



Ohio State Racing Commission

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

John Kasich
Governor

Robert K. Schmitz
Chairman

Ohio-breds vie in Rowland & Tomboy

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by Kimberly Rinker for the Ohio Thoroughbred Race Fund

A pair of \$75,000 stakes for Ohio-runners highlight the weekend racing action in the Buckeye State, with the 14th running of the Michael F. Rowland Memorial Handicap slated for Saturday afternoon at Jack Thistledown in Cleveland and the Tomboy Stakes set for Sunday afternoon at Belterra Park in Cincinnati.

A field of ten Ohio-Accredited runners will enter the Thistledown starting gate for the Rowland Memorial, slated as the seventh race on the eight-card program, with a scheduled post of 4:40 pm, ET. The six furlong test for 3-year-olds and up is named in honor of one of the Buckeye State's leading riders who tragically lost his life in a 2004 Turfway Park racing accident. Rowland, only 41 at the time, had 3,998 career wins, twice tying the Ohio riding record by steering six winners home in a single afternoon.

Eighthardway makes his 5-year-old debut for owner Paul Groves and trainer Richard Vickers in the Rowland Memorial. The dark bay altered son of Parents Reward-Natural Nine, by Cryptoclearance has \$250,468 in his coffers with a 7-4-6 record from 29 career starts. Bred by Blazing Meadow Farm, Eighthardway captured the \$75,000 Ruff/Kirchberg Memorial Handicap on Dec. 3, 2016 and also won the \$75,000 Catlaunch Stakes at Thistledown last season. Luis Gonzalez rides.

Rival **Buckeye Bullet**, a 4-year-old Dark Kestrel gelding, comes into the Rowland riding a four-race win streak for the Ruberto Racing Stable. Trained by Sharon Ruberto, this homebred speedster steps up into stakes company for the first time this season, looking to add to his bankroll of \$131,339. He did finish second in the 2016 editions of both the \$75,000 Noonan Stakes and the \$75,000 Tall Stack Stakes. Luis Quiones will be in the irons.

Twelve Ohio-registered 3-year-old fillies vie over the Belterra turf at distance of one and 1/16 miles in the Tomboy, carded as the featured seventh event on the eight-race program, with an approximate post time of 4:26 pm, ET.

Last year's Galbreath Stakes winner **Someday Soon** heads up the Tomboy for breeder/owner Tommy Ligon. Conditioned by William B. Van Meter, this Proud Citizen lass comes off an impressive third-place finish in the \$500,000 Ashland Stakes (Gr.I) at Keeneland on April 8. This winner of \$222,027 will be trying for her fourth trip to the winner's circle in her tenth career start. Delcan Cannon will be in the saddle as Someday Soon carries high weight of 122 pounds in the Rowland.

Rival and Southern Park Stakes winner **Nikki My Darling** hopes to keep her win-streak intact in the Tomboy for owners Looch Racing & Imaginary Stables. Bred by the Sheltopee Farm and James Evans,

this grey daughter of Creative Cause—Zamindarling, by Zamindar has fared well under the tutelage of trainer Jeff Radosevich, winning her last three starts. A winner of \$101,533 lifetime, Nikki My Darling has four career wins in seven tries. Regular jockey Luis Colon has the riding assignment.

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Photo Cutline: Someday Soon—shown here winning the \$150,000 John Galbreath Stakes at Mahoning Valley last fall--vies in Sunday's \$75,000 Tomboy Stakes at Belterra Park.

Photo by Brad Conrad