

SOUTHERN RACEHORSE EXPRESS



MARCH 2013
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COVERING THE THOROUGHBRED INDUSTRY IN TEXAS AND OKLAHOMA

Sam Houston meet records gains in handle and attendance

Sam Houston Race Park concluded its 20th annual live Thoroughbred meet on March 18 with the 33-day racing season highlighted by a series of high-profile stakes races and notable attendance and handle gains.

The revamped stakes schedule in 2013 was anchored by the richest Thoroughbred race in Texas and in Sam Houston Race Park history. The inaugural \$400,000 Houston Ladies Classic on January 26 featured a dynamic field of fillies and mares. The winner, Joyful Victory, gave a dominating performance that garnered national attention. The 5-year-old daughter of Tapit, who is trained by Larry Jones and owned by Fox Hill Farms Inc., solidified her place as one of the top older horses in the country with a stunning victory in the Grade 1, \$300,000 Santa Margarita Stakes at Santa Anita Park less than two months later. Now the newly minted millionaire will likely accomplish even more en route to her intended target of the 2013 Breeders' Cup World Thoroughbred Championships in November.

The Houston Ladies Classic and three additional stakes were televised nationally on HRTV and locally on Fox Sports Southwest.

Daily purses were up 5% from 2012 to \$170,000 per day, compared to \$162,000 in 2012. For the third consecutive year, Sam Houston Race Park was able to offer the highest purse structure since opening in 1994. In total, the meet featured 23 stakes races with purses of \$1.7 million, including four new stakes for Texas-breds.

"This was a successful meet for us with solid fields throughout the season and one of the most competitive stakes programs in the history

of Sam Houston Race Park," said Eric Johnston, vice president of racing. "We attracted nationally prominent horsemen, including Steve Asmussen, Larry Jones, John Terranova, Mike Maker, Bret Calhoun, Mark Casse, Eddie Keneally and Al Stall. Each was effusive in their praise of the quality and safety of our main track surface and Connally turf course."

Sam Houston Race Park officials noted increases in both on-track and total handle. Total handle was up 2% with \$43,917,000 wagered compared to \$43,071,000 last year. Total on-track handle from Houston fans increased 9%. Monday afternoon racing continued to be well-received by racing fans. On both February 11 and March 18, Sam Houston Race Park led the nation in handle for the live cards.

Live attendance was up 10% from 2012 with sizeable crowds for several of the racing festival events. On March 9, Sam Houston Race Park hosted the second annual Camel and Ostrich Races. The highly entertaining evening attracted a crowd of 14,818, topping the record-setting attendance of 12,389 in 2012.

"Our goal was to improve the quality of our live racing product, and we believe we made great strides, especially with addition of the Houston Ladies Classic," said Sam Houston President Andrea Young. "That stakes will return next year. We really felt it set the tone for the entire meet."



Multiple stakes winner Worldventurer to close out Fasig-Tipton Texas Sale

The Fasig-Tipton Texas 2-Year-Olds in Training Sale will offer a slightly different format this year with the addition of horses of racing age, and the auction figures to end with a bang as Texas-bred multiple stakes winner Worldventurer is set to go through the ring as the last horse, hip #134.

Bred by Clarence Scharbauer Jr. and owned by Wesley Melcher, Worldventurer is a 3-year-old gelded son of Valor Farm stallion Wimbledon who has a record of 11-4-2-2 with earnings of \$207,932. The Bret Calhoun trainee, who was named Texas Champion 2-Year-Old Colt/Gelding last year, has won three stakes: the Jim's Orbit division of the Texas Stallion Stakes, Groovy Stakes and Texas Thoroughbred Association Sales Futurity. Worldventurer also hit the board in the \$300,000

Springboard Mile at Remington Park and Texas Heritage Stakes at Sam Houston Race Park against some promising stars.

"This horse kept very good company and has won back-to-back stakes as a 3-year-old at seven furlongs and a two-turn mile," Fasig-Tipton Texas Director of Sales Tim Boyce told *Thoroughbred Daily News*. "He could easily be considered a Derby horse as he has been edged by Rebel Stakes (G2) winner Will Take Charge and upcoming Louisiana Derby (G2) favorite Departing."

The under tack show for the 2-year-olds in training is set for April 1 at 11 a.m. with the sale set for April 3 at noon on the grounds of Lone Star Park. To view the catalog online, [click here](#).



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Joyful Victory named Sam Houston horse of the meet

Joyful Victory, winner of the richest current Thoroughbred stakes in Texas, was named Horse of the Meet at Sam Houston Race Park. The 5-year-old daughter of Tapit is owned by Fox Hill Farms Inc. and trained by Larry Jones.

