



## **Breeders' Cup World Championships Friday, Nov. 3 and Saturday, Nov. 4**

### **Friday News & Notes Friday, Nov. 3, 2017**

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#### **CLASSIC**

**Arrogate, Collected, Mubtaahij, West Coast** – Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert's runners for the \$6 million Classic went out for 1 1/4m gallops at Del Mar Friday morning. Baffert said that everything was fine with his group as he seeks a record-extending fourth straight win in the Classic.

Arrogate is the defending champion and will be making the final start of a relatively short but brilliant career during which he has won seven times and earned a North American record of \$17.3 million. He is being retired to stud by his owner Juddmonte Farms. Arrogate has lost his last two starts, both at Del Mar.

The four members of Baffert's powerful quartet have different owners. While Baffert would like to see Arrogate return to his previous form, he can't have a favorite.

"You want him to run well. I just want them all to run well," he said. "I have the same mindset with all of them. We just hope all of them perform at the highest level. That's all you ask for. We know if (Arrogate) does, we know what he can do."

Arrogate and West Coast, owned by Gary and Mary West, went out for their Friday morning exercise under Dana Barnes, Manny Avila rode Mubtaahij, owned by Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa al Maktoun, and Augustine Laura was up on Speedway Stable's Collected.

Two years ago, the Classic was the final start for Baffert's Triple Crown winner American Pharoah. Baffert recalls being sad after the thrilling win in the Classic simply because it was American Pharoah's final start.

"Now with Arrogate, it's a different kind of feeling, because he's accomplished so much," Baffert said. "What more can you do with a horse like this who has won everything? I'd love to have him around until he's 10 years old. He's been so good to us, to win the Breeders' Cup Classic, running down the great California Chrome. That was the most exciting Breeders' Cup win, other than Thirty Slews (1992 Sprint), my first one, that I have been involved in. That was really exciting. And to come back and win the Pegasus and do what he did in Dubai. My job is to make sure he runs his race and hopefully goes out a winner."

**Churchill** – Dual Guineas winner Churchill, with Donnacha O'Brien on board, did a slightly stronger canter than his stable companion War Decree and the 3yo son of Galileo looked in great condition and providing his last run at Ascot in heavy conditions two weeks ago has not taken the edge off him connections are hoping for a big run.

**Gunnevera** – Jockey Edgard Zayas stood along the outside rail to watch Classic contender Gunnevera gallop 1 ½m at Del Mar Friday morning, very much impressed with his first Breeders' Cup mount's level of energy.

"He looks great. The way he galloped, it looks like he wants to go. He can be lazy sometimes," the 24-year-old South Florida-based jockey said. "He looks like he likes the cool weather. He's been in Florida all summer in 90-degree weather. He looks good."

Zayas, a native of Puerto Rico who has won several riding titles at Gulfstream Park and Gulfstream Park West as an apprentice and a journeyman, has breezed Gunnevera for the past two years before riding the Antonio Sano-trained colt in his two most recent races.

"I'm super excited to have the opportunity to ride this horse in the Classic, especially a horse that has a shot at winning," Zayas said. "He seems like he has a very good shot in the race. If the race comes out how he want it – a lot of speed and the speed comes back – he'll be coming at the end."

Zayas scored a five-length victory aboard Gunnevera in the Tangelo Stakes at Gulfstream Aug. 6 before retaining the mount for the Aug. 26 Travers at Saratoga. The stretch-running colt lagged far behind in the early going of the Travers after being bumped hard coming out of the gate and circled the field on the final turn to engage front-running West Coast at the top of the stretch before settling for second, 3 ¼ lengths behind the Bob Baffert-trained frontrunner and 2 ¼ lengths ahead of third-place finisher Irap.

"It was a really tough Travers, especially running against the Derby winner, the Preakness winner and the Belmont winner – all those horses in one race," Zayas said. "He ran a great race. He broke from the outside and I had to take him wide around all the horses and he still ran a huge race."

Zayas said he's going to let Gunnevera do his own thing in the Classic.

"I'm just going to ride him the way he likes to run. I'm not going to change anything. He has a style – one run at the end. Hopefully, the speed comes back," he said. "I think there'll be a solid pace."

Margoth's Gunnevera, who finished seventh in the Derby and fifth in the Preakness, is the only Triple Crown participant in the Classic field.

