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\$75,000 Howard B. Noonan Stakes at Mahoning Valley Saturday

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by Kimberly Rinker for the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

The \$75,000 Howard B. Noonan Stakes—honoring a former top breeder in the Buckeye State—will be contested on Saturday, April 13 at Mahoning Valley Race Course. The six-furlong test for Ohio-registered 3-year-olds has a scheduled post time of 1:38 pm, ET.

Blazing Meadows & WinStar Farm's **Diamond Dust** looks to be the prohibitive favorite, hailing from the Tim Hamm barn. This son of Paynter-Radiant Sky has amassed \$193,100 via his four victories and two second-place finishes from just six lifetime starts. The winner of last year's \$150,000 Juvenile Stakes on Best of Ohio day at Thistledown, Diamond Dust also captured the \$75,000 Hoover Stakes on July 7 at Belterra Park after breaking his maiden on June 3 at that same oval. He also finished a strong second on Aug. 4 at Thistledown in the \$75,000 Cleveland-Kindergarten and played the bridesmaid in a Sept. 3 Thistledown allowance test.

This season the venerable bay gelding captured his lone start on March 30 at Mahoning, a 5½ furlong, \$38,000 allowance race, galloping to victory in easy fashion over a muddy surface for rider Geraldo Corrales.

Trainer Anthony Quartolo will saddle **Magic Tale** for owner Ron Paolucci. Bred by Langsem Farm, the son of Tale of the Cat-Conjuress, by Indian Charlie has career earnings of \$64,827 from 2 wins in four lifetime starts. This sophomore gelding brought \$35,000 at the 2017 Kennel Association September Yearling Sale and later \$70,000 at the Ocala Breeders Sales Company 2018 March Sale of 2-Year-Olds in Training. Magic Tale responded by winning his first lifetime start on June 27 of last year at Thistledown and then the \$75,000 Cleveland-Kindergarten Stakes on Aug. 4. He was then off the board in his next two starts, finishing a disappointing seventh in the \$150,000 Juvenile Stakes on Oct. 13 and sixth in his 2019 debut on March 23 at Mahoning Valley.

Jack Be Fast, a gelded son of Cowtown Cat-Kiss the Breeze, is trained by Jeff Radosevich for owner Gerald Silver. Bred by Mapleton Thoroughbreds, Jack Be Fast broke his maiden in his fifth try on Nov. 20 at Mahoning Valley and didn't hit the board in his final start as a freshman on Dec. 1 in the Radosevich Memorial Stakes. This season, the winner of \$77,550 lifetime has

matured a bit, finishing second, then third at Mahoning before winning two-in-a-row on Feb. 13 and March 23. Lifetime, he has three wins, one second and four thirds, and seasonal earnings of \$47,790.

Trainer Larry Rivelli bridles up **Ohio Player** for owner Patricias Hope. This gray son of Alphabet Soup-Sensational Love, by War Chant will be trying for his first season victory in the Noonan. Bred by Hal Snowden, Jr., Ohio Player sports a bankroll of \$56,957 from two wins and three seconds in nine starts. He was a smart second to Diamond Dust in that March 30 allowance race and appears poised for another good effort in here.

A pair of stablemates will break from the Mahoning gate for the trainer-owner combination of Robert and Marion Gorham. **Oaken**, a striking chestnut gelded son of Giant Oak and homebred winner of \$62,08 lifetime will be trying for his fourth victory in his seventh career start. **Dolly Dear**—the lone filly in the field of eight—is a daughter of Justin Phillips who most recently was third in the \$75,000 Southern Park Stakes at Mahoning. The winner of \$46,708 lifetime is winless this year in three tries, with her lone maiden triumph coming late in the 2018 season.

Celtic Line is trained by Richard Zielinsko for breeder Allen Lowell, who co-owns the son of Line of David-My Celtic Star along with John Bourke. This bay gelding broke his maiden on Jan. 8 at Mahoning Valley and will be making his first stakes start in the Noonan. He has \$30,114 in earnings from a win, one second and two thirds in six tries.

Sammy Da Bull broke his maiden by nearly seven lengths at Mahoning on Dec. 22 and followed that up with a Jan. 12 allowance triumph. Trained by breeder Rodney Faulkner for the R & P Racing Stables, LLC, the Vertiformal gelding has banked \$76,675 thus far in his career from ten starts, with two wins, three seconds and a trio of thirds.

The \$75,000 Howard B. Noonan Stakes is named in honor of the former Springfield, Ohio businessman, a Thoroughbred breeder and owner, who established Windy Knoll Farm in 1974 on the northwest side of that agricultural hamlet.

Noonan, already heavily involved in the racing business at the time, had shared ownership of 1971 Kentucky Derby winner Canonero II and was a partner with Catesby Clay of Runnymede Farm.

In its heyday, the 500-acre Windy Knoll was home to more than 100 horses, standing eight stallions in the late 1970s, including Shipping Magnate, Peak Value, Sovereignty and others. His top racehorses included Terrible Tiger, Star of Kuwait, Spirit Son and others.

Noonan also bred Angle Light, one of the few horses to best the mighty Triple Crown winning Secretariat, when he did so on April 21, 1973 in the Wood Memorial Stakes at Aqueduct. Sham was second and Secretariat third in the Wood, as Angel Light went wire-to-wire with Jacinto Vasquez riding.



Diamond Dust captures the \$150,000 Juvenile Stakes on Best of Ohio day at Thistledown in 2018. *Photo by Jeff Zamaiko*