



Breeders' Cup World Championships Friday, Nov. 1 and Saturday, Nov. 2

Wednesday Notes Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2019

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SPRINT

Catalina Cruiser – The multiple graded-stakes winner had a standard gallop Wednesday morning under the watch of trainer John Sadler as he seeks what would be his first career Grade I win should he pull off the victory in the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Sprint.

“Other than the Breeders' Cup last year, he's won everything so he's doing well,” said Sadler, referencing Catalina Cruiser's sixth-place finish in last year's Dirt Mile. “We're looking forward to this one on Saturday.”

Engage – Woodford Racing's Steve Asmussen-trained Breeders' Cup Sprint entrant Engage continues to fly under the radar as he prepares for his toughest test, but assistant trainer Scott Blasi believes he belongs in what many consider the classiest race of Breeders' Cup weekend.

“Physically, he's doing great and he won a Win and You're In at Keeneland, the Phoenix, and deserves a chance,” Blasi said. “He's a closing sprinter in a race with a lot of speed and should run a good race.”

Engage was last seen closing well to win the aforementioned Phoenix (G2) at Keeneland in fine style. The win was his second in a row and fifth lifetime from 12 starts. He will have the services of Hall of Famer John Velazquez when he breaks from post five of 10. He has been given morning-line odds of 15/1.

Firenze Fire – Mr. Amore Stable's Firenze Fire jogged 4f and galloped 5f Wednesday morning at Santa Anita, where the 4yo son of Poseidon's Warrior is scheduled to start in Saturday's Sprint.

Firenze Fire's ability to close from off the pace in a race with several horses with high early speed could serve him well.

“We were kind of feeling the same way. But sometimes you get those races with a lot of speed and everyone's thinking the same thing – ‘I don't want to get killed’ – and they all take them off the lead,” trainer Jason Servis said. “Even in a claiming race, you think there's a lot of speed and everyone gets taken off the lead. But I'm happy with the post [three] and happy with the speed in the race.”

Firenze Fire made a strong move to take the lead in the stretch in the Sept. 28 Vosburgh at Belmont Park, only to lose by a nose to a resurgent Imperial Hint, who ran 6f in 1:08 1/5.

“We're concerned coming off that big Beyer, that big race, but you can't win if you're not in,” Servis said.

Firenze Fire, who launched his career with a debut victory at Monmouth Park and a victory in the Sanford Stakes at Saratoga, is a multiple graded-stakes winner who will make his first start in the Breeders' Cup Sprint Saturday. He finished off the board in the 2017 Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Del Mar and fourth in the 2018 Dirt Mile at Churchill Downs.

“He turned out to be a nice horse. When he broke his maiden, I was surprised. He wasn’t the favorite. When he won [the Sanford], I said, ‘What do we have here?’” Servis said. “He’s been a really good horse.”

Imperial Hint – Raymond Mamone’s Imperial Hint jogged 1m and galloped 1m under exercise rider Alejandro Contreras Wednesday morning at Santa Anita for Saturday’s Sprint.

“He got a little rank there. It’s good that he didn’t run off. He was turning his head to the inside, because he wanted to go,” trainer Luis Carvajal Jr. said. “It’s him. That’s what he does when he’s fresh and has a day off and then just jogs the next day. He’ll test you.”

Imperial Hint, who finished second in the 2017 Sprint at Del Mar and third in last year’s Sprint at Churchill Downs, will be ridden by Javier Castellano Saturday. The Hall of Fame jockey has been aboard ‘The Little Rocket’ for all four of his G1 victories.

“He has won for [Trevor] McCarthy, Julian Pimentel, [Antonio] Gallardo, but it seems like the smaller the jockey, the better he sits on the horse,” Carvajal said. “You don’t want a taller jockey. It’s a little more comfortable, especially when he starts pulling. That’s my way of thinking. I could be wrong, but Javier fits just right in there.”

