



# West Virginia

## THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

October 2021

### **Curiosity, Precocity and Velocity**

If you talk to handicappers/gamblers they swear it's their economic impact that controls the game.

Most Thoroughbred owners would refute that statement and verbalize their financial relationship to the business being of paramount importance, but true champions of the industry realize breeders are the most critical element to cultivate and sustain longevity. Thus every year, with *Daily Racing Form* in hand, enthusiasts attempt to decipher the DNA codes intrinsic to pedigree, as the excitement mounts for the beginning of the 2-year-old season. Knowing which trainers have their charges cranked-up for debuts, uncovering that runner with an attribute for speed, and weighing the accuracy of morning workouts all factor in to one of the prime conjectures of our sport.

The first baby race of the year had it's normal accompaniment of trainers, McKee, Sterling, Casey (father and son), and while the eventual winner was no surprise (third choice in the wagering), the victorious sire for owner, trainer, breeder John McKee was a tad shocking.

Cousin Winnie, a son of Firing Line out of Aunt Winnie (Ire), wrangled the early advantage away from rivals by bravely squirming through tight quarters and held her West Virginia rivals

safe in the run to the wire. Unlike the preponderance of Beau Ridge Farm runners that call Fiber Sonde their daddy, Cousin Winnie hails from a gifted runner who earned just a shade under \$1 million and whose greatest accomplishment was a second place effort in the Kentucky Derby.

Thursday, July 8, John A. Casey rolled out the latest creation off his family's productive assembly line, Fancy Her Up, and the compact filly by Juba out of Fancy Up, by Smoke Glacken, didn't disappoint her robust backing. Hammered down to 3-2 favoritism, the first time starter left the gate like shot out of a cannon, immediately established a 5-length advantage and cruised home as much the best. Final time for the 4½ furlongs for the gray/roan filly was an outstanding 52.33 seconds.

The filly's dam Fancy Up was a winner of nine of 28 starts, and spent much of her career competing for breeder and South Carolina native Henry Carroll. Juba stands at Taylor Mountain Farm and recently watched his son Nocashrefunds dominate an allowance field for owner Shade Tree Farm LLC. A winner in restricted company, Fancy Her Up didn't fare so well in her next outing, stakes company at Colonial Downs, but

as Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz* said, "There's no place like home."

Under normal circumstances, the initial 2-year-old races don't feature horses that have racing experience, let alone one that has competed in multiple jurisdictions. On Thursday, July 16, Baytown Warrior shipped in having tried Keeneland, Churchill Downs, Belmont Park and Ellis Park on his busy East Coast tour.

The son of First Samurai, out of Streetheart (by Street Sense), found racing against lesser competition desirable. Soundly bumped early from his inside post, he aggressively bullied his way to the front and eagerly maintained his advantage throughout the lane. The value purchase by McEntee Farm (\$1,500 Keeneland yearling sale) authenticated his local commanding score, by hitting the road and finishing a solid third in the Tyro Stakes at Monmouth Park.

As horsemen continue to get more innovative with names, one of my personal favorites, O K Smarty Pants, strolled home effortlessly on Thursday, July 23.

Every year it seems owner, trainer, breeder Mike Sterling unveils a talented project from a very limited band of players. The hardy bay filly by Smarty Jones out of Over You was rudely treated in her debut, as noted in the Equibase charts, "shut off

and clipped heels leaving the chute and lacked room.”

In her second effort, O K Smarty Pants was comfortable throughout and finished up with plenty left in the tank. Patience is a hallmark of her trainer, but I'm sure we'll find out in the next few months if this noteworthy West Virginia-bred is an enigma or truly authentic, as we enter our championship time of the year.

Strong Fiber made substantial use of his lone career effort, where he finished third, to come back and wire the field in the first race on Friday, June 29. The son of Fiber Sonde exhibited his father's propensity for speed and fortitude to repel runner-up Talking Teddy.

Champion West Virginia sire in 2020, Fiber Sonde continues to be a productive influence in the breeding shed and genetically enhance his racing progeny. Owned, trained and bred by octogenarian John McKee, Strong Fiber is another in a long line of Beau Ridge Farm (2020 West Virginia Farm of the Year)

runners that possess startling uniformity of accomplishment.

Charting a horse's value is especially critical in 2-year-old races, where PPs are often an unknown commodity. Handicappers frequently use toteboard odds as their guide for success. On Friday night, Aug. 13, all eyes, in the paddock, were focused on a well-mannered youngster for leading conditioner Jeff Runco.

Breaking from post seven, Change the World, a daughter of Overanalyze and Saturday Nthe Park, left the gate in good order but appeared slightly bewildered when pressured on both sides for the lead. After a few indecisive strides, the handsome filly gathered herself and accelerated with a purpose.

Swinging wide turning into the stretch, Change the World shrugged off rivals with relative ease and set sail for the wire like an express train leaving Grand Central station.

The winner is owned and bred by Coleswood Farm and gives

one the impression she will not be distance challenged, while exhibiting multiple characteristics of a good horse.

Sunday, Aug. 22 was used to make-up a previously canceled card and the third race that humid evening was worth the price of admission. Run to Daylight, a daughter of Runhappy out of Daylight's Coming, by Stormy Atlantic, opened up at odds of 1-5, suggesting her series of lively morning trials were no fluke.

Momentarily confronted early, the Jeff Runco trainee assumed full command by the quarter pole and handily prevailed for owner David Raim. Bred in West Virginia by James Miller, this 2-year-old is a stunning illustration of her sire's sprinting prowess.

The unpredictability of the horse racing game is formidable at times, but it appears veteran conditioner Jeff Runco is primed for a successful fall campaign in the juvenile filly division.

### **Benefits of Owning a WV-Bred and/or -Sired racehorse** ***Some of the best incentives in the nation:***

- A minimum of three accredited races are written every day at Charles Town exclusively for registered WV-bred and/or -sired horses.
- West Virginia has the only program in the country that permits horses to win state-bred races that do not count against the horse's lifetime open conditions.
- The WV Thoroughbred Development Fund distributes almost \$5 million to breeders, owners, and stallion owners of accredited WV-bred and/or -sired horses based the horse's annual earnings at Charles Town and Mountaineer Park racetracks.
- The West Virginia Breeders Classics pays out almost \$1 million in purses for WV-bred and/or -sired horses. It is held annually on the second Saturday in October.
- \$800,000 in purses are allocated for up to 16 WV accredited stakes races during the year.
- Supplemental Purse Awards of up to 10% of the winner's share of the purse to the owner, breeder, and/or sire owner of the accredited WV-bred and/or -sired winner.
- West Virginia offers year-round racing with approximately 300 race days per year.

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