

Saturday

PM SIMULCAST

BELMONT

MONMOUTH

CHARLES TOWN

MOUNTAINEER

PENN NATIONAL

EVANGELINE

PRESQUE ISLE

CHURCHILL

HOLLYWOOD

Lone Star duel
would benefit
El Gato Malo

The speedy Samba Rooster may have company up front in the form of stretch-out sprinter Leonides, which could create an ideal setup for El Gato Malo in Saturday's \$400,000 Lone Star Derby. **Page 3**

□ Past performances follow editorial.

FORMIDABLE FAVORITE — On the Acorn is the defending champ, but even his trainer, Mike Mitchell, admits everyone may be running for second money behind Champs Elysees in the Jim Murray Handicap at Hollywood Park. **Page 3**

PREAKNESS PROSPECT — Yankee Bravo, who has trained well since his sub-par performance in the Santa Anita Derby, will take a shot at Big Brown in next weekend's Preakness. **Page 4**

TASK FORCE — In the wake of Eight Belles's death, The Jockey Club has created a seven-member committee assigned to find ways to improve the health and safety of Thoroughbreds. **Page 4**

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BELMONT

Bold Ruler looks like a tough call

By DAVID GRENING

ELMONT, N.Y. — Trainer Kieran McLaughlin thought he had a chance to win both stakes races at Belmont Park on Saturday. But with Lieutenant Ron forced to miss the Grade 2 Peter Pan because of a foot injury, McLaughlin hopes he can salvage the day with Lucky Island, who will make his stakes debut in the Grade 3, \$100,000 Bold Ruler Handicap.

McLaughlin had hopes of taking Lucky Island to Dubai for a rich stakes race in March, but those plans went awry early after Lucky Island bled in a first-level allowance race at Calder. McLaughlin then put the colt on Lasix — medication that is not permissible in Dubai — and Lucky Island responded with a pair of convincing allowance wins at Gulfstream and Aqueduct.

"He's a real serious horse, he's trained well," McLaughlin said. "This is a big step up, but he's a

very nice horse, done everything right. We like him, let's see how good he is."

Handicapping the Bold Ruler, run at six furlongs, is best left until after scratches. Executive Fleet and Man of Danger are the two primary speed horses, but Linda Rice, the trainer of Executive Fleet, is toying with the idea of running in the Grade 1 Metropolitan Handicap on May 26 and could possibly scratch out of this.

If Executive Fleet runs, however, he will most likely be favored given his recent form. After two strong allowance victories, Executive Fleet finished a strong second to undefeated Bustin Stones in the Grade 1 Carter Handicap at Aqueduct on April 5. Not bad for a horse who almost didn't make it to the races because of an abscess near his heart valve when he was younger.

"Tremendous race — get beat a half-length in a

Grade 1, that's fun," trainer Linda Rice said. "Would have been nicer to win by a half-length."

Rice said Executive Fleet came out of the Carter with a "wrenched stifle. . . . It took him a little while to recover. He's doing okay now."

Man of Danger could be a little quicker than Executive Fleet and is coming off good second-place finishes in the Paumonok and Toboggan handicaps. Trainer Bruce Levine said Man of Danger should benefit from being off two months as well as the prospect of a wet track.

"He's not a real durable horse," Levine said. "When you lead him over there he usually gives it to you."

Levine will also run Callmetony, who has won 14 races from 51 starts and is coming off a career-best effort winning a \$100,000 claiming race on April 11. Council Member, Forefathers, and Gold and Roses complete the field.

Golden Spikes gains lead role



FOUR-FOOTED FOTOS

Golden Spikes, shown running second to Recapturetheglori in the Illinois Derby at Hawthorne on April 5, might well go off favored in Saturday's Peter Pan, thanks in part to the defection of Lieutenant Ron.

By DAVID GRENING

ELMONT, N.Y. — A foot injury suffered by the exciting 3-year-old Lieutenant Ron has removed the favorite from Saturday's \$200,000 Peter Pan Stakes at Belmont Park and turned the Grade 2 event into a wide-open affair.

Trainer Kieran McLaughlin said Thursday that Lieutenant Ron, an impressive winner of his first

two starts, pulled up "a little bit funny" from a Wednesday morning gallop. Thus far, X-rays and an ultrasound have not revealed anything serious and McLaughlin is hoping it's just a bruised foot.

Lieutenant Ron's defection left a field of nine for the Peter Pan, which at 1 1/8 miles is the local prep for the Belmont Stakes, the third leg of the Triple Crown, to be run on June 7. Aside from Casino Drive — a half-brother to recent Belmont Stakes

winners Jazil and Rags to Riches — and Tomcito, it is unclear if any of the others in the race have the Belmont in their sights.

Peter Pan favoritism could fall to Golden Spikes, who comes off a second-place finish in the Illinois Derby, which produced Kentucky Derby third-place finisher Denis of Cork and fifth-place finisher

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