The remarkable gray mare drew off by more than four lengths in winning the \$400,000 Houston Ladies Classic, which attracted a stellar field of contenders that had collective earnings in excess of \$2.3 million. Joyful Victory not only gave a first-class performance under one of the nation's top riders, Rosie Napravnik, but she also set a new track record as she covered 1 1/16 miles over a fast track in a final time of 1:42.30. The previous track record of 1:42.74 was set in 1999 by Texas-bred Desert Air, a Grade 3-winning son of Manzotti who posted the mark with an 11 1/4-length win in the Jersey Village Stakes.

Joyful Victory earned \$237,600 for the Houston Ladies Classic victory. What might have been even more impressive is that she made her next start in the Grade 1, \$300,000 Santa Margarita Stakes at Santa Anita Park and won again in front-running style under Napravnik to eclipse the million-dollar mark in career earnings. Purchased for \$60,000 in the 2009 January Sales at Keeneland, Joyful Victory has now won six of her 17 career starts, bankrolling \$1,090,679.

Jones will give Joyful Victory a break and will look at some opportunities in late May. The long-term goal is a victory in the Breeders' Cup Ladies Classic (G1) in November at Santa Anita.

Danny Pish notches his fourth leading trainer title in Houston

Texas horseman Danny Pish had another strong showing, winning his fourth Sam Houston training title with 27 wins. He showcased some promising rising stars, including Platinum Song, who captured the \$50,000 Bara Lass Stakes on Texas Champions Weekend.

"It was a great meet," acknowledged Pish. "We started with a bang, with the filly in the Bara Lass, and all in all, we kept winning races. I was very pleased that two of my horses, Pharme's Phire and Temparnillo, were undefeated this meet."

Pish, who operates a training center in Cibolo, Texas, credits his Sam Houston team, led by assistant Jasmine Daniels, for their hard work over the last three months.

Pish won his first Sam Houston title in 2006 and was the leader the following year as well. In 2010, he finished in a tie with Karl Broberg. With four leading trainer titles in Houston, Pish is second to Steve Asmussen, who holds the record with five seasons of top honors since the track opened in 1994.

Pish has blazed his name in the Retama Park history book as trainer of the meet for a record 13 years and added his first title at Lone Star



Cady Photography

Joyful Victory

Park last summer. He will have a full barn in Grand Prairie when their Thoroughbred meet kicks off on April 11.

Pish, 48, was born in Yoakum, Texas, and has become one of the Lone Star State's most successful trainers. According to Equibase statistics, since 1995, Pish has saddled 9,730 horses, winning 1,606 races and purses of \$21.9 million.

Asmussen was second with 17 wins. Jack Bruner saddled 16 winners, and Brent Davidson finished the meet with 11 victories.

Gerardo Mora wins first Sam Houston riding title

Last year as an apprentice rider, Gerardo Mora impressed horsemen and fans with his talent and finished the meet in second-place to veteran Glen Murphy. This year, Mora started strong, dueling mid-meet with Murphy, before drawing off to win his first Sam Houston leading rider title with 47 victories.

Mora won two stakes this season, taking the \$50,000 Bara Lass aboard Platinum Song for Pish on Texas Champions Weekend and the \$50,000 Auto Nation Spring Stakes with Legal Mind for trainer Jack Bruner.

"I want to thank all the people who have supported me in Houston," said Mora. "My agent (Toby Cathey) and so many trainers named me on great horses. I am very happy to be leading rider."

Born in Palestine, Texas, the 20-year-old Mora had family ties to racing as his uncle, Adrian Ramos, has ridden in Texas, Louisiana and New Mexico since 2001. Mora began working horses in Louisiana three years ago and rode as an apprentice at Retama Park near San Antonio in 2011. He was the leading rider at Retama Park for their 2012 Thoroughbred meet and will head to Lone Star Park to see if he can win the rare Texas triple.

Murphy was second in the standings with 38 wins. Roman Chapa had a strong season with 26 victories, and Chris Landeros finished the meet well with a total of 22 wins.

Joyful Victory named Sam Houston horse of the meet (cont.)

Tom Durant wins second leading owner title

Prominent Dallas businessman Tom Durant won his second Sam Houston Race Park leading owner title with 16 wins. He shipped in 36 starters, all trained by Jack Bruner, with a mix of maidens, allowance runners and stakes horses. Rising star Legal Mind ably stepped up to stakes company to win the \$50,000 Auto Nation Spring Stakes on March 16.

Durant's previous owner title came in 2011. Durant was pleased with the meet and the success of their runners.

