

Wednesday

PM
SIMULCAST

BELMONT
MONMOUTH
PRESQUE ISLE
TURFWAY
DELAWARE
OAK TREE/SA

INSIDE

To our readers

Today you may notice some changes to your copy of the *Daily Racing Form* – the paper is a half-inch shorter, but a new look and a host of new features make it easier to read and deliver more information than ever. **Page 4**

Track reports

Curfin put the finishing touches on his preparation for Saturday's Jockey Club Gold Cup at Belmont with an easy half-mile work Monday at Saratoga. **Page 12**

Wednesday's Hey Baba Lulu Stakes at Belmont is a land mine for pick-six players. **Page 12**

The Polytrack at Turfway will play host to dirt specialists Zanjero and Honest Man and turf pro Stream Cat in Saturday's Kentucky Cup Classic. **Page 15**

News and notes

Hall of Fame jockey Earle Fikes, 61, retired Sunday after 44 years in the saddle. **Page 14**

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OAK TREE AT SANTA ANITA

Stakes bonanza starts meet



Designs on the Cup

Get Funky, left, will be trying for a spot in the new Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint when he runs in the Morvich on opening day at the Oak Tree Meeting at Santa Anita. In the first five days of the meet, eight of the nine graded stakes will offer berths in the expanded 14-race Cup.

Wednesday

RACE (Grade)	PURSE	BC BERTH
Morvich Handicap (3)	\$100,000	Turf Sprint

Saturday

Goodwood (1)	\$500,000	Classic
Yellow Ribbon (1)	400,000	F&M Turf
Oak Leaf (1)	250,000	Juvenile Fillies
Clement Hirsch (1)	250,000	-
Lady's Secret (1)	250,000	Ladies' Classic
Ancient Title (1)	250,000	Sprint

Sunday

Norfolk (1)	\$250,000	Juvenile
Oak Tree Mile (2)	200,000	Mile

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- ▶ Howday on the guinea pig meet, page 5
- ▶ Tyler Baze back in the saddle, page 8
- ▶ Hollendorfer is moving up, page 10
- ▶ Silver meet for golden throat, page 10



Photo by Beaver & Associates

By Brad Free

ARCADIA, Calif. – The autumn Oak Tree race meet begins Wednesday at Santa Anita just like many major California meets begin these days – smiling track officials with fingers crossed, hoping the latest generation of synthetic surfaces is up to the challenge.

"I am extremely bullish on our meet," Oak Tree executive vice president Sherwood Chillingworth said Monday, despite economic gloom in the racing business and beyond. And yes, Chillingworth understands there are questions about the Pro-Ride main track at Santa Anita that replaced the dysfunctional, non-draining Cushion Track.

"In light of everything, I think we'll have a hell of a good meet; we have a great racing schedule," Chillingworth said.

Oh yes, the racing. Oak Tree starts

Wednesday with trepidation, but ends with a Friday-Saturday bang on Oct. 24-25, with the two-day, 14-race, \$25 million Breeders' Cup extravaganza. The five-week Oak Tree meet ends Oct. 26.

Much of the action is packed early in the season. An unprecedented six Grade 1 races will be run Saturday, with two more graded stakes Sunday; opening-day Wednesday features the Grade 3 Morvich Handicap, a turf sprint. Eight of the nine graded stakes are Win and You're In races; the winners earn berths in respective BC races, pending entry fees.

The 2008 Breeders' Cup will be the first on a synthetic surface, and Santa Anita track president Ron Charles is hopeful that initial reviews of the surface extend beyond fall, into winter.

"So far, everybody has been very positive; almost every rider I talked to has said it's very consistent, with very little change from

days that are overcast to days that are sunny," he said.

Meanwhile, many trainers are on the fence, including Bob Baffert.

"What I've seen so far in the morning looks good, but we won't know until we start running on it," he said.

Cool morning temperatures generally contribute to consistency; the true test is racing under afternoon sun. "Some horses will adapt to it, and some won't," Baffert said.

While the Oak Tree stakes program is set, racing director Mike Harlow admits it will be hard to duplicate the 2007 fall overnight program when full fields were normal.

"Last year was unbelievable; we averaged 8.9 starters per race," he said.

By coincidence or not, the 2007 Oak Tree

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