

2023 Triple Crown Column..

February 13 ...

Want to thank Vladimir for allowing me to write this column. I need a place to get all this pent up knowledge and interest out! And since I am a student of racing around the world and learn so much from websites worldwide, I hope that I can expand your interest or curiosity of American Horse Racing and all things Triple Crown. This weekend, all the eyes of the world will be on the Dubai Cup for sure (think Japan will come thru this time, sorry Baffert) but there are only around 70 days til the Kentucky Derby....

(comments and commentary here are my own and I own any errors that there might be, tho I do try hard to verify my research. I would always welcome anyone who'd like to contact me and chat racehorses. I am limited to English, tho, so bear with me!

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It's hard to believe that this is the 50th anniversary of Secretariat's Triple Crown. It's hard to believe that I am of that age where I can tell you I was at the finish line when he crossed the line 31 lengths in front in the most remarkable Belmont Stakes ever. I am thrilled that I've seen the last 5 Triple Crown winners put the finishing touches on their accomplishments by winning the Belmont. There was a while there when I thought there would not be another in my lifetime. I prayed "one more before I die", and poof, along came American Pharoah. Three years later, Justify. Amazing.

So, we start on the road to the 2023 Kentucky Derby with balls in the air – like Baffert's wanting a new judge on the Baffert vs Churchill Downs battle and one of the Derby early line favorites, Newgate, already off the trail due to an injury, as is Breeders Futurity runner-up, Loggins.

I'm not going to start with the obvious horses, like the two year old champion of 2022, Forte or other high-rated horses at this point in time like Arabian Knight, Blazing Sevens, Cave Rock, Curly Jack, and a few others. I'm going to start with this past weekends results and we'll talk pedigrees.

A week before, the weather in New York was frigid but thankfully it warmed up considerably by the time the Withers Stakes (G3) was run on February 11, 2023 (Happy Birthday to my daughter, Barbara!). HIT SHOW won by 5 ½ lengths over ARCTIC ARROGANCE who was 6 ¼ lengths in front of the 3rd place finisher, General Banker. The rest of the field was spread out so there was 56 lengths from first to the 7th and last place finisher. The time for the 9 furlongs was an unimpressive 1:54:71. (2022 Preakness winner, Early Voting, won this race last year, by the way. Bernardini won in 2006 and he, too, won the Preakness.)

Despite the fact that it wasn't a very interesting race, the winner's pedigree is. His sire is an all time favorite of mine, Candy Ride (Arg). Candy Ride is the sire of Gun Runner (sire of a Classic winner already in his young sire career), Shared Belief, Game Winner, Clubhouse Ride, Misremembered, Vekoma, Sidneys Candy and so many other really

really good horses. But he hasn't sired a classic winner and that's such a disappointment to me. Maybe this year? Well, maybe not Hit Show, but...

The dam of Hit Show is ACTRESS who is a daughter of leading sire Tapit, who has had his share of Classic winners (Tapwrit, Essential Quality, Tonalist, Creator,--all winners of the Belmont). Gart & Mary West bred and owned Actress during her 9 race career in which she won but 2 race. Her maiden win came in the G2 Black Eyed Susan Stakes at Pimlico in 2017. Jason Servis trained and Nik Juarez rode. There were 11 in the field and Actress won by a head over Lights of Medina, over a track labelled as sloppy. 9 furlongs, by the way. She followed that with a 3rd in the Delaware Oaks (8.5f), and a couple races later, won the Graded Comely Stakes which was also at 9 furlongs. Ridden by Jose Ortiz that day, she was ridden out to an easy 8+ length victory. That was her last race as a three year old and she came back at 4 to race twice more with two second place finishes, both graded races and both at a mile and a sixteenth. She apparently was happier with the added distance. Anyway, going into retirement. Her first foal was Hot Rumor, by Medaglia D'Oro, which broke her maiden in her second start last year in a mile race at Indianapolis. Actress was bred back to that sire and foaled a filly last year.

The second dam of HIT SHOW is the Canadian Champion Three Year Old Filly Milwaukee Appeal by Milwaukee Brew. She won the Woodbine Oaks, was second in the G1 Alabama and Spinster. Her best foal to date has been Actress. So, all things considered, expect HIT SHOW to improve with distance and you'll probably see him in the Wood Memorial.

Second in the Withers was Arctic Arrogance, a New York bred son of Frosted which has won stakes restricted to NY bred. Third was General Banker, another NY bred, this one by Central Banker who I feel would be best if kept to under a mile.