"All of our horses were coming off lay-offs," said Durant. "We started slow but then really took off. The meet turned out very well for us."

Durant is the owner of Classic Chevrolet in Grapevine, Texas, and summed up the key to his long-term association with Bruner. "I let Jack choose where to run the horses," he said. "My job is to sell enough cars to pay for them."

End Zone Athletics Inc. was second in the standings with six wins. Jose Luis Espinoza, Ralls and Foster LLC and Pharme Racing Ltd. were tied with five victories each.

Texas HORSE to hold Horse Week at the Capitol on April 1-5

Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-District 20) has filed Texas State Senate Joint Resolution 36 and enabling Senate Bill 789 that call for a constitutional referendum to allow video lottery games at licensed horse and Greyhound racetracks and by Indian tribes under the regulatory authority of the Texas Lottery Commission and the Texas Racing Commission. Sen. Hinojosa, whose district in South Texas includes Corpus Christi, McAllen, Edinburg and Mission, has been an important and longtime supporter of the horse and Greyhound racing industry in Texas.

"This legislation has very significant implications and substantial benefits that could preserve and make prosperous the Texas horse racing industry," said Dr. Jacquelyn "Jackie" Rich, an equine veterinarian from Lott who is president of Texas HORSE. "We are currently surrounded by states that have slot machines at the horse racetracks that generate millions in purse money and put Texas racetracks at a severe disadvantage. In 2012, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma paid more than \$214 million in purse monies to racehorse owners while Texas racetracks paid less than \$24 million. And the majority of the money wagered at the slot machines at these racetracks in surrounding states is wagered by Texans."

To support these measures, Texas HORSE will hold Horse Week at the Capitol on April 1-5. Texas HORSE is calling for Texas horse owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys, track employees and racing fans to

come to Austin the week of April 1-5 to meet their Texas State Senators and Representatives to tell their story and ask for legislators' support for video lottery games at Texas racetracks. To make reservations and receive assistance in arranging visits with their elected officials,

participants should call one of these organizations: Texas HORSE at (817) 845-2917 or (512) 934-2974, Texas Thoroughbred Association at (512) 458-6133 or Texas Quarter Horse Association at (512) 458-5202. Online registration is available at www.texas-horse.com.

More than 800 supporters of the Texas racing industry attended Texas Horse Day at the Capitol during the 2011 session.

Texas HORSE (Horse Organizations for Racing, Showing, Eventing) comprises the largest group of horse organizations in Texas united to introduce

and pass legislation to help Texas regain its leadership position within the horse industry. Successful legislative efforts of Texas HORSE are designed to invigorate and restore the ground lost to other states while providing resources to the many horse enthusiasts who participate in diverse disciplines. Texas HORSE is committed to keeping the more than one million horses in the state that contribute \$5.2 billion directly to the Texas economy with a workforce of nearly 96,000 employees.

For more information about Texas HORSE, contact Executive Director Dan Fick at (817) 845-2917 or dan@texas-horse.com.



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Will Rogers Downs racing secretary adjusts to new role as meet begins

For the last five years, Jesse Ullery was the voice of Will Rogers Downs. His voice filled the casino as he offered insight on wagering before each race, and it got louder as it crackled out of the grandstand speakers as the horses changed position during the race.

During the first day of racing on March 4, Ullery stood near the track railing quietly watching the races with the day's race card rolled up in his hand.

He is still involved in daily racing operations, and it is in an even larger role at the Claremore racetrack and casino.

Ullery is the racing secretary, which means he oversees the entire racing operation. He's in charge of writing the condition book, gathering nominations for stakes races, allotting stalls to horsemen, negotiating simulcast contracts and supervising the running of races.

"I know how important of a role I serve now, and it is not like I went away," said Ullery. "I'm still here, and I'm still fortunate enough to be around the same group of great customers, great employees and great horsemen. I'm just serving in a different capacity."

While Ullery was best known at the track for calling the races, during the last four years he also served as clocker and then became the assistant racing secretary prior to last year's spring meet.

Well-known track announcer John Lies is behind the microphone during the spring meet, but a conflicting schedule with his duties at Lone Star Park means Ullery is likely to return to the booth to call races for at least a couple of days this spring.

In his new job, Ullery said his job is to make sure the races run smoothly and provide fun entertainment for those at the track and those watching it in simulcast rooms around the world.



Courtesy Will Rogers Downs

Jesse Ullery, racing secretary for Cherokee Casino Will Rogers Downs, stands in front of the outside rail during live racing at the Claremore track and casino.