Mitole – William and Corinne Heiligbrodt’s Steve Asmussen-trained Breeders’ Cup Sprint favorite Mitole walked the shedrow one day after breezing an easy 3f in 37 2/5 over the Santa Anita main track. The son of Eskendereya has shown immense sprinter and miler speed, while continuing to impress onlookers, including assistant trainer Scott Blasi, who has watched him develop into a three-time G1-winning earner of \$2 million. This season, the bay colt has won five of six races.

“He looks good,” Blasi said. “I’ll put it to you this way. He’s the fastest one from pole to pole that we have right now, but it’s hard to rank him against some of the best ones we’ve had. Majesticperfection was really a talented fast horse like him, but he got hurt early and we never got to see what he could do. Mitole is a Met Mile and three-time Grade 1 winner this year of real races and won eight of his last nine. The two months between his last race and now should freshen him up.”

Shancelot – Immensely swift sophomore Shancelot continues to give trainer Jorge Navarro confidence that he will be able to land his first Grade 1 on Saturday in the Sprint, a race his conditioner placed in with Private Zone in 2015. On Wednesday, the son of Shanghai Bobby left Barn 7 and jogged one lap and galloped one more at just past 7 a.m.

“I love my chances,” Navarro said. “This is the second time I’ve been this confident. The last time was with X Y Jet in Dubai this year and we won the (Dubai Golden) Shaheen. (Shancelot) is a cool, quiet horse to be around, but once he sees the gate, he transforms into a beast, just like Private Zone used to. He just wants to get in there.

“He’s a sprinter and we’ve always known he was one, so when we won at first asking (Feb. 16 at Gulfstream Park), we knew he wasn’t a Derby horse, so I told the owners to keep him sound and point to the big races at the end of the year,” Navarro continued. “We knew with how he ran first out and how easily he was doing it, that he was a serious horse. He doesn’t act like a sprinter. He’s very laid back, but when you take him outside and show him the gate, he’s ready to fight.”

FILLY & MARE SPRINT

Come Dancing – Trainer Carlos Martin was all smiles Wednesday after his 5yo mare Come Dancing completed her morning exercise routine under exercise rider Francisco Tapia at Santa Anita.

“She looked sensational,” he said. “We got her out right before the track closed because it was a little quieter and she was able to gallop about a mile and an eighth. She looked super. Came off the track happy. Did not miss an oat last night. Right now, I’m pretty pleased with the way that Come Dancing is coming into the Breeders’ Cup.”

While Come Dancing is Martin's first Breeders' Cup horse, he was at racing's signature event 32 years ago when his father, Jose, trained Sprint runner-up Groovy. His grandfather, Hall of Famer Frank Martin Sr. won the first running of the Juvenile Fillies with Outstandingly in 1984.

Martin said Come Dancing has settled in at Santa Anita and so has he. Gone is the nervousness that he felt at the post position draw Monday after the mare was shipped from New York.

"It's a different kind of feeling. Now I am calm and relaxed and excited," he said. "Worried was probably the proper term, when you get her on that plane and get her over here. Just those first few days watching her train and just making sure that everything is fine. These horses can be fragile, they can be tough. Thank God the temperature has been nice and cool so it's kind of been the same for her.

"But you always worry about a horse getting sick, any time you do any kind of traveling. Now I am still excited, but calm is probably the better word to describe me watching her go the last couple of days."

Come Dancing, the 5-2 second choice in the wagering will be ridden by Javier Castellano from post four in the field of nine.

Covfefe – LNJ Foxwood's Filly & Mare Sprint morning-line favorite Covfefe made her first appearance at Santa Anita Wednesday and has her trainer Brad Cox excited about her chances in Saturday's race. The 3yo Into Mischief filly has won four of five races this year heading into the Breeders' Cup.

"She's the queen," Cox said. "She means a lot to us. She's fast. She's an unbelievable talent. I know there's some question with the post, but she's two for two from the one hole. It's going to be all about the first quarter, first three-eighths of a mile. It will be all about where she can lay and how comfortable she can be. If she's comfortable down the backstretch, she's as fit as any racehorse can get and she's worked as well as any racehorse can work. She's going to be tough. I really like her and I'm excited about her."

