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CHAMPION AMERICAN PHAROAH WORKS BULLET FIVE FURLONGS TOWARD KENTUCKY DERBY; 35-YEAR CLOCKER SAYS HE MIGHT BE BEST HE'S EVER SEEN

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, April 26, 2015) – Zayat Stables' American Pharoah, the champion 2-year-old of 2014 and probable morning-line favorite for the \$2 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (GI), worked five furlongs in :58.40 Sunday morning at Churchill Downs. The work was the fastest of 32 at the distance.

"I have been doing this for 35 years," said private clocker and bloodstock agent **Gary Young**, "and he might be the best horse I've ever seen. He's simply like **Michael Jordan** and stays in the air like he did in his rookie year. He stays in the air longer than any horse and you get the feeling that there's not one gear left, but he may have two, three or four gears."

Arriving early Sunday afternoon from Southern California for the Derby were **Dortmund**, **Firing Line** and **Bolo**.

Also on the Churchill Downs work tab Sunday for the \$1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) were two-time Oaks-winning trainer **Larry Jones'** hopefuls: **I'm a Chatterbox** (1:01) and **Lovely Maria** (:59.60), who put in five-furlong works with their race riders aboard, and **Donegal Racing's Puca** (:48.20) and **Regis Racing's Shook Up** (:49.60), who both worked a half-mile.

KENTUCKY DERBY NOTES

AMERICAN PHAROAH/DORTMUND – Zayat Stables' American Pharoah provided some heat on a raw morning at Churchill Downs Sunday with a bullet workout – the fastest of the day at the distance – covering five furlongs in :58.40 under jockey Martin Garcia.

The Arkansas Derby (G1) winner, who is likely to be the betting favorite in the 141st Kentucky Derby, turned in split times of 11.40; 23, 34.60 and 46.40. He galloped out six furlongs in 1:11.40. It was American Pharoah's first work since he won the Arkansas Derby by eight lengths on April 11.

"He's where we want him to be," Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert said. "He hasn't regressed. He looks great. It was pretty exciting to come in here on a nice, cool day, so everything worked out. From here on out we have to keep him happy."

Baffert's other Derby candidate, unbeaten Dortmund, had his final Derby work at Santa Anita and arrived at Churchill Downs early Sunday afternoon.

As he typically does, Baffert watched the workout from the grandstand side of the track so he could see the colt run down the stretch to the wire. With Baffert were the colt's owner Ahmed Zayat and his son, Justin, the stable's racing manager. Baffert was worried about the track conditions because of the rain overnight, but said the surface was in great shape.

Baffert liked what he saw on the track and did not give Garcia any instructions on the walkie talkie.

"He was just clipping along," Baffert said. "Usually, I talk to him, but I just left him alone. He was doing it in hand, but that's the way he works. Mr. Zayat was wondering if he was going too fast, but he hasn't seen him. That's how he works in California. He does things really effortlessly. He galloped out strong, came back and wasn't blowing. He handled it well."

Baffert said the toughest task in the week would be controlling the owner, an enthusiastic, outgoing man who has three Derby candidates with as many trainers. American Pharoah is the most accomplished of the trio and has won four straight by a total of 22 ³/₄ lengths since his disappointing debut at Del Mar last summer.

"He's such a nice horse," Baffert said. "I'm just fortunate that I would be lucky enough that he sent him to me and I have him. I could have drawn the short stick and gotten another horse. I'm just happy that he's given me this horse and has gotten me in this position."

Baffert has won the Kentucky Derby three times – Silver Charm (1997), Real Quiet (1998) and War Emblem (2002) -- and drew laughter with his response to a question about how he would react to a fourth victory.

"It's been so long I've forgotten," he said. "That's the past right there. It was so long ago it doesn't matter. This horse is totally different than those other horses. Every horse is different. They have a different personality, a different style. He's made differently. He moves differently than those other horses. He's a very exciting horse. You've all just witnessed the way he trains. That's been him. When he runs, he shows a dimension. He surprises me every time that I run him. I'm looking forward and hope everything goes well. But he still needs racing luck. You have to get a decent post, you need to break well and get the trip. A lot can happen, so I really don't take anything for granted."