"I enjoy the opportunity to be in a role where I can help not only Will Rogers Downs be successful but also allow the horsemen to have success," Ullery said. "I enjoy my new position, and I think I have the very best crew that I could possibly assemble. We all work together as a team for a common goal, and I thoroughly enjoy working with everyone here."

The Thoroughbred spring meet runs through May 18. Races begin at 1 p.m. every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday until May, when Saturday replaces Wednesday on the schedule. Each day features 10 races.

Cherokee Casino Will Rogers Downs is located three miles east of Claremore on Highway 20. For more information, visit www.cherokeestarwards.com, or call 918-283-8800.

Departing remains undefeated with his victory in the \$50,000 Heritage Stakes

Trainer Al Stall Jr. knew he had a talented colt in his barn with the undefeated Departing. Owned and bred by Claiborne Farm and Adele B. Dilschneider, the War Front colt won both of his starts at Fair Grounds and ably won his stakes debut on March 2 at Sam Houston Race Park in the \$50,000 Texas Heritage Stakes.

Rider Brian Hernandez Jr. kept his mount in a tracking position as Seeking Payday went to the lead.

"I was happy to follow the six horse and give him a target," said Hernandez. "He did it in hand."

"We're in a good spot," stated his trainer. "They send nice horses to us year in and year out. He's a good horse and has everything put together. We know he has talent and will just see how far he can go."

Stall indicated that Departing will likely be pointed to the Louisiana Derby at Fair Grounds on March 30.

Departing returned \$3.20 as the even-money favorite. Holiday Mischief was a game second, followed by Texas-bred Worldventurer, who had won two previous stakes this season at Sam Houston.

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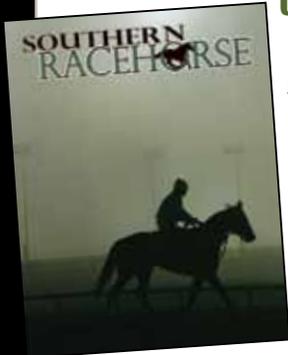
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RACING NEWS

March/April issue of *Southern Racehorse* online, in the mail



The March/April issue of *Southern Racehorse* magazine has been printed and mailed to all Texas Thoroughbred Association and Thoroughbred Racing Association of Oklahoma members. The issue is also available online by [clicking here](#).

This issue features recaps of the Houston Ladies Classic, John B. Connally Turf Cup and all the Texas-bred stakes at Sam Houston Race Park, a look at the success of Oklahoma owner Danny Caldwell, a review of how blood tests can help you improve the overall health of your horse and a profile of Valid Expectations, the new all-time leading stallion in Texas. As always, this issue also features news from the TTA and TRAO plus other information related to Thoroughbred racing and breeding in Texas and Oklahoma.

For more information about advertising in the next issue of *Southern Racehorse*, [click here](#).

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Equine Sales of Louisiana announces 2013 sales, begins construction of new barns

Equine Sales of Louisiana LLC has announced their 2013 Thoroughbred sales schedule. This year, they will be offering three sales for Thoroughbred horses:

- The **Consignor Select Yearling Sale** will be held on Wednesday, September 4. Nominations for this sale are now being accepted, and the deadline for nomination contracts is June 14.

- The **Open Yearling Sale** will be held on Monday, October 28. This sale is open to all yearlings throughout the Southwest region. Nominations forms and closing dates will be announced shortly.

- The **Mixed Sale** will be held on Tuesday, October 29, following the Open Yearling Sale. This sale is open to all Thoroughbreds. Nominations



tion forms and closing dates will be available in the near future.

Sales Director Foster Bridewell stated, "With our newly updated sales pavilion and on-site barns, now under construction, we offer consignors the optimal location to sell their Thoroughbreds in the South."

Equine Sales of Louisiana has raised the funds necessary to construct a total of 232 stalls in barns located on-site at the rear of the sales pavilion. Sitework began on March 8, and the company expects it to be fully completed and operational by the end

of August in time for the Consignor Select Yearling Sale.

For more information, contact Foster Bridewell at 214-718-7618, or visit www.equinesalesofla.com.

Artemus Kitten victorious in the \$50,000 Jersey Lilly Stakes

Artemus Kitten, a 5-year-old daughter of Kitten's Joy, ran second in the 2012 Jersey Lilly Stakes but shed her bridesmaid status in the 2013 edition on March 2. With a skilled ride from jockey Rosie Napravnik, Artemus Kitten rallied for a 1 ½-length victory in the 1 1/16-mile turf stakes, covering the firm course in a final time of 1:44.12.

Bred and owned by Kenneth and Sarah Ramsey and trained by Michael Maker, the talented mare won her fifth career race, returning to the winner's circle for the first time since July 14 at Ellis Park.