Spiced Perfection – Pantofel Stable, Wachtel Stable and Peter Deutsch's Spiced Perfection will try to end the season in savory fashion Saturday when the Peter Miller-trained daughter of Smiling Tiger starts as one of the main players in the Filly & Mare Sprint. After galloping 1m at San Luis Rey Downs Wednesday morning to her conditioner's satisfaction, Miller expressed confidence that a victory could have championship ramifications.

"Obviously if she were to win, she could be a champion and I believe whoever wins it likely will be crowned this year," Miller said. "It's a defining race and I think she'll actually be better suited to the seven-eighths than the six furlongs last time she won at winning the TCA at Keeneland. Seven-furlong races develop a little slower with the pace and she won the La Brea here at Santa Anita at the distance.

"My only worry going in is she did miss a work because she grabbed a quarter really bad in the TCA," he added. "That prevented us from working her one more time. She actually grabbed one the week before the TCA, but she wound up being ok. She's a tough filly."

TVG JUVENILE

Dennis' Moment – If pressure is a privilege, consider trainer Dale Romans suitably blessed. The Louisville, Kentucky, native has brought well-regarded horses to the Breeders' Cup in the past, but none has shouldered the level of buzz TVG Breeders' Cup Juvenile morning-line favorite Dennis' Moment currently has upon him. And with the defection of Grade I winner Maxfield from the Juvenile lineup, the already lofty expectations for Albaugh Family Stables' colt have been cranked up that much more.

"It's a whole different type of pressure," said Romans, whose three career Breeders' Cup wins have all been upsets in the form of Tapitsfly (2009 Juvenile Fillies Turf), Court Vision (2011 Mile), and Little Mike (2012 Turf). "When you run a longshot that you like, only good things can happen. When you run the favorite and you're supposed to win, it's a different type of pressure. But it's very much a privilege. And all pressure is self-induced."

Dennis' Moment has done nothing to dispel his hype during his time in California, and Wednesday's gallop and gate schooling session under Tammy Fox was no different. His good mind and unflappable demeanor have allowed him to make everything look routine and, most important, Romans and Fox say his stride has

remained as fluid over the Santa Anita Park main track as it has been at Churchill Downs and Ellis Park, the sites of his two career victories.

“He’s the same, he just bounces over it. He went so good today, it’s incredible,” Romans said. “This horse deserves to win. Second is not good enough for him.”

Eight Rings – Eight Rings, the American Pharoah-winning colt by Empire Maker, stood in the gate for exercise rider Humberto Gomez then galloped 1m.

Assistant trainer Jimmy Barnes said that colt did their exercise with high energy.

Shoplifted – Grandview Equine, Cheyenne Stables and LNJ Foxwoods’ Steve Asmussen-trained Shoplifted, who will attempt to steal the show in Saturday’s Juvenile, left Barn 59 on Wednesday morning and galloped 1¼m over the main track at Santa Anita Park with exercise rider Angel Garcia aboard, according to assistant trainer Scott Blasi.

“He’s fine,” Blasi said. “He just did an easy gallop.”

The Grade 1-placed son of Into Mischief will attempt to improve upon his fifth last out in the American Pharoah Stakes over the same 1 1/16m course and distance of the Juvenile. He breaks from post three of eight and will be ridden by Ricardo Santana Jr., who was aboard for his lone victory on debut at Saratoga on July 27.

Wrecking Crew – Rockingham Ranch and David Bernsen’s Peter Miller-trained Juvenile hopeful Wrecking Crew came out of his leisurely 3f breeze Tuesday in fine shape, according to his conditioner, and walked the shedrow Wednesday morning.

“He came out great from the work,” Miller said. “There’s a lot of questions he needs to answer in this race. We don’t know if he wants to run two turns and it’s hard to gauge so far. He has a lot of talent and he’ll have to move forward at the same time. I do believe we haven’t see his best yet, though.”