Baffert noted that Zayat's horses have been second in the Derby three times. He referenced the Seattle Seahawks' loss on a play in the final seconds of the Super Bowl and said you cannot get ahead of yourself in these types of situations.

"I saw the (Seattle coach) Pete Carroll deal and what he had to go through. I've been there," Baffert said. "Right now we just have to contain ourselves. It's exciting to be here with two good horses, him and Dortmund. It's going to be a long week and hopefully it will go quickly. He looks great today. Every day is a different day."

Zayat said he wanted to look ahead and not spend much time reflecting on the runner-up finishes.

"I want to focus on the positive, and there's a lot," he said. "I'm very proud of my horse, my horses – I have two others in the Derby. I'm very proud of my trainer. This is one different horse. I don't know, other than the fact that we bred him. His daddy, Pioneer of the Nile ran in the Derby and almost got it done for us. His mommy, Little Princess Emma, named after my daughter, we raced her, we loved her. He is totally Zayat blood from A to Z. If you want to be in the Derby and you want to come with a horse that you feel would have a decent chance that would be the one. For that, it means a lot for us. It's a privilege just to be here. It's a humbling experience."

American Pharoah will be ridden by two-time Derby winner Victor Espinoza.

BOLD CONQUEST – The Ackerley Brothers Farm's Bold Conquest galloped a mile and a half Sunday under exercise rider Abel Flores and is scheduled to work Monday for trainer Steve Asmussen.

The colt, who stands 22nd in the Kentucky Derby points standings and isn't assured a spot in the body of the Derby field, is coming off a fifth-place finish in the Arkansas Derby (GI). "We're training him," Asmussen said. "We get to see how he's doing."

BOLO – Golden Pegasus Racing and Earle Mack's Bolo was aboard a Tex Sutton charter flight out of Ontario in Southern California Sunday that landed in Louisville shortly before noon. Also on the plane were Kentucky Derby 141 starters Dortmund and Firing Line.

Bolo, a Temple City colt who is trained by veteran California conditioner Carla Gaines, was vanned to Churchill Downs and took up residence in Barn 45. He was joined by his groom, Daniel Marquez, along with his exercise rider, Tony Rubalcaba, who had flown a red-eye out of LAX to be on hand for their charge's arrival. Gaines plans to join in on the fun on Monday.

Bolo was third in the Santa Anita Derby behind Dortmund on April 4 in his latest try. The dark bay will be handled in Saturday's mile and a quarter classic by California's top rider, Rafael Bejarano.

CARPE DIEM/ITSAKNOCKOUT/MATERIALITY/STANFORD – You have your busy days and your not so busy ones on the road to the Kentucky Derby. A serious participant in the annual fest – and with 40 starters in the race since the year 2000, trainer Todd Pletcher has gone way beyond casual in this quest – learns to ride the ups and downs and keep moving forward.

Sunday at Churchill Downs was one of those almost-as-slow-as-Vermont-molasses mornings, one that the Texas-born conditioner a chance to grab a deep breath, even though he's poised to add four more runners to his Derby credits when the 141st edition of the Run for the Roses unfolds this coming Saturday.

Pletcher's three Churchill based Derby colts -- Starlight Racing's Itsaknockout, Alto Racing's Materiality and Stonestreet Stables, Mrs. John Magnier, Derrick Smith and Michael Tabor's Stanford – all just took simple strolls around their Barn 40 shedrow Sunday, no heavy lifting required. The trainer had worked all three Friday, then jogged them Saturday and was happy with where they were.

"I like where they are with their training right now," he said. "Walking was the right thing to do today; give them a day off. They'll go back to the track tomorrow for gallops or jogs, we'll see."

