



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

Longines Notes Thursday, Nov. 2, 2017

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OVERSEAS HORSES

With all the horses having cleared quarantine a total of 35 European Breeders' Cup challengers were seen out on the Del Mar track Thursday morning with the added excitement of seeing the 13-strong contingent from Ballydoyle out on the track for the first time since arriving on Monday evening.

Home of The Brave (Mile) was first out on to the track at 6:45 but he went to the starting gate first before heading on to the main track where he stretched his legs with a steady canter. Hugo Palmer, who leaves California tonight to supervise his runners in Australia, was pleased with the son of Starspangledbanner.

Gordon Elliott was also trackside to see his first Breeders' Cup runner **Beckford** (Juvenile Turf) canter two laps of the main track with Lisa O'Neill in the saddle.

"I am very happy with him at the moment. He is really well and I am very happy to be here," Elliott said.

Sands of Mali (Juvenile Turf) also went through his paces with his Yorkshire handler Richard Fahey also in attendance.

A total of 13 European horses went out on to the turf this morning. The Godolphin pair of **Masar** (Juvenile Turf) and **Wuheida** (Filly & Mare Turf) did a lap and a half of the turf with Queen's Trust (Filly & Mare Turf) also doing a steady canter.

Decorated Knight (Turf) looked extremely happy when striding out on the turf under his big race jockey Andrea Atzeni, and preparations appear to going according to plan. Frankie Dettori, the most successful British-based jockey at the Breeders' Cup was on board **Juliet Capulet** (Juvenile Fillies Turf) for trainer John Gosden and the daughter of Dark Angel appeared relaxed and settled as she did a lap and a half of the turf.

Rajasinghe (Juvenile Turf), **Nezwaah** (Filly & Mare Turf) and **Madeline** (Juvenile Fillies Turf) all seemed happy as they stretched their legs on the Del Mar turf.

Roger Varian is looking forward to the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf with his charge **Madeline**, who had a roll in the sand ring back at the Quarantine Barn after her morning's exercise. "She's looking well, or was before she just covered herself in sand," he remarked. Madeline has been catching the eye all week, looking at home in her Del Mar surroundings, and appearing to be thriving in California.

Turf Sprint challenger **Cotai Glory** found the tight bends of the Del Mar track a bit difficult to negotiate at first but having gone a circuit seemed a lot more at ease with the track.

Pascal Bary and Francis-Henri Graffard were both trackside to see **Senga** (Filly & Mare Turf) and **Karar** (Mile) stretch out on the turf.

Graffard said of Karar, who comes here off a close up third-place finish in the Group1 Prix de La Foret on his last start, “Karar is in good form, much better form than last year, but his draw in post 14 is not ideal.”

Suedois (Mile) looked in great shape as he cantered around the turf and Fergal Davis who has been overseeing Suedois’ preparation in the absence of trainer David O’Meara could not be more pleased with the son of Le Havre.

“He is really well in himself and I am happy, happy, happy. He will love the track and I don’t think he has been in better shape. I think he has got a great chance on Saturday.” Davis said.

Ulysees (Turf), who finished fourth in the race last year as a 3yo did his most serious piece of work since arriving, and with Kevin Bradshaw in the saddle did a nice breeze down the home stretch before returning to the barn.

With the turf track shut **Ribchester** was first out on to the dirt and did a steady canter of the main track before returning to the barn.

Trainer Richard Fahey was at the track for the first time on Thursday to see his Mile contender Ribchester bounce onto the track for a routine canter around the main track. “He’s fit, and he seems to have taken his last race in his stride. He’s traveled well out here, and I’m happy enough with him,” he said of Europe’s leading hope in the Mile.

Joseph O’Brien, who is no stranger to the Breeders’ Cup, was on a pony to escort **Now You’re Talking** (Juvenile Fillies Turf) around two laps of the dirt.

James Garfield (Juvenile Turf), the recent winner of the Mill Reef Stakes, has thrived since his arrival Sunday morning, and the George Scott-trained son of Exceed and Excel appears to be peaking at the right time.