"I love coming here to ride on the turf; this is a great course," said Napravnik. "This filly had a great stalking trip on the outside; she was much the best."

"It was nice to see her get a good trip today," said Joe Sharpe, assistant to Maker. "She was very unlucky last year."

Artemus Kitten returned \$4.80 for the win. Distorted Legacy, a graded stakes-placed 6-year-old mare, ran second, followed by Firehouse Red in third.

Legal Mind takes final stakes of Sam Houston meet

The final stakes of the 2013 Sam Houston Race Park Thoroughbred meet took place on March 16 with a solid group of 3-year-old fillies competing at the distance of one mile in the \$50,000 Auto Nation Spring Stakes.

Trainer Jack Bruner felt that Legal Mind deserved a chance to step up to stakes company after the dark bay daughter of Bellamy Road owned by Tom Durant and broke her maiden on October 26 at Retama Park. She then was impressive as she came off the pace to score by two lengths in a \$21,000 allowance on February 9.

In the Spring Stakes, Sam Houston's leading rider Gerardo Mora kept her in a comfortable tracking position as Livin Peace took the lead, com-

pleting the first quarter-mile in :23.91 and the half-mile in :47.55. The rail opened up, and Mora guided his filly to a 2 ½-length victory. She covered the mile, over a fast main track, in a final time of 1:39.76.

"She's been training really well, and my crew has been touting her strongly," said Bruner. "Gerry (Gerardo Mora) gave her a great ride"

Satin Gold, who was making her 2013 debut off a third-place finish in the \$75,000 La Senorita at Retama Park, rallied for second under jockey Alfredo Contreras.

Legal Mind, sent off at odds of 8-1, returned \$18.60 to her backers. Bilrrubina (Mex) was sent off as the post-time favorite and ran third.

Flashpoint impressive in the \$50,000 Sam Houston Sprint Cup

Flashpoint took on some of the nation's top 3-year-olds in 2011, competing in the Grade 1 Florida Derby and Preakness Stakes for trainer Steve Asmussen. In the \$50,000 Sam Houston Sprint Cup Stakes on March 2, rider Glen Murphy had the call on the 5-year-old son of Pomeroy for Peachtree Stable. It resulted in the fifth win from 11 starts for the Florida-bred, who covered six furlongs in 1:10.21.

"He's a big horse and left the gates well," said Murphy. "He's a tough

horse to work in the morning but put it together tonight."

Trainer Larry Jones had a memorable night at Sam Houston Race Park on January 26, winning and setting two track records with Joyful Victory and Icon Ike. This evening, Hamiltonian, a 4-year-old son of Bellamy Road, set the pace but had to settle for second.

Flashpoint, sent off as the third-betting choice, returned \$10.40 for the win and earned \$30,000 for the victory. Bind was third.

WINNER'S CIRCLE RADAR

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Unstoppable U can't be stopped in Maxxam Gold Cup

The \$100,000 Maxxam Gold Cup Handicap has attracted nationally prominent horses since its first running in 1994, and the 2013 renewal on March 2 included multiple stakes winners and two horses that had run in the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes. It was Unstoppable U who showed his class and maturity in capturing the 1 1/8-mile feature.

The 4-year-old son of Exchange Rate won his first two career starts last year at Aqueduct before running sixth in the Belmont Stakes. Trained by Kenneth McPeck for owners Magdalena Racing and Mojallali Stables Inc, he began his 2013 campaign at Oaklawn Park and shipped into Sam Houston fresh off an allowance score on February 9.

"He's acted like a good horse from the beginning," said McPeck. "He had some breathing issues as a 3-year-old. That's why he didn't run well in the Dwyer. He's maturing, and this was a good test for him. We'll look for a Grade 3 for his next start."

With confident handling by jockey Chris Landeros, the Kentucky-bred sat off the early pacesetter Hurricane Ike, who posted fractions of :23.88 for the first quarter-mile and :48.48 for the half-mile. At the top of the stretch, Landeros took command and drew to the lead, drawing off in a final time of 1:50.96 over a fast main track.

McPeck was at Sam Houston in 2002 to saddle the incomparable Take Charge Lady in the \$275,000 NTRA Great State Challenge Distaff.



Candy Photography

Unstoppable U

"I've had a bit of luck over the years," said McPeck. "I need to come back more often, I suppose."

Trainer Michael Stidham finished second and third in the Maxxam with Dreaming Blue and Hurricane Ike, who was sent off as the post-time favorite.

Unstoppable U returned \$15.80 as the fifth betting choice in the eight-horse field.



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