On a second front, Pletcher had his staff at Keeneland put Blue Grass Stakes (GI) winner Carpe Diem through a one-mile jog around the Lexington oval. The WinStar Farm and Stonestreet Stables runner had worked at that track Saturday morning, so a follow-up jog day was just about par for the course in Pletcher's world.

"I'm headed over there now to give him a check and make sure all the arrangements are in place to bring him over here Monday," Pletcher said.

The seven-time Eclipse Award winner as the nation's top conditioner is all set on riders for three of his four runners. Hall of Famers John Velazquez will be at the controls for Carpe Diem; Javier Castellano will handle Florida Derby winner Materiality, and Luis Saez has the call on Itsaknockout. The assignment on Louisiana Derby runner-up Stanford has yet to be resolved.

"Still working on it," Pletcher said.

DANZIG MOON – John Oxley's Danzig Moon galloped a mile and half after the morning renovation break with exercise rider William Cano up. It was the first day back on the track for the Blue Grass Stakes (GI) runner-up since working a half-mile in :48.80 on Friday.

"He went pretty well this morning and tomorrow he will probably go to the paddock," said Norman Casse, assistant to father, trainer Mark Casse.

Danzig Moon was on the track the same time that American Pharoah was working.

“I saw him go by at the three-eighths pole and it looked like he was moving along pretty good,” Casse said with a laugh. “There have been plenty of circumstances in the past when something or another happens to a standout and somehow they get beat. We were kind of laughing about coming back watching all the people around (Bob) Baffert this morning. I’d rather have all those people with us after the race.”

EL KABIER – Zayat Stables’ El Kabeir came out of his half-mile work of :46.81 Saturday at Belmont Park in good order according to trainer John Terranova.

“Everything is great here and he is getting ready to ship this afternoon,” Terranova said. “He will get in early tomorrow morning, get the day off and go to the track Tuesday.”

FAR RIGHT – Harry Rosenblum and Robert LaPenta’s Far Right galloped a mile and a half after the renovation break with Laura Moquett aboard.

Far Right made the earliest debut of any possible Kentucky Derby entrant, running second in a 4 ½-furlong race at Keeneland on April 25 last year. Two weeks later he ran second going the same distance at Churchill Downs.

Rosenblum bought the Notional colt in a private purchase the first of July and Far Right was transferred to trainer Ron Moquett, who was very familiar with him.

“I saw his first race at Keeneland and he dropped the rider in the post parade and it took the outriders 15 minutes to catch him and they still put him back in the gate,” Moquett said. “The horse that beat him that day was Conquest Tsunami, who has won five of seven and three stakes. The horse that beat him here was Cinco Charlie and all he did was win the (William Walker) stake last night. Those are two good horses.”

In his first start for Moquett in September, he won a 6 ½-furlong maiden race by five lengths.

“This is the guy right here that rode him,” Moquett said of jockey Ricardo Santana Jr. “He got off the horse and the first thing he said was ‘This is a Derby horse.’ He said it three times and I told him to tell the owner.”

FIRING LINE – Arnold Zetcher’s Firing Line arrived safely at Churchill Downs Sunday shortly after 12 noon aboard a flight that originated out of Ontario in Southern California. On the Tex Sutton charter was a pair of Firing Line’s Kentucky Derby rivals, Dortmund and Bolo.

Firing Line has taken up residence in Barn 42 on the backstretch where he’ll be tended to by assistant trainer Carlos Santamaria and exercise rider Humberto Gomez. Trainer Simon Callaghan is scheduled to come on board from his Santa Anita headquarters on Tuesday.

Firing Line is a winner of two of five starts with three seconds besides. Two of those second-place endings were photo-finish losses to Dortmund, one of the likely favorites in Saturday’s Derby 141. One of his wins – and his most recent start – was a galloping 14-plus lengths triumph in the Grade III Sunland Derby March 22. Hall of Fame rider Gary Stevens was aboard for that romp in New Mexico and he’ll have the call again Saturday.