"He's looking different. I think he's one of those horses that as a 4yo he's going to get better," Zayas said.

**Gun Runner** – Winchell Thoroughbreds and Three Chimneys Farm's Steve Asmussen-trained Gun Runner had an easy gallop early Friday morning under exercise rider Angel Garcia, a day prior to his toughest career test, the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic. Runner-up in the \$1 million Las Vegas Dirt Mile last year, the son of Candy Ride has progressed emphatically in 2017, reeling off three consecutive Grade 1 victories to earn himself 9-5 morning-line favoritism in Saturday's 10-furlong showcase. Florent Geroux, aboard for his previous 14 races, rides from post five.

**Pavel** – After a light gallop Friday morning, Pavel was judged by trainer Doug O'Neill to be locked and loaded and ready to fire in Saturday's \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic against 10 other world-class runners at 1 ½m over Del Mar's main track.

"We see him as being perfectly ready to give a big effort tomorrow," O'Neill said. "We know this is an extremely difficult race but he certainly gives us every signal that he's up to the task. We expect him to be in a stalking position off the pace a bit," he continued. "His outside post position (10) could be a bit of a problem, but he has good gate speed, so we think he'll find himself a good position."

**War Decree** – Breeders' Cup Classic hopeful War Decree went out on to the main track this morning and was watched by Aidan O'Brien who is hoping that one of his two challengers can give him that elusive first Breeders' Cup Classic win. O'Brien also trains Churchill.

**War Story** – The Brooklyn winner, and possibly the longest shot in the Classic field, had an easy morning walking the shed row.

"I always walk my horses the day before a race," trainer Jorge Navarro said.

The 5yo gelding was entered with his first preference in the oversubscribed Turf even though only one of his 23 starts was on the grass.

“We wanted to try the Turf and we were here already so we decided to take a shot (in the Classic),” Navarro said.

War Story will be making his third start in a Breeders’ Cup race. He was eighth in the 2015 Dirt Mile and eighth in last year’s Classic after breaking in the air and fighting his rider. Navarro took over training the millionaire in January.

“The last three years he’s been after the top horses,” Navarro said. “He’s not a horse to show you much in the morning but I actually thought his work last weekend was better than (Navarro’s Dirt Mile contender) Sharp Azteca’s. Even Paco Lopez, when he worked him, said, ‘Who is this?’ I told him, ‘Once you hit the three-eighths pole let him run’ and Paco told me the longer they went the better he got.

“The last few days it seems like he’s really coming around. He’s a cool little horse and I just want him to enjoy it. Do I believe he has a chance? Hey, you never know.”

**Win the Space** – “We’re ready to go,” trainer George Papaprodromou said Friday morning about Saturday’s date in the Breeders’ Cup Classic for Win the Space.

“I just hope we get a fast pace. My horse is a closer and we hope those other horses will go out fast and give my horse a chance to come strong at the end. That’s the way Joe (jockey Joe Talamo) was able to ride him in the Awesome Again (when third) and that’s the way we’d like it to go again.”

## OVERSEAS

Final preparations were put to the European challengers out on the Del Mar track this morning.

With a 6 o’clock start **Home of The Brave** and **Karar** (Mile) and **Wuheida** (Filly & Mare Turf) all stretched their legs out on the main track. Karar first went to the starting gates before doing a steady canter.

Andre Fabre’s **Talismanic** (Turf) was next out on to the dirt and was immediately joined by the first of the Aidan O’Brien string **Highland Reel** (Turf) who jogged two laps of the track before having a gentle canter down the back stretch. Last year’s Breeders’ Cup Turf winner was joined by fellow Turf contenders **Cliffs of Moher** and **Seventh Heaven**. Winner of the Yorkshire Oaks and Irish Oaks Seventh Heaven was very well in herself and was bouncing off the Del Mar dirt.

**Lancaster Bomber** (Mile), **Rhododendron** (Filly & Mare Turf), **Roly Poly** (Mile) and **Washington DC** (Turf Sprint) all jogged a couple of laps of the track.

Once the main track was cleared it was the turn of **Queen’s Trust** (Filly & Mare Turf), **Cotai Glory** (Turf Sprint), **Zelzal** (Mile) and **Decorated Knight** (Turf) to head out on to the turf.

