

Friday

AMERICA'S TURF AUTHORITY SINCE 1894



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SIMULCAST

VOL. CXIV NO. 263 (NY)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008

PRICE: \$5.50

BELMONT
MONMOUTH
CHARLES TOWN
PENN NATIONAL
MOUNTAINEER
PRESQUE ISLE
FAIRPLEX

Macho Again tops field of 10 for Super Derby

Trainer Dallas Stewart once worked as a valet in the jockeys' room at Louisiana Downs. Now he has the favorite in the track's biggest race as Macho Again drew post 3 for Saturday's Grade 2, \$500,000 Super Derby. **Page 3**

BIG GUN — Commentator will be heavily favored against six opponents in Saturday's \$500,000 Massachusetts Handicap at Suffolk Downs. **Page 3**

NOW A MAYBE — Trainer Larry Jones may be changing his mind about a Breeders' Cup trip for Proud Spell, who looms a big favorite in Saturday's Grade 2 Cotillion at Philly Park. **Page 3**

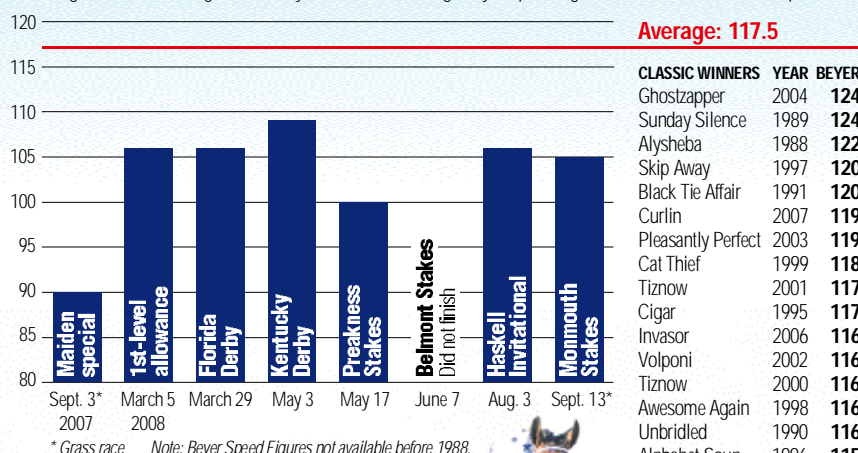
U.K. PREP — Churchill Downs announced plans Wednesday for a Kentucky Derby prep race at Kempton Park in Great Britain in which the winner would secure automatic entry into the field for the 2009 Kentucky Derby. **Page 4**

STEROID BAN — Maryland has approved new restrictions on steroids that are expected to be in place by Jan. 1, making it likely the drugs will be banned in all three Triple Crown states. **Page 4**

Big Brown game but a bit too slow

Speed check

In eight career starts, Big Brown has yet to reach the average Beyer Speed Figure that wins the Breeders' Cup Classic.



CLASSIC WINNERS	YEAR	BEYER
Ghostzapper	2004	124
Sunday Silence	1989	124
Alysheba	1988	122
Skip Away	1997	120
Black Tie Affair	1991	120
Curlin	2007	119
Pleasantly Perfect	2003	119
Cat Thief	1999	118
Tiznow	2001	117
Cigar	1995	117
Invasor	2006	116
Volponi	2002	116
Tiznow	2000	116
Awesome Again	1998	116
Unbridled	1990	116
Alphabet Soup	1996	115
Concern	1994	115
Arcangues	1993	114
A.P. Indy	1992	114
Saint Liam	2005	112



PHOTO BY TOM KEYSER



Dick
JERARDI

PHILADELPHIA — After you follow a horse as closely as we have all followed Big Brown this year, you start to get reasonably confident about what you know. This is a colt with talent, toughness, and consistency. If you can forget the absurdity of the Belmont result, Big Brown has been perfect. Only Peppers Pride wins like that.

In the colt's six wins this year, Big Brown has hit triple digits on the Beyer scale every time. That is serious business.

I thought his prep race last Saturday in the Monmouth Stakes was perfect in every way. Loved the smooth stride on the backstretch. Loved the competitiveness in the stretch against a B-list group of grass horses. Love the fact that Rick Dutrow gets six weeks to get the colt ready for

the Breeders' Cup Classic.

Without getting into what the new artificial surface at Santa Anita means or does not mean (I don't know and neither does anybody else), I feel very confident in saying Big Brown will run as well as he possibly can in the Classic.

However, after crunching the numbers for a few days, I have to wonder if that will be good enough. Big Brown's three best dirt Beyers are 109 (Kentucky Derby) and a pair of 106s (Florida Derby and Haskell). Has Big Brown hit a Beyer ceiling?

The evidence would suggest he has. And if that evidence holds up, Big Brown likely won't be fast enough to win the Classic. The winner almost has

Continued on page 5

BELMONT

Mott filly lands in good spot

By DAVID GRENING

ELMONT, N.Y. — After competing in nothing but stakes for the better part of a year, Namaste's Wish takes a drop in class when she heads a field of seven entered in a second-level optional \$50,000 claiming race that serves as Belmont Park's Friday feature.

In addition to dropping in class, Namaste's Wish returns to her preferred track and distance and should get the firm footing she appears to prefer in the 1 1/16-mile race over the inner turf.

The 3-year-old Namaste's Wish, trained by Bill Mott, won the Miss Grillo Stakes at Belmont last September and was sent off the favorite in the Epitome Stakes at Monmouth on Breeders' Cup Day. But that race was run over soft ground, and Namaste's Wish could do no better than fifth.

Namaste's Wish is winless in five stakes tries this year, but her best effort may have been in the Gaviola Stakes, where she was beaten just 1 1/4 lengths by My Princess Jess. That horse used the Gaviola as a springboard to victories in the Boiling Springs and Lake George stakes.

In her most recent start, Namaste's Wish caught yielding turf at Saratoga, where she finished fourth behind Backseat Rhythm, who came back to win the Grade 1 Garden City.

Kapanga has won her last two starts after suffering troubled trips in her first two starts, both at Belmont Park. Trainer Angel Penna Jr.'s primary concern is that the distance may be too short for her.

"More quality [opponents] and less distance is not the best combination," Penna said. "If this race would have been a mile and a quarter, I would have been much more comfortable, but she can handle a mile and a sixteenth."

Survived and Jeux de Danse will run for the \$50,000 claiming option. Jeux de Danse won in a similar spot on June 26 and was claimed out of that race by Patrick Reynolds.

Value Stream is 2 for 2 at Belmont, including a gate-to-wire score in a first-level allowance race here in July. She drops out of an overnight stakes run over yielding ground at Saratoga.

Viva La Flag has finished second in three of four starts in this allowance condition.