FRAMMENTO – Mossarosa’s Frammento galloped Sunday morning at Keeneland with exercise rider Juan Bernardini aboard for trainer Nick Zito.

The fourth-place finisher in the Blue Grass Stakes (GI) in his most recent start, Frammento needs one defection from horses under consideration for Derby 141 by entry time Wednesday to make the 20-horse starting gate.

“I need one scratch,” Zito said. “It would be sad if he doesn’t get in. He is ready to go a mile and a quarter.”

FROSTED – Godolphin Racing’s Frosted came out of his five-furlong work of 1:01.10 Saturday at Palm Meadows in good order according to trainer Kieran McLaughlin.

“He’s good this morning and he will go to the track in the morning,” McLaughlin said. “He will train Tuesday morning and then get a noon flight to Louisville.”

INTERNATIONAL STAR – Ken and Sarah Ramsey’s Louisiana Derby (GII) winner and Road to the Kentucky Derby points leader (171) International Star walked the shedrow at trainer Mike Maker’s Trackside barn the day after posting a half-mile breeze in :50.80.

“All’s well,” Maker reported, adding that International Star would van to Churchill Downs on Wednesday, most likely late morning, after the trainer finishes up with his work at Trackside.

International Star seeks to become the first Louisiana Derby winner to take the Kentucky Derby since Grindstone in 1996. The only other horse to pull off the Louisiana Derby-Kentucky Derby double was Black Gold in 1924.

Miguel Mena, who was aboard for all three of International Star’s wins in the Fair Grounds series of Kentucky Derby preps (which also includes the GIII Lecomte and GII Risen Star) will retain the mount. In his only previous Kentucky Derby appearance, Mena finished 20th aboard longshot Backtalk in 2010.

KEEN ICE – Donegal Racing’s Keen Ice, who worked five furlongs Saturday in 1:01.60, had an easy morning Sunday, walking in the shedrow in the barn of trainer Dale Romans.

MR. Z – Zayat Stables’ Mr. Z. will be the 48th Kentucky Derby starter for Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas, whose record 14 victories in Triple Crown races include four wins in the Derby. He first participated in the Derby in 1981. Lukas said that since his first Derby, he has seen changes in how trainers prepare their horses.

“Absolutely,” he said. “You watch the guys who have been here for the first time, and you see them do things that probably they wouldn’t normally do. They try to change things because it is the Kentucky Derby – trying to compete at this level and so forth. –The thing is I think what’s important is to say with what got you here, do things that you know work for you. Don’t change up much.”

But Lukas said he has made changes over the years. “I think the one thing we’re probably a little bit better at is reading what we’ve got to work with, making decisions on the individual horse . . . just read the individual horse a little bit better,” he said.

Mr. Z, with exercise rider Edvin Vargas aboard, galloped Sunday morning after the renovation break and had a schooling session in the in the paddock.

MUBTAAHIJ – A day after posting a half-mile breeze of Arlington’s Polytrack, Mubtaahij (IRE) cantered a lap of the same surface under Lisa Moncrieff while assistant trainer Trevor Brown did the same aboard Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (GI) chance Umgiyo.

“They are absolutely bouncing at the moment, we can’t wait to get down to Louisville and pick it up there,” Brown said this morning. “It’s all gone according to plan, touch wood, and we are ready to crack on to Kentucky.”

The pair will leave Arlington after training hours on Monday morning and van down to Churchill. They are expected to arrive around 6 p.m. Trainer Mike de Kock boarded one of the longest non-stop flights in the world on Sunday from Johannesburg to Atlanta and will arrive in the U.S. on Monday morning.

OCHO OCHO OCHO – DP Racing LLC’s Delta Jackpot (GIII) winner Ocho Ocho Ocho galloped 1 1/2 miles following the renovation break under Matt Williams, exercise rider and assistant to trainer Jim Cassidy.

