

DERBY DAY TO GARNER NATIONAL EXPOSURE

When the nation's top 3 YO's gather here at Parx Saturday, September 21st for the \$1 million G1 Pennsylvania Derby, much will be riding on the outcome. Maybe even the highly coveted divisional championship. The spring prep races and the classics provided few answers as to who was the best 3YO in the country. The PA Derby winner will give someone yet another opportunity to step forward and take command of the division. Having risen greatly in stature in the recent past, the race will also for the first time garner national TV exposure. The NBC broadcast team will be here in Bensalem to broadcast the event to a national audience.

With the recent news that Maximum Security would skip the Travers Stakes, trainer Jason Servis has stated his intentions to bring the high profile colt here to Parx. The son of New Year's Day has two major G1 wins on his resume, having won the Florida Derby in March and the Haskell in July. Maybe best known for being part of the historic disqualification in the Kentucky Derby, Maximum Security can take a huge step toward a 3YO championship with a third G1 win in the PA Derby.

Trainer Mark Casse has also declared his desire to run Preakness winner War of Will. The War Front colt switched from turf to dirt at the start of his 3YO campaign and promptly won two preps at the Fair Grounds, the G3 LeComte and the G2 Risen Star. Involved in the now infamous Derby bumping incident that brought Maximum Security down, War of Will went on to Pimlico and fashioned a perfect trip at 6-1 to become a classic winner. Subsequent efforts in the Belmont and Jim Dandy have been subpar, but he obviously has the ability and connections to return to prominence through the fall season.

While not all top 3YO are ready to show their best heading into the Triple Crown season, each year it's always of interest to see who will turn into the late bloomers. This year that profile fits the red hot Mr. Money. Racing for Bret Calhoun, the Goldencents colt was no better than seventh in the Risen Star in his seasonal debut and then was 50-1 in the Louisiana Derby. His season would turn around dramatically that first Saturday in May. No, not in the Kentucky Derby, but rather in the other 3YO race of the day, the G3 Pat Day Mile. Off at 7-1, he romped home better than five lengths in front and has had the peddle to the metal ever since. He won the G3 Matt Winn at Churchill by six and a half, was a clear cut winner in the G3 Indiana Derby and then made it 4 in a row with a dominating six length win in the G3 West Virginia Derby. While up in class coming here, there's no telling how good he might be.

There's also every indication that one of the top 3YO's from the spring season, Omaha Beach, will be back to the races after missing three months because of an entrapped epiglottis. Having won the G2 Rebel and the G1 Arkansas Derby he was headed to Churchill as one of the favorites before being forced to the sidelines. Expected to return

August 25th at DelMar in the Shared Belief Stakes, owner Rick Porter has stated that if all goes well, the next stop would indeed be right here for the Pennsylvania Derby.

And what would a PA Derby be anymore without Bob Baffert. Having won the last two with West Coast and McKinzie (and 3 of the last 5), Baffert will try to make it three in a row with Mucho Gusto. The Mucho Macho Man colt won the G3 Robert Lewis in the seasonal debut back in February and has added two graded wins since. He won at 7 furlongs in the G3 Laz Barrera at Santa Anita and then at one mile and one-sixteenth in the G3 Affirmed a month later. His most recent start came in the G1 Haskell where he ran a terrific second behind Maximum Security. It's Baffert, who can never be counted out.

Baffert will also face an interesting decision with his high profile colt, last year's 2YO champion, Game Winner. Like Maximum Security, he's been declared out of the Travers, so the next logical spot becomes the Pennsylvania Derby. There have been no indications regarding what the next step might be, but it certainly won't be long before more is known about where he'll race next.

The \$1 million G1 Cotillion Stakes also looks to be loaded with star power and for the first time ever, the race is a Breeders Cup "Win and You're In" race. Having won the G1 Frizette and the G1 Breeders Cup Juvenile Fillies to earn herself honors as the 2YO filly champion, local filly Jaywalk opened the season with great expectations. Disappointing efforts in the G2 Davona Dale, the G1 Ashland and the G1 Kentucky Oaks left fans and trainer John Servis wondering what had happened to the so promising Cross Traffic filly. A return home and a two month respite may have been a perfect tonic. Retuning to form in the G3 Delaware Oaks, she overpowered her five rivals with a nine length win and a career best 96 Beyer.

It looks like the next stop for Chad Brown's undefeated filly Guarana will be the Cotillion. Unraced as a 2YO, the Ghostzapper filly burst onto the scene with an eye catching 14 length win in her career debut April 19th at Keeneland and then took an immediate jump from a special weight to G1 company. Favored off one win, she drew away to win the G1 Acorn by six and then came back to win the G1 Coaching Club American Oaks at Saratoga. She'll be looking to keep her perfect record in tack with a third consecutive G1 win.

And finally, there's Serengeti Empress. Fast and game, the Alternation filly showed her class last September with an overwhelming 19 length win in the G2 Pocahontas at Churchill. She opened her 3YO campaign for trainer Tom Amoss with a 4 ½ length in the G2 Rachel Alexandra at the Fair Grounds. At 30 cents on the dollar, she would then bleed through her Lasix in losing the Fair Grounds Oaks before returning with the signature win of her career, a front running, 13-1 win in the G1 Kentucky Oaks.