Moving on to the Jimmy Winkfield Stakes, this 6 furlong event was won by over 4 lengths by DREW'S GOLD, who remains undefeated. Favored in this event, he didn't beat much to be honest. Trainer is James Chapman who has been around since the mid 1990s. His best horse to date is the graded stakes winning gelding, Caller One and G2SW Western Pride and a few other stakes winners. At one time, he split his stable between NY and California. Last year, he ran 127 times and won 18 races. Drew's Gold was a \$25,000 purchase at Keeneland in September by Mr Chapman. He is by Violence, a son of Medaglia D'Oro, whose own Triple Crown hopes were thwarted in the 2013 Fountain of Youth Stakes in which he lost to eventual Derby winner, Orb. Trained by Todd Pletcher, Violence suffered a career ending injury after just 4 starts and 3 wins. He won the Cash Call Futurity (G1) and one other graded stake after breaking his maiden in impressive style at Saratoga, indicating his \$600,000 purchase price was justified. Since retirement, Violence has done well at the sales and OK at the races. His son Newgrange recently won the G2 San Pasqual at Santa Anita (9 furlongs), recent black type stakes placing Murky (which I will probably be writing about soon), and some nice allowance winners. Drews Gold is in his 6th US crop. He's been a useful sire in Argentina.

Dam of DREWS GOLD is Frolic's Revenge (by Vindication), a multiple stakes winner. Tho she did not win at a graded level, she nevertheless had black type with wins in races like the one mile Lindsay Frolic Stakes (Calder), the 8.5 furlong (turf) Ginger Brew Stakes, the listed 8.5fT Calder Oaks, and the flat mile Regal Gal Stakes as well as the Sweettrickydancer Stakes (mile, turf). Frolic's Revenge is also dam of the Blame filly American Frolic which won the 7.5fT Miss Gracie Stakes. In fact, her 3 other wins were on turf as well. Her Ghostzapper filly, Lookintogeteven, is still looking for a win (or a placing) after 25 starts. Her son, a gelding named Night Frolic, is racing in Japan and won on dirt twice, once at a mile (on a sloppy course) and once at 2100 meters. Her Super Saver son, Mc Awesome, raced in New Mexico in an abbreviated career, pulling up in the Mne That Bird Derby. The only other offspring of Frolic's Revenge is Nate's Revenge who is by Exaggerator which runs at a \$10,000 claiming level in Louisiana. He did win at a mile, tho, in a MSW event early on in his career.

Anyway, look for Drew's Gold in the one mile Gotham Stakes in early April. I know it's a long way from the 6 furlong Jimmy Winkfield Stakes at Aqueduct in February to the winners circle at Churchill Downs on the first Saturday in May, but....well, remember at this same time frame last year, Rich Strike was still eligible for "non winners of two" and was 3rd in the one mile Leonatus Stakes at Turfway Park. So, stranger things have happened.

Second in the Jimmie Winkfield was Todd Pletcher's CLUBHOUSE who, tho best of the others, was no match for the winner. He does deserve a mention, tho. Clubhouse is by Speightstown and has won 1 of his 7 starts thusfar. The maiden win came in his first 2023 start, the one before the Winkfield, and he pulled away to win by over 6 lengths (why did Pletcher switch from Carmouche?) Second in that event was Chad Browns' talked about POWER IN NUMBERS which was making his much anticipated first start. He's a \$200,000 yearling purchase by Girvin.

Would like to say a few words about a maiden winner from February 11, this one from Gulfstream Park. Emma-Jayne Wilson, a perennial leading rider in Canada, headed south and was aboard GOLD MAGIC for this 6 furlong event. Kevin Attard, a leading Canadian based trainer, saddled the Canadian bred (did you expect anything else?) son of Good Magic. He drew off to win by almost 3 lengths over favored Elnico in the good time of 1:10:35. I don't know if they have Derby thoughts for this one, probably more the King's Plate (nope, not the Queen's Plate this year since GB has a King now...) but I really enjoyed the race (watched it a good half dozen times now) and hope this one develops early on. Good Magic, you might remember, is a son of Champion Curlin and himself was Champion Two Year Old (in 2017) & was 2^{cd} in the Kentucky Derby (to Justify) and won the Haskell. He'd have been Champion at 3 if it wasn't for that pesky Justify. Good Magic is also the sire of a potential Kentucky Derby horse in Curly Jack (more on him later) and the wierdly named Dubyuhnell. This is his first crop. Dam is

Golden Amber, who is by Wood Memorial winner Gemologist. Gold Magic is her first foal. She's been sold 3 times in her life, once to Tracy Farmer who raced her then as a broodmare (carrying Gold Magic) to Chad Schumer and then in foal to Maclean's Music for \$75,000 to Forty Oaks. I'd guess her value has gone back up.

Til next time! Stay well, stay warm. (we had 6" of snow followed by sleet last night. Not complaining as it has been a pretty much snowless season thusfar...and only only 56 days til Spring...