“Nothing too exciting,” Williams said. “He went really good,” Cassidy said from Santa Anita that he may give Ocho Ocho Ocho an additional breeze Wednesday morning but wanted to assess the son of 2007 Kentucky Derby winner Street Sense for himself when he arrives on site Monday before making any decision.

TENCENDUR – Philip Birsh’s Tencendur jogged a mile early Sunday morning, a day after a bullet five-furlong work of 1:00 on Saturday.

While many horsemen walk their horses a day after a timed work, trainer George Weaver, a Louisville native with his first Derby candidate, said he has a different approach.

“Especially when they are coming up to a race we take them out to the track and make sure they are moving well with a rider on their back,” he said. “Obviously, you can look at their legs in the barn, but I want to have a rider have a feel for how they come out of their work. It would be customary to probably give him a walk day tomorrow.”

Weaver said that Tencendur was fine and he was happy with how he came out of the work. Manny Franco, who was aboard for the colt’s only victory, will make his debut in the Derby on Tencendur.

UPSTART – Ralph Evans’ Upstart had a light gallop at Palm Meadows Sunday morning, a day after working five furlongs in :59.95.

“I just wanted to get him a little exercise to see how he came out of the work and he was full of himself this morning,” trainer Rick Violette said. “He will train Tuesday morning before leaving for Louisville.”

WAR STORY – Loooch Racing Stables, Glenn Ellis and Christopher Dunn’s War Story jogged a mile and galloped a mile and a half under exercise rider Marvin Orantes after the morning renovation break.

“He had a good day getting over the track,” trainer Tom Amoss said. “The most disappointing thing this morning was watching how good American Pharoah looked.”

KENTUCKY OAKS NOTES

ANGELA RENEE/ESKENFORMONEY – It was a walk day for trainer Todd Pletcher’s Kentucky Oaks duo of Siena Farm’s Angela Renee and Star Ladies Racing’s Eskenformoney. The 3-year-old fillies had put in their final major work moves for Friday’s Grade I race this past Friday and then gone for light jogs early Saturday morning.

Pletcher has a feel for the Oaks and the fillies who run in it. The two he'll send out in the \$1,000,000 test this year will be his 17th and 18th starters (since 1999) in the nine-furlong Grade I that is considered the ultimate spring prize for 3-year-old fillies. Along the way, he's won it three times – with Ashado in 2004, Rags to Riches in 2007 and Princess of Sylmar in 2013.

"They'll go back to the track tomorrow," the trainer said of his current pair Sunday morning at Barn 40. "We'll see if they jog or gallop."

Angela Renee will get the saddle services of John Velazquez, while Eskenformoney will be handled by Javier Castellano.

BIRDATTHEWIRE – Forum Racing's Gulfstream Park Oaks (GII) winner Birdatthewire walked the shedrow a day after working five furlongs in 1:01.20 for trainer Dale Romans.

CONDO COMMANDO – Trainer Rudy Rodriguez kept his Gazelle (GII) winner Condo Commando busy Sunday morning, schooling her in the paddock and the gate and then jogged her on the track. "So far, so good," Rodriguez said as he held her shank what she was being bathed. "She seems pretty good."

Jockey Joel Rosario will ride the filly owned by Michael Dubb, Bethlehem Stables and The Elkstone Group.

FOREVER UNBRIDLED – Trainer Dallas Stewart said he's aware of scenarios by which Charles Fipke's Forever Unbridled can move into the top 14 in Kentucky Oaks points and be assured a spot in the Oaks starting gate. As of Sunday, she stood 15th in the standings. But, Stewart said, all he can do is prepare her as if she's going to run.

"You've just got to train your horses," Stewart said.

Early on Sunday, Forever Unbridled jogged a mile under exercise rider Emerson Chavez, who later in the morning escaped injury in a training incident on another horse.