The focus was now on the team from Ballydoyle and all 13 Breeders’ Cup hopes stretched their legs out on the Del Mar dirt

Defending champion **Highland Reel** (Turf) was first out and walked a circuit and a half of the track before going a gentle canter. All of the O’Brien team followed a similar pattern and all looked extremely well in their coats and seemed happy with their new surroundings apart from **Happily** (Juvenile Fillies Turf) who was reluctant at first to go out on to the track but once led out on to the main track by one of the outriders all seemed well.

Joining the O’Brien team on the dirt was the Andre-Fabre trained **Talismanic** (Turf) and **Zelzal** (Mile). Talismanic did nothing more than a gentle canter whilst Zelzal did his strongest piece of work since his arrival with a strong canter down the backstretch.

Marsha was the final European out on the track once again and with Luke Morris in the saddle the daughter of Acclamation, who will be going through the sale ring this month, did a gentle canter behind a pony before returning to the barn.

“I am very happy with her,” said William Butler, assistant trainer to Sir Mark Prescott. “But, I am just not sure how she will handle these bends.”

The Middle Park and Dewhurst Stakes double winner **U S Navy Flag** (Juvenile) looked extremely well in his coat as he walked and jogged around two laps of the track, and the son of War Front is undoubtedly in great shape ahead of what will be his first attempt on a dirt surface.

LONGINES TURF

Chad Brown (Beach Patrol and Fanciful Angel) — James Covello, Sheep Pond Partners and Head of Plains Partners’ Beach Patrol and Michael Dubb, Head of Plains Parters and Madaket Stables’ Fanciful Angel went through their preparations for Saturday’s \$4 million Longines Turf without a hitch Thursday morning. Each had routine gallops. Fanciful Angel went out earlier on his own, while Beach Patrol partnered up with promising 2yo Breeders’ Cup Juvenile runner Good Magic. While the latter two did not gallop together, they did walk, jog and return as a team, with 4 yo Beach Patrol obviously functioning in a bit of a mentoring role.

Beach Patrol will put himself in line for an Eclipse Award with a victory on Saturday, having won the Arlington Million and Joe Hirsch Turf Classic Invitational in his last two starts. Those two Grade 1 victories came in his only tries with rider Joel Rosario, who evidently clicks well with the compact son of Lemon Drop Kid.

“He’s a tricky horse to ride,” Rosario said. “We have teamed up a couple times and he seems to get along with me. He’s been training good in the morning, too. He’s tough in the gate, so you have to make sure you get him out. That may be the main thing, because once he’s out he’s a good mover and puts you there. I think you have to be stronger in your ride. He’ll run all day and has no problem with the distance on Saturday.”

Hunt – Thinking he may have a “horse for the course,” Phil D’Amato oozes confidence in his candidate for the Breeders’ Cup Turf.

“He loves this turf course,” he said enthusiastically of Hunt. “He’s won two stakes in a row on it. Flavien (jockey Flavien Prat) breezed him on the course last Sunday and said he thought he got hold of it really well and was full of energy. We know it’s a very deep field with some really nice horses in there, but one thing we have going for us is that we know this horse loves this turf course.

“Hunt drew pretty far out in the 11 post, but he’s got tactical speed so I’m not too worried about him. I just need to keep all my runners happy and healthy until they run and keep our fingers crossed.”

Oscar Performance – Amerman Racing’s Oscar Performance galloped 1 1/2m before the renovation break on the main track under exercise rider Arnoldo Orellana as he continued preparations for Saturday’s Turf.

Trained by Brian Lynch, Oscar Performance will attempt to become the first Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Turf winner to win the Turf, run at 1 1/2m.

Oscar Performance has been the Turf distance once, finishing third behind Beach Patrol in his most recent start in the Joe Hirsch Turf Classic.

“I don’t think he ran his race that day,” Lynch said. “(Jockey) Jose (Ortiz) put him in a tough spot and had him on the worst part of the course.”

Oscar Performance will break from the far outside 14 post Saturday.

“From the 14, I think he will get a great opportunity to find out if what I think is right,” Lynch said. “And it should be a fast and firm course.”

MILE

Heart to Heart – Terry Hamilton’s Heart to Heart galloped 1 1/8m early Thursday morning on the main track under exercise rider Arnoldo Orellana for trainer Brian Lynch.

A confirmed frontrunner, Heart to Heart figures to have company right off the bat from post position two with the speedy Midnight Storm breaking to his immediate inside.

