

-February 22, 2008-

The prep schedule is light this weekend, with just two races, Saturday's \$50,000 Mountain Valley at six furlongs at Oaklawn Park, and Sunday's Grade II \$350,000 Fountain of Youth at Gulfstream Park, the first 1 1/8 mile test on the dirt for classic colts.

GULFSTREAM PARK --- Racing fans, both at the track and around the country at simulcast sites, will get a double dose of Derby fever when the Hallandale track not only serves up the \$350,000 Fountain of Youth, but follows it up with the 2008 debut of the unbeaten juvenile champion, War Pass.

Court Vision, riding a three-race winning streak, including two graded races, is the probable post time favorite in the Fountain of Youth that has attracted a field of 12. The Bill Mott-trainee must overcome cobwebs, idle since winning the Grade II Remsen at Aqueduct on Nov. 24, a neck decision over Atoned. Court Vision also won the Grade III Iroquois at Churchill Downs on Oct. 28, by a neck over Halo Najib, one of his FOY rivals. There are two other graded stakes winners in the Fountain of Youth, **Anak Nakal**, who won the Grade II Kentucky Club Jockey Stakes at Churchill Downs on Nov. 24, and **Z Humor**, winner of the Dec. 7 Grade III Delta Jackpot on Dec. 7. Like Court Vision, Z Humor is trained by Mott, but may not run, having finished fifth in last weekend's Sam Davis at Tampa Bay Downs.

THE CHAMP RETURNS --- A half-hour after the Fountain of Youth, in the 10th race on the Gulfstream Park card, **War Pass**, perfect at two, will make his seasonal debut for owner Robert LaPenta and trainer Nick Zito. The son of Cherokee Run has been training forwardly at Palm Meadows but hasn't run in the afternoon since winning the Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Monmouth Park on Oct. 27. His other freshman stakes score came in the Oct. 6 Champagne at Belmont Park.

OAKLAWN PARK --- While 18 horses were nominated, only five will face the starter in the Mountain Valley, a race used by Afleet Alex to launch his march towards victory in the 2005 Preakness and Belmont Stakes. **Ferragamo** and **Sebastian County** appear the top entrants, the former an impressive winner of a six furlong dash at Oaklawn on Jan. 20 in 1:09. Sebastian County has been idle since last summer when he finished third in the Arlington-Washington Futurity. Joe Johnson has the mount on Ferragamo for trainer Larry Jones, while Larry Sterling Jr. will be aboard Sebastian County for trainer Don Von Hemel.

In Triple Crown/Ohio Derby Countdown action last weekend . . .

OAKLAWN PARK --- **Denis of Cork** (\$11.60), rallying in the three path, sprinted away from his rivals to pot a 2 1/4-length victory in Monday's renewal of the Grade III \$250,000 Southwest Stakes. The Southwest marked the stakes debut for the son of two-time Ohio Horse of the Year Harlan's Holiday, the Florida-bred ran a mile in 1:37 2/5 to remain unbeaten in three lifetime start. Sierra Sunset ran second, while Liberty Bull scrambling late to dead-heat front-running Sacred Journey for third. David Carroll trains Denis of Cork, a \$250,000 auction ring buy, who was ridden by Robby Albarado. Carroll said he plans to return Denis of Cork to his headquarters at the Fair Grounds, but to ship back to Oaklawn for the March 15 \$300,000 Rebel Handicap. Denis of Cork is named for priest in County Cork, Ireland, who is a friend of William Warren Jr, the colt's owner. Turf War, the Southwest's 5-2 favorite in a field of 11, had a rough trip and was unplaced.

TAMPA BAY DOWNS --- **Fierce Wind** (\$8.80), clocked in stakes record time, won Saturday's 28th running of the \$200,000 Sam F. Davis, the major prep for the Tampa Bay Derby. The Nick Zito-trainee, ridden by Cornelio Velasquez, ran 1 1/16 miles in 1:44. The son of Dixie Union races for Four Roses Thoroughbred and was winning for the third time (all in a row) in five starts. Tim Poole, a Zito assistant, accompanied the horse from south Florida to Tampa and said after the race, "Two turns is always a plus when you've got tactical speed. Cornelio did an excellent job of getting him there today. He's always been a horse who has ability."

SAM HOUSTON --- **Ablaze With Spirit** (\$8.60) was along in time to nail the favored Gold Coyote for a half-length victory in the \$125,000 Jim's Orbit, a race named in honor of the colt who accounted for the 1988 Ohio Derby. The mile race, timed in 1:39 4/5, was restricted to horses nominated to the Texas Stallion series.

SUNLAND PARK --- **Poni Colado** (\$5.80) didn't disappoint the chalk players as he romped by eight lengths in Saturday's \$100,000 Borderland Derby. The victory for the Steve Asmussen-trainee is his third in eight starts, which have come at six different tracks.

BAY MEADOWS --- **Sea of Pleasure** (\$2.60) became the most heavily-favored winner of a Triple Crown/Ohio Derby Countdown race when he drew off to win Saturday's \$59,530 Sophomore Sprint Stakes at the bay area track. The victory was vindication for the Gary Stute-trainee who failed as the favorite in the Jan. 20 San Pedro at Santa Anita. Sea of Pleasure ran the Sprint's six furlongs in 1:09 3/5.