasonal win in this stake. Trained and owned by Jose Lopez, this daughter by King of the Roxy has \$71,396 in her coffers from two wins and three seconds in 18 tries and was second in last season's \$75,000 Ohio Debutante Handicap. She was bred by Bobby Rankin, and is making just her third start of the year.

The homebred **Lady Power**, owned and trained by Kris and Fred Nemann, is a 4-year-old Kinship filly who broke her maiden on May 17 of this year. With \$22,367 in her bank account from that lone win and three third-place finishes, Lady Power makes her debut into stakes competition.

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Photo Outline: Leona's Reward—shown here winning the 2018 edition of \$75,000 Classen Memorial—will be trying for another victory in the \$75,000 Miss Southern Ohio Stakes On Sunday afternoon, Sept. 2 at Belterra Park. **Photo by Jeff Zamaiko**