“If he breaks well, maybe the others will say ‘OK’ and just let him go,” Lynch said of Heart to Heart, who will be ridden by Julien Leparoux.

“When we shorten him to a mile, there is always pace pressure. But, going longer he can shake loose.”

Midnight Storm – This 6yo son of Pioneerof the Nile is another runner that loves Del Mar’s Jimmy Durante Turf Course and trainer Phil D’Amato is counting on that to serving the turf expert well.

“He’s won five out of seven on it,” D’Amato said.

“What gives me more confidence is that it looks like he’s rounding back into his best form. We drew the rail so we’ll have to jump out of there and keep him on the engine, but he’s acting like his old self and I think he’ll give us everything he’s got.”

FILLY & MARE TURF

Avenge – Reprising last year's effort in the 1 ¼m Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf might be all Avenge needs in this 1 1/8m renewal of what has become one of the world championships' top attractions.

Avenge led nearly every step of the way in 2016 before being passed in the final strides to finish third, beaten a length. With the race an eighth of a mile shorter, could this 5yo daughter of War Front owned by Ramona Bass hold on to capture the top prize this year?

Trainer Richard Mandella owner Bass certainly hope so. "She will go to the lead," Mandella said. "That's her game and you can't take that away from her. We hope she's still there at the end."

She'll be leaving from post 12 under regular rider Flavien Prat.

Chad Brown (Lady Eli, Grand Jete, Dacita) — Chad Brown's tough trio of turf filly and mares Lady Eli, Grand Jete and Dacita continue to train well and went through routine gallops Thursday morning for the reigning Eclipse Award champion trainer.

Lady Eli, winner of the 2014 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf for Brown and owner Sheep Pond Partners, will be making her final start for her connections before selling at Keeneland's November Sale. She will look for redemption Saturday in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf when she gets a second crack at 2016 winner Queen's Trust, who nipped her at the wire.

"She's meant everything to us," Brown said. "She's the horse of a lifetime. We're very lucky to have had a lot of good times with her and she's never let us down. Hopefully she can come through one last time here on Saturday.

"She ran a terrific race last year, Queen's Trust just found more right at the end there and of course is a deserving winner," Brown continued. "It's frustrating, but I'm glad she's going to get another crack at it this year."

Juddmonte Farms' Grand Jete is the least heralded of the trio, having a mere Grade 3 victory and a pair of Grade 1 placings. Still her connections hold her in high regard and her appearance this week has impressed onlookers. She must improve upon a third last time in the Flower Bowl Invitational as the even-money favorite.

"Hopefully she can find some cover just off the pace," Brown said. "Obviously we didn't want to be on the lead last time. That would be ideal for her. I think she's a very talented filly who has developed over the course of the year. We feel like she's earned it. We felt by mid-summer that she was a Grade 1 mare and gave her a chance to get here and she got here. She'll also appreciate firm ground."

Sheep Pond Partners and Bradley Thoroughbreds' Dacita could play the role of spoiler on multiple levels for her stablemate Lady Eli. A victory Saturday would give her wins in both the Breeders' Cup and Beverly D. and put her in contention for an Eclipse Award. The five-time Grade/Group I winner will have to do it with a new jockey, as Irad Ortiz, Jr., aboard for her last seven tries, rides Lady Eli and Javier Castellano, aboard for the previous four, is aboard Grand Jete. Joel Rosario picks up the mount. Like Lady Eli, she makes her final start for her connections on Saturday. The Chilean-bred daughter of Scat Daddy is entered in Fasig-Tipton's November Sale.

"She's been a model of consistency for us," Brown said. "She's been very valuable to our operation. I'm very proud of her and she'll be hard to replace. I think Joel will fit her well. I just have that feeling. Unfortunately I had to take Irad (Ortiz, Jr.) off because he rides Lady Eli, but it is what it is and I think Joel will do a great job."

Rosario added: "She's a good filly and I'm very happy to get the ride. Del Mar is a little different because the sharp turns. It depends on your horse and how it sets up if you have to move earlier or not, but she's a talented filly. I feel good about her here."

Peter Bradley, whose Bradley Thoroughbreds pinhooked Lady Eli, owns part of Dacita and is looking forward to the first clash between the two, as well as one final run with his star pupil.

