



Ohio State Racing Commission

77 South High Street • 18th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6108
(614) 466-2757 FAX (614) 466-1900
www.racingohio.net

John Kasich
Governor

Robert K. Schmitz
Chairman

Fillies that make you go ‘shhhhhhhhhhhhh’



Super Night 2017

The Richest Night of Horse Racing in the Buckeye State!

For Immediate Release: September 1, 2017

by Kimberly Rinker, OSDF Administrator

Norm Parker has a way with the ladies. At least the four-legged kind.

The 56-year-old conditioner has done nothing less than condition two of the top Ohio-bred freshman trotting fillies to a starting berth in the \$250,000 Ohio Sires Stakes 2-Year-Old Filly Championship on Saturday, Sept. 2 at Scioto Downs.

Looking For Zelda and Sugar Break finished first and seventh respectively in the freshman trotting distaff division with the former sweeping all four legs of the series and the later winning leg 2 and finishing second in leg 3—the only two OSS events she started in.

These young Standardbreds have drawn posts one and two in the Championship, slated as Race 2 on the 15-program. Both are by the stallion Break The Bank K, and both are owned and were bred by Robert Key of Leechburg, PA.

“You always worry when you get into a big race about the draw,” Parker said. “It’s the first step in the process of a major race. For me, it’s very exciting to be racing in Ohio as it’s been awhile since I’ve been here, and we couldn’t have asked for better post positions.”

Born and raised in Cincinnati, Parker spent his first decade traveling with his father throughout the Buckeye State, racing horses.

“I have a lot of great memories about sitting on the Scioto backstretch, waiting for my dad to finish racing,” Parker recalled. “We moved to Welston, Ohio, when I was about 11 and raced at Scioto during the summertime. So I have a very big place in my heart for Ohio and for being able to be part of the Championship program. This is what we—as trainers—work for every day.”

Looking For Zelda is the undefeated, \$101,000-winning homebred second foal out of the Conway Hall mare My Winning Way K 3, 1:59.4f (\$77,488), and is a half-sister to Boyz N Guitars (by Muscle

Massive) 2, 1:58.3f (\$24,007). Besides her sweep of the OSS legs, she also captured a \$42,000 Ohio Fair Stake on July 27 in 1:57.1. Parker says she is nothing short of perfect.

“She’s handled everything perfectly that we’ve thrown at her,” he confirmed. “She responded in the baby qualifiers just the way we had hoped, and hasn’t stopped from there. She’s very professional.”

Looking For Zelda began her career via a trio of qualifiers at The Meadows on June 2, 8 and 22, finishing fifth, third and winning the third one in 2:00.4 with Tony Hall at the lines. Her career debut came on July 3 at Northfield Park when she wired the field in the first of her four \$40,000 OSS events, stopping the timer in 1:59.1.

“It’s nice to get a horse like her that does everything for you,” Parker acknowledged. “It makes my job easy. She has the ability, which is the best part of training her. She’s very simply rigged and shod and only wears trotting boots behind and has pretty much been a plain Jane or plain Zelda.”

Looking For Zelda’s stablemate, Sugar Break, is not as easy to work with, despite being loaded with talent, Parker says. She is the first foal out of the Angus Hall mare Sugar Heart 3, 1:57.4f (\$36,485) and owns a lone win scored in her OSS contest, along with a pair of second-place finishes, with \$36,485 in her coffers.

“She’s been kind of a late developer so we raced her in the Stallion Series first and she was second in her first start at Northfield,” Parker said. “Overall, we’re pretty pleased with how she’s developed, but she’s a big, strong mare and tends to get anxious about racing so we’ve been trying to teach her how to race and keep her calm at the same time. We’ve kept an ear hood on her and that seems to help keep her more comfortable.”

Sugar Break won her July 19 OSS event at Scioto Downs in 1:57.4, before finishing fourth in a \$42,000 Ohio Fair Stake there on July 27. She was a strong second in her third OSS leg on Aug. 4 but had to be scratched from Leg 4 when she came up sick.

“In that last sires stakes race she started getting sick and then we weren’t able to race her at Northfield,” Parker lamented. “She came down with an ugly viral infection, and we think we have it pretty well cleared up for the championship.

“We plan on racing both of these fillies at Delaware, too,” he continued. “They’re both staked heavily and their ability level will tell us where we go from there. Zelda is eligible to the Breeders Crown and a lot will depend upon what happens in the next two weeks with her.”

Parker says having an owner-breeder to train for is a bonus—as in this case when Key owns the stallion Break The Bank K.

“Bob (Key) is so passionate about the sport—he wants to breed champions, and he’s got his own broodmares and his own sires that he breeds too and it’s just another way for him to enjoy the business,” Parker stressed.

Having a good partnership with a driver, who is cognizant of a horse’s ability—never hurts either, Parker admitted.

“I use Tony (Hall) as much as I can,” Parker explained. “I like his driving style and I know he likes to go to Ohio to race and I picked him to drive Zelda originally because I thought he fit her well. He’s a really good driver and understands what I like and what I expect in regards to what a horse needs from a driver.

“It also really helps when a driver has affection for a horse,” Parker continued. “When Tony first qualified Zelda, he told me she was a nice horse and that he’d like to stick with her. The third time he qualified her, he asked her to go a little bit in the stretch and she won easily. That time, when he bought her back, he looked at me, put his fingers to his lips and went ‘shhhhhhhhhhh.’ That’s when I knew he thought a lot of her.”

About the Ohio Sires Stakes: Ohio-breds are made eligible to the four-part series—featuring \$40,000 purses per divisional leg—divided by age, gait and gender, by their owners with a March 15 payment.

In 2017, the Ohio Standardbred Development Fund (OSDF) received 1,148 nominations of 2- and 3-year-old foals sired by Ohio-registered pacing and trotting stallions. The most lucrative of any series for Ohio-bred Standardbreds, the Ohio Sires Stakes saw a 6% gain in nominations from 2016 (1,091 nominees) and a 49% increase of 2015 nominations (774).

Horses in the series are awarded points based on where they finish in each of the legs. Accumulated points are totaled after Leg 4, and Championships eligible-youngsters are posted on the Ohio State Racing Commission website (www.racingohio.net).

Post time for the Ohio Sires Stakes Championships is 6:30 pm.

-30-