An \$875,000 purchase—a shocking figure considering sire Sky Kingdom stands for a mere \$5,000—the dark bay ridgling has raced three times. He broke his maiden at first asking July 27 at Del Mar over 6f. Two weeks later, he was a good second after a slow start in the Best Pal at Del Mar, which was three weeks before once again finishing second in the Del Mar Futurity.

He breaks from post two of eight Saturday in the Juvenile and will be ridden by Paco Lopez for the first time.

“It’s a tough race,” Miller explained. “We’ve got speed, but he’s not been a good gate horse. That’s one of the reasons we worked him out of the gate a week and a half ago.”

The promising ridgling must overcome a two-month layoff, while also stretching out to a two-turn route for the first time.

“In a perfect world, we would have had one more prep at Santa Anita (in the Grade 1 American Pharoah), so it’s not ideal to not have had that race, but he was battling some ulcers and we needed to treat them. We got them under control and he’s 100 percent now.”

JUVENILE FILLIES

Doug O’Neill (Comical, Juvenile Fillies; Lazy Daisy, Juvenile Fillies; War Beast, Juvenile Turf) – O’Neill’s two-pronged lineup for the Juvenile Fillies each galloped Wednesday morning with assistant trainer Leandro Mora looking on the apron.

Both Comical and Lazy Daisy are co-owned by Colorado Avalanche defenseman Erik Johnson, who races under the nom de course ERJ Racing LLC, and each filly has managed to give Johnson a taste of high-level success in the sport. Comical captured the first stakes of the Saratoga meet when she took the Schuylerville with Lazy Daisy prevailing in the Pocahontas Stakes at Churchill Downs on Sept. 14.

“Lazy Daisy has been showing a lot of promise in here, she’s been galloping like a really good one,” said Mora, assistant to trainer Doug O’Neill. “If you see her gallop, you would probably pick her over quite a few fillies.

“With Comical, she’s typical of her sire type (Into Mischief). She wants to get over with it just like (former O’Neill trainee and two-time Breeders’ Cup winner) Goldencents. She has a big stride for a little filly.”

Johnson also co-owns Juvenile Turf contender War Beast, who galloped along with Comical at around 6:30 a.m. under Amir Cedeno.

“Everyone is doing fantastic, really, really well,” O’Neill said.

Mark Casse (Peace Achieved and Proven Strategies, Juvenile Turf; Perfect Alibi and Two Sixty, Juvenile Fillies) – Peace Achieved, Perfect Alibi, and Two Sixty all went through routine gallops Wednesday with Kim Carroll aboard the first two and Shane Tripp taking up the reins on Two Sixty. Proven Strategies walked the shedrow after arriving Tuesday.

His looks have caused more than one observer to mistake him for his classic-winning stablemate War of Will, but Peace Achieved has earned attention on his own merit. The son of Declaration of War has won his past three starts and overcame ground trainer Mark Casse didn’t think the colt thrived on while taking the Bourbon Stakes at Keeneland on Oct. 6.

“I thought he may actually get beat in the Bourbon,” Casse said. “Here, he got a great post which is important. A couple times I’ve come out here with horses I thought could win the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Turf and they drew the 14 hole. He drew a great post (three). He has good natural speed. He’ll like the sharper turns and he’ll like the firmer ground. I think he has a big chance.”

Perfect Alibi is already a veteran of sorts with five career starts, two graded wins, and a top-level triumph in the Spinaway Stakes to her credit heading into the Juvenile Fillies. Tracy Farmer’s filly finished second last time out in the Alcibiades at Keeneland where she too caught a surface her conditioner feels didn’t play to her strengths.

“I knew going down the backside at Keeneland she was going to have trouble,” Casse said. “She’s a big, big filly and the track was extremely loose opening day at Keeneland. I could see her struggling. I’m just hoping she gets over this racetrack a little bit better.”

Gary Barber’s Two Sixty is taking a big jump in class after winning the FTBOA Florida Sire My Dear Girl Stakes on Sept. 28.

“In her races, she beat a real average bunch but she ran fast,” Casse said. “If you compare her to the colt division (of the Florida Sire Stakes), she ran as fast as that winner did. She’s a little better than she looks maybe on paper.”