Chavez, who worked Alazano in company with 2014 Kentucky Derby runner-up Commanding Curve, was thrown to the track when Alazano collapsed near the half-mile pole after the workout. Chavez lay on the track for several minutes.

"After I fell, I was kind of in shock a little bit," he said. "But after that, I'm good. Greg (Blasi, a Churchill Downs outrider) came to me and asked me a couple questions, but I'm good."

Forever Unbridled is a daughter of Unbridled's Song and the Lemon Drop Kid mare Lemons Forever, who won the 2006 Kentucky Oaks for Stewart in 2006. The filly is a full sister to the 4-year-old filly Unbridled Forever. Last year, she was a multiple graded-placed runner for Stewart. She is in training at Churchill Downs, and Chavez is her exercise rider, too.

"Both are great," he said. "The new one, Forever Unbridled, is bigger than her sister. But both are great, good fillies. ... Her sister last year was third in the Kentucky Oaks, so I'm hoping (Forever Unbridled) can make it in the race."

I'M A CHATTERBOX/LOVELY MARIA – Grayson Farm's Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) heroine I'm a Chatterbox and Brereton Jones' Ashland Stakes (GI) winner Lovely Maria each breezed five furlongs Sunday morning, with I'm a Chatterbox going first in 1:01, followed seconds later by Lovely Maria in :59.60.

"They both did well," trainer Larry Jones said. "Both jockeys came back grinning."

I'm a Chatterbox, ridden by regular jockey Florent Geroux, recorded splits of :11.80, :23.80 and :36, with a six-furlong gallop out in 1:14.40. The work was the fifth fastest of 32 at the distance.

"It was kind of the way she worked when she first came in [to the Jones barn at Fair Grounds in December]," Jones said. "She got real brilliant in her works down in New Orleans. This was a little slower than she'd been working. I just don't know if she takes to Churchill as well but we'll see."

Right behind I'm a Chatterbox was Lovely Maria, who broke off from the half-mile pole with regular rider Kerwin Clark aboard as her stablemate was finishing through the lane and posted fractions of :12, :23.80 and :35.80. Clockers caught her gallop-out time in 1:13.40. The work was the second fastest of 32 at the distance.

"Lovely Maria just worked sparkling," Jones said. "Every eighth was just getting faster and we're real happy with her. She's just getting on her game right now."

Jones said he wasn't looking for a specific time from his fillies and didn't even bother with suggestions for either of the jockeys, who have been working with these horses all winter.

"They both know what to do," Jones said of Geroux and Clark. "If I have to give instructions by now then I've got the wrong riders. That's what's great about brining your team in. They know the game plan, they know what they've done, and obviously it's been working for them."

This year's Kentucky Oaks is comprised of a deep field of fillies, many of which are coming off impressive wins. "You could make a case for every horse in this race," Jones said. "They all have something on their resume that shows they're capable of winning."

INCLUDE BETTY – Brereton Jones and Timothy Thornton's Fantasy Stakes (GIII) winner Include Betty walked the shedrow at trainer Tom Proctor's barn the morning after a five-furlong breeze in 1:02.20. Regular rider Rosemary Homeister Jr. has been in town following the Include filly's preparations and is understandably excited about a Kentucky Oaks that could set up perfectly for a closer.

"Tom has been joking that he's going to take me to lunch at the track kitchen every day because that's exactly where he wants me to move in the Oaks," she said. Churchill Downs' track kitchen is located on the backstretch directly across from the half-mile pole.

"She's a happy-go-lucky filly and she's really at the top of her game right now," Homeister said. "She looks amazing. She came out of the Fantasy full of confidence. She's not a big filly but she's got a big heart and a huge stride."

Homeister, 42, has 2,750 career wins and won an Eclipse Award as the Outstanding Apprentice Jockey of 1992. She has been working horses at Churchill this weekend to get a feel for the track and has mounts here Wednesday and Thursday in advance of the Oaks Day card.