Cotai Glory, who struggled with the bends Thursday, looked a lot more at ease when cantering half a lap of the track.

Sir Michael’s Stoute’s Queen’s Trust did no more than a steady canter before returning to the barn with her pony. Zezal, trained by Jean-Claude Rouget, who has not made the trip to Del Mar from France did the strongest piece of work of the day and did a steady breeze around a lap and a half of the turf.

Roger Charlton was trackside to witness Breeders’ Cup Turf hopes Decorated Knight go one lap of the track at a steady canter.

**U S Navy Flag** (Juvenile) looked happy out on the main track and after having jogged two circuits of the Del Mar dirt went for a gentle canter before returning to the barn. Aidan O’Brien last won the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile in 2001 with Johannesburg and is hoping that the son of War Front can land the spoils again.

## **OTHER RUNNERS**

**Finley'sluckycharm (Filly & Mare Sprint)** – Carl Moore's Finley'sluckycharm put in her final preparation for Saturday's race with a 1 1/2m gallop over the main track Friday morning with Sara Calhoun aboard.

Trainer Bret Calhoun, who won this race in 2010 at Churchill Downs with Dubai Majesty, has seen Saturday's 7f test play out in his mind many times since post positions were drawn Monday.

"She is definitely going to be forwardly placed," Calhoun said of Finley'sluckycharm, who will break from post position nine under Brian Hernandez Jr. "We have most of the speed to the inside of us with one (Unique Bella) to the outside. If somebody goes (for the lead), we should be sitting right off."

Finley'sluckycharm showed a new dimension in winning the Thoroughbred Club of America in her previous start by coming from off the pace for the victory.

"That gives us confidence," Calhoun said. "You think they can do it, but until they do, you just don't know."

**Lady Eli (Filly & Mare Turf)** – Sheep Pond Partners' Lady Eli went through her morning exercises without a hitch Friday, having a routine gallop around the Del Mar oval for trainer Chad Brown. The daughter of Divine Park, winner of the 2014 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf, is slated to make what is likely her final career start in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf on Saturday. Runner-up by a nose in said event last year, the 10-for-13 five-time Grade I winner is to be sold at Keeneland's November Sale. Irad Ortiz, Jr., aboard for all 13 of her tries, returns to the saddle one last time. They break from post nine.

**Moonshine Memories (14 Hands Winery Juvenile Fillies)** – The morning-line favorite for Saturday's Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies did her usual thing Friday – an easy 1m gallop over the main track with regular exercise rider Seraphin Carmona up.

"We don't need to do much with her," said Carlos Santamaria, assistant to trainer Simon Callaghan. "She's done everything she needs to do. We just want to keep her happy and energized."

**Unique Bella (Filly & Mare Sprint)** – Not only is Unique Bella running against 13 competitors in the Filly & Mare Sprint, the favorite is running against history.

No 3yo filly has won the race and sophomores, including six defeated favorites, are 0-for-29 heading into Saturday.

"That's a statistic we're trying to change," Hall of Fame trainer Jerry Hollendorfer said after he tightened the screws on the daughter of Tapit out of 2010 Breeders' Cup Distaff winner Unrivaled Belle.

Unique Bella will break post 11 with Hall of Fame rider Mike Smith, who has been her partner in every career effort.

"There's plenty of speed in the race but she has tactical speed. Mike will adjust if he has to and that's how it will play out," said the trainer.

Unique Bella jogged from the barn back to the paddock, standing there for 10 minutes while behaving beautifully, then she galloped 1 1/2 m under regular exercise rider Freddy Rodriguez early Friday morning.

**Zipessa (Filly & Mare Turf)** – Empyrean Stables' Zipessa, the star of owner Patrick Gallagher's three-horse stable, galloped 1 1/4m Friday morning with exercise rider Jose Alvarado aboard.

Zipessa, fifth in last year's Filly & Mare Turf, is trained by Mike Stidham, who will seek his first World Championships victory in eight tries Friday afternoon with Moon Dash in the Juvenile Fillies Turf.

"I'd like to see (jockey) Joe (Bravo) let her settle wherever that is and have a target to run at like he did in the First Lady," Stidham said of Zipessa, who tracked the leader in the First Lady at Keeneland before pulling away to victory.

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