Bast – Juvenile Fillies candidate Bast, winner of the Chandelier, went out to the track with Manny Avila, stood in the gate and then galloped 1 3/8m.

British Idiom – The Alcibiades winner British Idiom made her first trip to the Santa Anita track Wednesday morning at 6:45 along with stablemate and Breeders’ Cup Filly & Mare Sprint favorite Covfefe. The two fillies arrived along with three other Brad Cox trainees arrived Tuesday on a flight from Kentucky.

“She’s doing well,” Cox said. “I really like the way this filly is coming into the race. Her two works post Alcibiades have been fantastic. I think she’s coming into this race every bit as good as she did the Alcibiades. I think there’s going to be some speed in there. Hopefully she’ll relax right off it. She’ll be close to it, but not it. That’s what I’m seeing on paper. If she can relax and give us the race she gave us in the Alcibiades, she’s going to be tough in there.”

Donna Veloce – Donna Veloce, whose name translates from Italian to “fast woman,” certainly lived up to that billing in her racing debut with a dominating victory by nearly 10 lengths. In continuing preparation for Saturday’s Juvenile Fillies, the morning-line favorite galloped 1 3/8m Wednesday morning after backtracking to the 5f pole under regular exercise rider Ivan DeSilvo.

Despite that front-running victory, trainer Simon Callaghan believes she doesn’t need the lead.

“She has brilliant speed, but I don’t think she needs to be in front,” Callaghan said. “She’s is a versatile filly who’s shown us she can rate. Of course you never know how far they’ll go until they actually run the distance, but I believe with her breeding, she should get the mile and one-sixteenth.”

K P Dreaming – K P Dreaming stood in the gate, then stretched her legs with a 1 1/2m gallop Wednesday in advance of Saturday’s Juvenile Fillies. Patrice Roux was in the irons for trainer Jeff Mullins.

“I thought she was still traveling well after the wire of her last race,” Mullins said. “She appears to be just now coming to herself. Because she runs from off the pace, I’m hoping they help us by running a little faster up front on Saturday.”

Wicked Whisper – Wicked Whisper walked the shedrow Wednesday morning at Santa Anita.

The Siena Farms-bred daughter of 2015 Breeders’ Cup Dirt Mile winner Liam’s Map will be owners Alex and JoAnn Lieblong’s third starter in the Breeders’ Cup. Telling ran twice in the Breeders’ Cup Turf, finishing seventh in 2009 and sixth in 2010, in their colors.

“We’re really excited about her and we’re looking forward to being at the Breeders’ Cup,” Alex Lieblong said. “(Assistant trainer) Scott (Blasi) seems high on her. I was a little worried watching her last work when it looked like she was running into traffic. But, she’s like that. If you need her to slow down, she will. She’s not a run off type.”

BIG ASS FANS DIRT MILE

Mr. Money – Allied Racing Stable and Spendthrift Farm’s Mr. Money had a get-acquainted session with the Santa Anita main track Wednesday morning, galloping 1 1/2m under exercise rider Simon Camacho in preparation for Saturday’s Dirt Mile.

Fourth in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile last year at 41-1 odds, Mr. Money is the only starter from that race competing in this year’s World Championships.

“How about that,” trainer Bret Calhoun said of the Kentucky-bred colt who arrived here from Churchill Downs early Tuesday afternoon. “You never can predict what kind of year you are going to have and I can’t complain about the year he has had.”

After two off-the-board finishes at Fair Grounds, Mr. Money went on a tear of four consecutive Grade 3 victories before a narrow defeat in the \$1 million Pennsylvania Derby.

“There are always a lot of highs and lows,” Calhoun said. “He didn’t make the Kentucky Derby but he really kicked off his year on Derby Day in the Pat Day Mile.

Omaha Beach – Hall of Fame trainer Richard Mandella reported Dirt Mile favorite Omaha Beach came out of his final work Tuesday in good shape and remains on target for Saturday’s race.

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