"I'm excited because I really believe I have a big chance in this race," Homeister said of the Oaks. "Tom Proctor is one of the best trainers in the country, of all-time. I've ridden for him for 20 years and have so much confidence in him. And I have so much confidence in her, too. I believe we're going to have a really good race."

LUMINANCE/MAYBELLENE – Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert said that his Oaks candidates are scheduled to breeze Monday morning. Kaleem Shah's Luminance and Jill Baffert's Maybellene both galloped a mile and a half Sunday morning. Baffert said that he has not settled on a jockey for Maybellene. Martin Garcia is the regular rider for Luminance.

OCEANWAVE – Gary and Mary West's Fantasy Stakes (GIII) runner-up Oceanwave jogged one mile after the renovation break with regular exercise rider Santos Rivera aboard. "Everything's beautiful," trainer Wayne Catalano reported later in the morning.

Today's jog was Oceanwave's first appearance back to the track since Friday's five-furlong maintenance breeze that received some less-than-glowing reviews from the racing media.

"As far as opinions, everyone's got one," Catalano said. "We know how that goes. They don't know the horse. They don't know the situation. They were commenting on what they saw and that's fine. They're just doing their job, looking at the horse and giving their comments, but we were doing something different from what they saw. We weren't looking to get a fast time. We were just trying to get her inside of horses and educate her because she wants to get out a little bit. I'm happy with everything."

Oceanwave enters the Oaks off second-place finishes in the last two races of Oaklawn Park's series of graded stakes for 3-year-old fillies, the Honeybee (GIII) and the Fantasy (GIII). "She's not any different than her last two races and if anything she's better," Catalano said.

PUCA – Donegal Racing's Puca worked a half-mile in company in :48.20 with exercise rider Jo Lawson up. Working in company with Japan, a 3-year-old maiden, Puca produced fractions of :12.60, :24.80, :36.40 and galloped out five furlongs in 1:01.20. The work was the fifth fastest of 54 at the distance.

"It was very similar to the work a week ago," trainer Bill Mott said. "She went much the same. I was hoping that she'd work as well or better and she looked like she finished up her work nicely but she was all up on the bridle and willing to do it, moving well, galloped out well, came back good."

This was the second straight time Puca worked in company with Japan, who is entered in Thursday's eighth race.

"I put him in behind just because he needs a little education," Mott said. "He's a little green. They worked nicely together. I thought they were a good team last week and it worked out well so we just did the same thing again. Nothing fancy."

Puca hasn't won since breaking her maiden in October but went from that race straight into the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies and has only faced top company since.

"If you look at speed figures she maybe hasn't been as good as some of the others but visually, between the Breeders' Cup and her last race being pretty good...if she gets an honest pace that could help," Mott said.

SARAH SIS – Joe Ragsdale's Sarah Sis went to the track at 7:15 with exercise rider Jesus Esquivel aboard and trainer Ingrid Mason alongside on a pony.

As a team, they walked from the backstretch to the paddock for a schooling session and then walked around to the three-eighths pole before Sarah Sis moved off on her own at a leisurely pace back to the 4 ½-furlong marker.

"You just try to prepare them the best you can," Mason said. "There will be lots of walking and parading to get used to the attention."

Mason, who will be saddling her first Oaks starter, said Sarah Sis was "perfect" in the paddock this morning.

"She will school on race days," Mason said. "She didn't like the paddock at all at Oaklawn with the indoor paddock where people could look over the top."

SHOOK UP – Regis Racing’s Shook Up worked a half-mile Sunday in 49.60 seconds under exercise rider Mike Callaham for trainer Steve Asmussen. The workout was the 27th fastest of 54 workouts Sunday at the distance. The fractions were :24.60 and out five furlongs in 1:03.40.

“She’s doing well,” Asmussen said. “Handled good, didn’t lay in. So all’s well.”

In two of her races, including a Fair Grounds allowance race in which she finished second to Lovely Maria, Shook Up lugged in. In that race, she had the No. 1 post position and was jammed along the inside behind a slow pace.