“When you win the Beverly D and are beaten a head by a nice filly in a Grade I at Belmont who you’re giving weight to, you have to be happy coming into this race,” Bradley said. “I’m so proud of her. She puts her A-game out there every time. The firm ground plays to her strengths, but the short stretch is obviously problematic. Depending on how this sets up, if we get the right trip, we’re as dangerous as anyone in the race. I’m cautiously optimistic.

“You have to savor the moment of any horse, but with one who has won multiple Grade I’s for us and beaten Tepin, she has shown that she’s one of the best of her generation.”

Lady Eli is one of four Breeders’ Cup horses running this weekend who were pinhooked by Bradley Thoroughbreds. The others were Alluring Star (Juvenile Fillies), Significant Form (Juvenile Fillies Turf) and Best Performance (Juvenile Fillies Turf).

Goodyearforroses – Abbondanza Racing and Medallion Racing’s Goodyearforroses took a turn on the Del Mar turf course Thursday morning for trainer Richard Baltas.

Runner-up in the John C. Mabee this summer in her lone Del Mar start, Goodyearforroses drew into the race Monday from off the preference list when Roly Poly opted to enter the Mile.

“I’d like to see her back off the pace,” Baltas said of Goodyearforroses, who will represent his seventh Breeders’ Cup starter. “The last time (an eighth-place finish in the Rodeo Drive Sept. 30 at Santa Anita), I put blinkers on her and she was a little too keen and too close to the pace. The blinkers are coming off for this.”

Ten-time Breeders’ Cup-winning rider Corey Nakatani will partner Goodyearforroses as he has since the 5yo mare arrived in the Baltas barn last fall. They will break from post position 13, a spot where two of Baltas’ previous Breeders’ Cup runners have started (Freedom Crest in the 2001 Classic and Flashy Ways in the 2012 Juvenile Fillies Turf).

War Flag – Joseph Allen’s War Flag galloped at Del Mar Thursday morning in preparation for a start in Saturday’s Filly & Mare Turf, thoroughly impressing trainer Shug McGaughey

“This is the first time, I’ve seen her on the (Del Mar) track. I was impressed with what I saw,” said McGaughey, who had never been to Del Mar before arriving for this year’s Breeders’ Cup. “After what I saw today, I’m looking forward to Saturday.”

The 4yo daughter of War Front launched her career in France last year, winning three of five starts and finishing second twice. The Kentucky-bred filly made her first two U.S. starts this year at Monmouth, where she closed from off the pace to win and optional claiming allowance June 18 before finishing a close second in the Matchmaker.

“She was kind of unlucky to lose the Matchmaker. She got carried out and the winner got through on the inside,” McGaughey said.

War Flag finished third in the Glens Falls at Saratoga before breaking through with a Grade 1 victory with a narrow decision over Dacita in the Flower Bowl at Belmont Park Oct. 8.

“She came back to Belmont and she really seemed to like that situation and trained good. We really went into the Flower Bowl with high expectations. We just hoped we were good enough,” the Hall of Fame trainer said.

McGaughey, who has saddled the winners of nine Breeders’ Cup races, will seek his first success in the Filly & Mare Turf Saturday. War Flag is no relation to My Flag and Storm Flag Flying, McGaughey’s Juvenile Fillies winners in 1995 and 2002, respectively.

Zipessa – Empyrean Stables’ Zipessa galloped 1 1/4m early Thursday morning under Jose Alvarado with trainer Mike Stidham on hand after arriving Wednesday afternoon from New Orleans where he has set up shop for the upcoming Fair Grounds meet.

Saturday will mark Zipessa’s second start in the Filly & Mare Turf and Stidham thinks the 2017 model is better than the one that finished fifth in last year’s race at Santa Anita going 1 1/4m.

“She is more mature and seasoned,” Stidham said of the 5yo daughter of City Zip. “She was always a little hyper and difficult to relax settle.

“Last year, by accident, she broke bad (in the Breeders’ Cup) and came running late. Joe (Bravo) gets along with her so well and he told me before the First Lady (Oct. 7 at Keeneland) that he was going to do the same thing and track the leaders and rate which they did.”

This year’s race is an eighth of a shorter than last year’s renewal.

“The mile and an eighth is much better for her,” Stidham said. “A mile to a mile and eighth are her best distances but she can get a mile and a quarter.”

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