



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

Distaff Notes Thursday, Nov. 2, 2017

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Abel Tasman – The China Horse Club International and Clearsky Farms' filly trained by Bob Baffert will try to become the 11th 3yo filly to win the Distaff. She has won four Grade I races this year and was second in her most recent start, the Cotillion, Sept. 23 at Parx.

"She's one of our favorites in the barn. She's so sweet," Baffert said. "She has the temperament of American Pharoah. She's doing really well, but she comes off the pace. She needs a lot of pace to run at. If she doesn't get the pace she's in trouble."

Baffert said that while there could be a lively pace in the Distaff, a closer like Abel Tasman could have trouble making up ground at Del Mar.

"Speed is dangerous here," he said. "They keep going here."

Abel Tasman galloped 1 1/2m under Dana Barnes Thursday morning.

Champagne Room – Sharon Alesia, Ciaglia Racing, Exline-Border Racing, Gulliver Racing and Robin Christensen's Champagne Room jogged a mile early Thursday morning under exercise rider Eddie Inda for trainer Peter Eurton.

Champagne Room will break from the rail under Mario Gutierrez and for Eurton the key to the 1 1/8m race will be the first part.

"I'd like to see her relax early, be running free and not covered up," Eurton said of Champagne Room, who could join Beholder (2012-13) as the only filly to win the Juvenile Fillies and come back the next year and win the Distaff.

"I just hope there is no speed duel. I'd like to see Paradise Woods go out there and then maybe we can move two or three paths off the inside and not have somebody right alongside. The first half-mile will be everything."

Elate – Claiborne Farm and Adele Dilschneider's Elate went about her business as usual on Thursday morning, galloping a little over a mile on Del Mar's main track. Trainer Bill Mott followed while assistant trainer and son Riley led the dual Grade I-winning daughter of Medaglia d'Oro.

"All's well," Mott reported.

Elate looks extend Mott's record that stands at five Breeders' Cup Distaff wins, including Ajina (1997), Escena (1998), Unrivaled Belle (2010) and Royal Delta (2011 and 2012).

"I think you always kind of draw comparisons between the good ones," Mott said. "But she's a very straight-forward filly."

Forever Unbridled – Charles Fipke's Forever Unbridled continued to impress onlookers with her early morning work leading up to her second try in the Breeders' Cup Distaff. The 5yo mare left

under the cover of darkness at 6a.m. and galloped an easy 1 1/4m under Emerson Chavez, with trainer Dallas Stewart watching from the rail and assistant trainer Bentley Combs on pony.

Giving a brief moment of excitement for onlookers, the daughter of Unbridled's Song wheeled while jogging the opposite direction with her pony as she passed the finish line, just prior to turning around and breaking off into a gallop.

"She does that almost every day," assured Combs, who is starting his own stable Nov. 4. "It's her thing and we always know it's coming. She keeps you on your toes."

Mopotism – All eyes from trainer Doug O'Neill's staff will be on Reddam Racing's competitor Mopotism in hopes of seeing her fulfill what most believe is her potential.

Assistant trainer Leandro Mora, deputizing for O'Neill, said of the 3yo daughter of Uncle Mo: "She's a filly that's been against all the odds, all of the best around. We got her the same time as Nyquist (winner of the 2015 Breeders' Cup Juvenile and 2016 Kentucky Derby) so she's been around.

"She's always shown us that she's capable of doing more than she's shown us. When she worked against Pavel (last week), I thought to myself I believe she's got a chance. She went head-and-head with Pavel and looked very good. Overall, she's been training really well."

As to how the race might develop, Mora said, "She's not a front-runner. She'll probably be behind all of those champions from all over, but if nobody takes it [the lead], we could. We'll leave that up to our Italian jockey (Frankie Dettori). I think he'll try to keep her in a spot where she'll have a chance."

Paradise Woods – With only six career starts under her girth, Paradise Woods, in trainer Richard Mandella's words, "is a very good filly, who is in the learning process of racing. She's excitable, but not to a fault.

"She's had a day or two that didn't go right but she's had some that went very right. We're hoping for a good one on Friday.

"She likes the lead. She'll probably be there. She'll break good and I'm expecting her to be on the lead. We'll have to see if that spot's occupied."

The 3yo daughter of Union Rags finished her final preparations Thursday morning by going 1 1/2m at a steady gallop under exercise rider Janeen Painter.

Romantic Vision – The Spinster winner galloped 1 3/8m early this morning and continues to please trainer Rusty Arnold.

"She's very happy," he said. "She's handled the track good and she schooled great yesterday. She is going to run her race; it's just a matter of how good that is."

Romantic Vision drew the outside post eight for the 1 1/8m Distaff.

"I love the post," Arnold said. "There's a lot of speed in this race and we will not be near the lead this time. It's a different group and a different type of speed in here (than the Spinster). I see us laying fourth or fifth and we'll try to make a run at them."

Arnold trained Romantic Vision's dam, grand dam, and great grand dam, all owned and bred by G. Watts Humphrey. The Humphrey family has owned every mare on Romantic Vision's female side going back six decades.

"They are an extremely sound group of distance dirt horses that get better as they get older," Arnold said. "Likely Exchange won the Delaware Handicap at 5, Clear Mandate (out of Likely Exchange) won the Spinster at 5, this filly won the Spinster at 5. All of them had their best years at 5. Creme Fraiche (the 1985 Belmont Stakes winner, out of Likely Exchange) and Dream Scheme (a Grade 2 winner) also are from that family."

Stellar Wind – The favorite for the Distaff galloped 1 1/2m at 5:30 a.m. on her final morning officially in training.

The Distaff will be only Stellar Wind's fourth start of the year and could cap off an undefeated season.

"The design was to have her ready in March for the Santa Margarita," trainer John Sadler said. But we had historic rains in January and February and I didn't want to put her over a lot of sealed tracks. She didn't make the Santa Margarita so we went to the Apple Blossom. So she lost a little time at the beginning of the year due to weather.

"After that it was pretty routine – the Beholder and the Clement Hirsch. The other deviation was to skip the Zenyatta and train up to this. The Zenyatta was a little bit of a hard prep for her last year, when she had to work really hard to beat Beholder. We're going in fresher this year. Right or wrong I'm not really stressing. She's great and it would be nice if she wins but it's all gravy at this point."

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