“Her motor’s running,” Asmussen said. “She gets a little anxious. And when she does, that seems to be what happens. I think it’s when she gets to pulling. ... That day (in the allowance race), first time out (at Fair Grounds), it was sloppy and all that. ... She had drawn (No.) 1. They cleared her pretty easy, but then they backed it up right into her, and it was circumstances. I think you get these fillies together; they’re going to move on. So I think the circumstances that day were they cleared her from the outside, slowed it down and just kind of backed it up in her face, and then she was on the bridle.”

But in the Fair Grounds Oaks in her most recent start, Shook Up ran smoothly all the way en route to a second-place finish behind I’m a Chatterbox. “She handled nice and everything,” Asmussen said.

He said he expects Shook Up to improve in the Kentucky Oaks. “I expect her to run the race of her life,” he said. “And it’s going to take that – at least that.”

STELLAR WIND – Hronis Racing’s Stellar Wind arrived at Churchill Downs early Sunday afternoon after an early flight from Southern California. The Santa Anita Oaks (GI) winner is trained by John Sadler and will be ridden Friday by Victor Espinoza.

UPCOMING UNDERCARD STAKES PROBABLES

The following is an early rundown of known possible starters in Derby Week stakes races, according to assistant racing secretary and stakes coordinator **Dan Bork**:

\$400,000 ALYSHEBA (GII) (Entries taken April 28; race May 1) – Call Me George, Honor Code, Noble Bird, Ride On Curlin.
Possible: Den’s Legacy.

\$300,000 LA TROIENNE (GI) (Entries taken April 28; race May 1) – America, Frivolous, Molly Morgan, My Miss Sophia, Pearl Turn, Sheer Drama, Stopchargingmaria, Wedding Toast. **Possible:** Interest Free, Tiz Windy.

\$200,000 EIGHT BELLES (GIII) (Entries taken April 28; race May 1) – Ekati’s Phaeton, Fancy and Flashy, Lavender Chrissie, Mizz Money, Promise Me Silver, Streethart, Super Saks, Taylor S.

\$150,000 EDGEWOOD PRESENTED BY FORCHT BANK (GIII) (Entries taken April 28; race May 1) – Lady Zuzu, Pangburn, Quality Rocks. **Possible:** B Rockett, Sweet Opportunity, Whimsicality.

\$150,000 TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (GIII) (Entries taken April 28; race May 1) – Berlino Di Tiger (BRZ), Buster Rose, Channel Marker, Good Deed, Heitai, Positive Side, Power Alert (AUS), Something Extra, Undrafted.

\$500,000 WOODFORD RESERVE TURF CLASSIC (GI) (Entries taken April 29; race May 2) – Chocolate Ride, Finnegans Wake, Seek Again, Umgiyo (AUS).

\$500,000 CHURCHILL DOWNS (GII) (Entries taken April 29; race May 2) – Bayern, C. Zee, Pants On Fire, Private Zone.
Possible: The Big Beast.

\$300,000 CHURCHILL DOWNS DISTAFF TURF MILE PRESENTED BY LONGINES (GII) (Entries taken April 29; race May 2) – Coffee Clique, I’m Already Sexy, Lady Lara (IRE), Maid On a Mission, Personal Diary, Sandiva (IRE), Solid Appeal, Strike Charmer, Tepin.

\$300,000 HUMANA DISTAFF (GI) (Entries taken April 29; race May 2) – Classic Point, Dame Dorothy, Judy the Beauty, Princess Violet, Sweet Reason, Sweet Whiskey, You Bought Her. **Possible:** Clearly Confused.

\$250,000 AMERICAN TURF PRESENTED BY RAM TRUCKS (GII) (Entries taken April 29; race May 2) – A Lot, Conquest Typhoon, Firespike, Force the Pass, Indianaughty, Metaboss, Tuba, Wireless Future, World Approval. **Possible:** Royal Son.