



Ohio State Racing Commission

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Weekend racing offers two \$75,000 OTRF Stakes

Featured events at Thistledown & Belterra

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by Kimberly Rinker, Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

Two \$75,000 Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund (OTRF) stakes for Buckeye-bred runners are set to be contested this weekend, May 11 and 12. The \$75,000 Michael F. Rowland Memorial Handicap will commence Saturday at JACK Thistledown, while the \$75,000 Tomboy Stakes takes center stage at Belterra Park on Sunday.

The Rowland Memorial, a six-furlong test for Ohio-accredited foals, 3-year-olds and up, has been scheduled as the seventh event on the eight-race card, with a post time of 3:20 pm, ET.

Buckeye Bullet, a 6-year-old Dark Kestrel gelding, looks to retain his twice-won crown in the Rowland—having captured this same event in 2018 and 2017 for Ruberto Racing Stable, Inc. Trained by Luis Ruberto, this homebred has amassed \$248,099 in career earnings from eight wins, three seconds and two thirds in 16 lifetime starts.

The hard-trying **Eighththehardway** also makes his 2019 debut in the Rowland for trainer Paul Groves and owner Armored Acres LLC. This Parent's Reward 7-year-old is a multiple stakes winner—with former triumphs in the \$75,000 Lewis Memorial (2018); \$75,000 Ruth/Kirchberg Memorial (2018 & 2017); and the \$75,000 Catlaunch Stakes (2016). Eighththehardway is the richest horse in the field of eight, with \$426,988 in career earnings from nine wins, seven second and ten thirds in 46 starts.

Mobil Solution, a winner of \$229,020 in his young career, hails from the Jeff Radosevich Stable in the Rowland, along with mild longshots and stablemates **Funnel Cake** and **Cielo Lindo**. Mobil Solution is a 4-year-old son of Mobil bred by Mapleton Thoroughbreds for owner Gerald Silver who was second in this stake last year, after scoring back-to-back victories in the \$75,000 Horizon Stakes and the \$75,000 Catlaunch Stakes in 2018. He also captured the 2017 edition of the Joshua Radosevich Memorial Stakes.

The sleeper in this race might be **Direct Deceit**, a 4-year-old gray son of Twinspired owned by Robin Murphy and Penny Lauer and trained by Mike Lauer. This lightly raced gelding enters stakes company for the first time but gets the benefit of having two starts under his belt this year at this same distance—the first on March 9 when he was second at Mahoning Valley and the next on April 10 over that same oval. From eight career starts Direct Deceit has three wins, three seconds and a third with \$79,570 in his coffers.



Buckeye Bullet wins the 14th running of the \$75,000 Michael F. Rowland Memorial Handicap at JACK Thistledown in 2018. This tough gelding also won the 2017 edition. *Photo by Jeff Zamaiko*

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