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Weekend Stakes Spotlight Ohio-breds

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by Kimberly Rinker, For the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A pair of stakes for Ohio-bred runners highlight the weekend cards at both JACK Thistledown and Belterra Park racetracks.

First up is the \$75,000 Michael F. Rowland Memorial Handicap, a six furlong event for Ohio-accredited foals, 3-year-olds and up, to be contested as Race Five at JACK Thistledown on Saturday, May 12, with a schedule post time of 3:40 pm, ET.

On Sunday, May 13, Ohio-registered 3-year-old fillies go postward in the \$75,000 Tomboy Stakes, a one mile and a sixteen race to be contested over Belterra Park's turf course.

From 18 nominees, seven horses passed the Thistledown entry box for the Rowland Memorial, named in the honor of the popular rider who tragically died after a 2004 racing incident at Turfway Park. Rowland had 3,998 lifetime wins and was Thistledown's all-time leading jockey, having won 29 titles at the Cleveland one-miler.

Top contestants include \$360,748-earner and multiples stakes winner **Eightthehardway**, a 6-year-old son of Parent's Reward conditioned by Glenroy Brown for owner Paul Groves. Bred by Blazing Meadows Farm, Eightthehardway has eight wins, seven seconds and nine thirds in 39 career starts for his connections and will battle rivals **My Pardner Cal**, a 5-year-old Big Atlantic gelding with career earnings of \$204,707 and **Buckeye Bullet**, a Dark Kestrel gelding with a career bankroll of \$203,099.

The 5-year-old Buckeye Bullet is the reigning Rowland champion, having captured this stake last year by two lengths over Eightthehardway, with My Pardner Cal another eight lengths back in third.

Show Sliding Home, Funnel Cake, Ol' L B and Bubba J are all seeking their first stakes triumph in the Rowland.

-30-

Photo Cutline: Buckeye Bullet hopes to repeat last year's victory in the \$75,000 Michael F. Rowland Memorial

Photo by Jeff Zamaiko