



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

Distaff Notes Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2017

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Abel Tasman – Kentucky Oaks winner Abel Tasman galloped 1 ¼ m under Dana Barnes. Trainer Bob Baffert watched the filly train from the front side and said everything was going fine with her preparations for the race.

Champagne Room – Sharon Alesia, Ciaglia Racing, Exline-Border Racing, Gulliver Racing and Robin Christensen's Champagne Room galloped a mile early on the main track at Del Mar Wednesday morning under exercise rider Eddie Inda.

Winner of the 14 Hands Winery Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies last year, Champagne Room started 2017 with a third-place finish in the Las Virgenes at Santa Anita before going on the shelf in March with an ankle chip.

"We were thinking about a campaign at the end of the year for her," trainer Peter Eurton said. "It turned out to be a question of what race can I make (leading up to the Breeders' Cup)."

Eurton chose the Remington Park Oaks at 1 1/16m on Sept. 24 as the comeback race and Champagne Room responded with a front-running 3 3/4-length victory.

"We were thinking about the Cotillion (at Parx Racing on Sept. 23) but that looked a little tough and we thought about races at Charles Town and Churchill Downs," Eurton said. "The Remington race really fit well. It was six weeks and she has had three works. It was ideal."

Champagne Room is scheduled to have a paddock schooling session Wednesday afternoon.

Elate – At around 8:30 a.m., as part of the second post-break set, Claiborne Farm and Adele Dilschneider's standout sophomore filly Elate left Barn DD on Thursday morning and went through the paddock en route to an easy mile gallop over the Del Mar main track. The daughter of Medaglia d'Oro was led by assistant trainer Riley Mott, whose father and Hall of Fame conditioner Bill Mott was also on foot.

"She just had an easy morning," the younger Mott said. "She went through the paddock and galloped and came back. She's happy. She covers a lot of ground with that big stride and likes the track. She's a laid-back filly, but she can be stubborn sometimes. She's smart. She recognizes people and decides who she does and doesn't like."

Elate enters with an Eclipse Award on the line for the 3yo filly division and must defeat the last horse to beat her, four-time Grade I winner Abel Tasman, to do so. She will be looking for her third consecutive Grade 1 victory, having taken Saratoga's Alabama in August and Belmont's Beldame Invitational in September.

Forever Unbridled – Charles E. Fipke’s homebred multiple Grade 1 winner Forever Unbridled had a similar morning on Wednesday as Tuesday, heading to the track at 6 a.m. with assistant trainer Bentley Combs leading her on pony. She galloped and an easy 1 1/4m under a snug hold from exercise rider Emerson Chavez. The 5yo daughter of Breeders’ Cup Juvenile winner Unbridled’s Song and Kentucky Oaks winner Lemons Forever will be looking to improve upon a solid third-place finish in last year’s Breeders’ Cup Distaff behind champions Beholder and Songbird.

Trainer Dallas Stewart expressed satisfaction in the condition of his seven-time winner and earner of more than \$2 million.

“She’s undefeated this year,” Stewart said. “I’m very happy with her. She’s in great shape and couldn’t be doing any better. She appears to be a little stronger and bigger and I feel like she’s very healthy.”

Last out, in the Personal Ensign, Forever Unbridled defeated Songbird at equal weights at Saratoga. A victory by her on Friday at the expense of fellow divisional heavyweight Stellar Wind would likely make her champion older mare.

Stellar Wind and Forever Unbridled have faced off twice in their careers. In the 2015 Kentucky Oaks, Stellar Wind was fourth, while Forever Unbridled was 11th — one of only two off-the-board efforts in 16 career races. In last year’s Distaff, Forever Unbridled bested Stellar Wind by 2 1/2 lengths as her John Sadler-trained rival finished directly astern in fourth.

Mopotism – Though winless since February, Mopotism is set to take on the best of her class again in spite of her light regard from Del Mar’s morning-line maker. She is listed at odds of 30-1.

Mopotism’s regular rider Mario Gutierrez will ride 2016 Juvenile Fillies champion Champagne Room, so international star Frankie Dettori has the call.

Mopotism was sent out Wednesday for a 1 1/2m gallop.

Paradise Woods – A walk through the paddock and a standing invitation at the Del Mar gate preceded a 1 1/2m gallop for trainer Richard Mandella’s Union Rags filly as her preparation for Friday’s Distaff moved forward.

In a field deep in talent and experience, Paradise Woods carries a morning line of 9-2, fifth best among the eight females. The 3yo filly has three wins and a second in her six starts and comes to Friday’s showdown from a scintillating victory in Santa Anita’s Zenyatta Stakes.

Longtime Mandella exercise rider Janeen Painter was up for the morning exercise and Flavien Prat, the only jockey the filly has known, will ride for the seventh time.

Romantic Vision – The connections of Romantic Vision – owner/breeder G. Watts Humphrey and trainer Rusty Arnold – are playing with house money after having their travel and entry fees paid via the Breeders’ Cup Challenge “Win and You’re In” program. The 5yo mare will make her final start Friday and any additional black type or earnings she picks up will be icing on the cake.

“My expectation is for her to run her race and if she does that I’ll be happy,” Arnold said. “I’m just hoping she makes a good showing. A placing would be great and that’s what we’re looking for.”

Humphrey is a third-generation horseman with a broodmare band that has bloodlines he personally has cultivated for as many as seven generations. The Humphrey family has owned every mare on Romantic Vision’s female side going back at least six decades to those owned by G. Watts Humphrey’s grandfather, George M. Humphrey, a prominent horse owner who served as Secretary of Treasury under Dwight Eisenhower.

Arnold confirmed this week that the Distaff will be Romantic Vision’s last run before she heads to Shawnee Farm to add another generation to that line.

“She will be retired after this race and be bred in the spring,” Arnold said.

The daughter of Lemon Drop Kid was out at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday for a 1 1/2m gallop that Arnold deemed “excellent.” She can be seen schooling in the paddock during Wednesday’s sixth race.

Stellar Wind – The morning line favorite for the Distaff hit the track at 5:30 a.m. per her normal routine, galloping 1 1/2m in advance of her final start Friday.

“It was a strong gallop that looked very good,” trainer John Sadler said.

On Tuesday she schooled in the paddock without incident and will repeat the routine this afternoon during the second race.

The six-time Grade 1 winner drew post two for her career finale, which Sadler was fine with.

“I think at a mile and an eighth, with eight horses, everyone should be able to work out the trip that they want,” Sadler said. “I’d always prefer to be outside of the speed horses and we’re inside of the real speed but I think it’ll be OK for her.”

Stellar Wind was pulled from Keeneland’s November Breeding Stock Sale last year, which was always the hope if she was still sound and game for another year of racing after the Breeders’ Cup. This time, though, there is no thought that she might come back to run at six.

“We’re down here with a small group of horses so we’re just enjoying every minute that we still have with her,” Sadler said. “She loves her peppermints so we’re going to put some in her travel bag when she goes back. I actually have to go to Kentucky for the sale so I’ll be over there with her a couple days. We’re just enjoying her and it’ll be sad when she walks out of here.”

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