

Wednesday

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AQUEDUCT

CHURCHILL

LAUREL

BEULAH

GOLDEN GATE

HAWTHORNE

HOLLYWOOD

INSIDE

Track reports

Trainer Helen Pitts has told Churchill Downs racing officials she is considering a run for Einstein in the Grade 2 Clark Handicap on Nov. 28, but legal issues surrounding his ownership could complicate things. **Page 9**

Cost of Freedom will work five furlongs and jog on Wednesday in an effort to be removed from the vet's list and permitted to enter Saturday's \$100,000 Vernon Underwood at Hollywood. **Page 8**

Artiste Royal, who has not run since winning the Grade 1 Charlie Whittingham at Hollywood Park on June 7, will make a comeback in an open allowance on Friday at Golden Gate Fields. **Page 8**

During his six-day race-calling stint at Churchill Downs, Michael Wrona reaffirmed his reputation as one of the best callers in North America. **Page 9**

The feature Wednesday at Hawthorne, a turf-sprint allowance, came up a decent race, topped by the Hugh Robertson trainee Radical Fringe. **Page 10**

News & notes

Keeneland's November breeding stock sale ended its 15-day run Monday with steep declines that are making sale officials and breeders feel cautious. **Page 3**



BARBARA D. LIVINGSTON

AQUEDUCT

Clement has two threats for turf stakes

By Dave Litfin

OZONE PARK, N.Y. – Last week's rainy weather wiped out turf racing at Aqueduct for four straight days. If Mother Nature cooperates and Wednesday's featured \$65,000 Four Bases overnight stakes stays on the grass at 1 1/16 miles, it should be a highly competitive race.

The pace complexion may depend on the weather, and whether Rick Dutrow Jr. runs Formal King, who is also entered in a starter handicap on the main track Thursday. Formal King, the lone 3-year-old, is a versatile gelding who has won 3 of 4 starts on turf and wet dirt since being stretched out to a mile or longer.

If Formal King should scratch, Buddy's Humor, a front-running winner of the Jersey Derby in his final start at 3 and the pacesetter in the Grade 3 Fort Marcy Handicap here back in April, could be the one to catch despite breaking from the far outside. A Bruce Levine-trained 4-year-old, Buddy's Humor makes his first start since July, when he ran a close fifth in the Grade 1 United Nations.

No matter the pace, Christophe Clement sends out two strong contenders in Operation Red Dawn and Nergal, who are uncoupled.

Over the past year, Operation Red Dawn has compiled five in-the-money finishes in graded stakes, including two at Aqueduct: a third in the Knickerbocker over soft turf last fall, and a runner-up finish in the Fort Marcy.

Nergal has won 3 of 6 starts in the United States, and raced effectively over soft and heavy ground in his native France.

"They're both very consistent horses – the type you dream to have in your barn," said Clement. "I wouldn't want to see the turf too soft for Operation Red Dawn, but for Nergal, soft ground is no problem."

Other contenders include Sensational Humor, a close second to Operation Red Dawn at Belmont earlier this year; Prince Rahy, in the money all four starts over Aqueduct's turf; Hotstufanthensome, fresh off a sharp score in the John Henry Stakes at the Meadowlands; Pick Six, who comes off a second-level allowance win; and Gimme Credit and Al Basha, New York-breds who were separated by a length in the recent Mohawk Handicap.

Hunting, winner of the Grade 3 Stuyvesant's 2007 running, and the Fair Hill-based Arcata, winner of the H.E. Johnson Memorial at Laurel earlier this year, entered for the main track only, in which case the distance would be shortened to a mile.

How much is Curlin worth?

The consultant Ric Waldman put Curlin's value at \$20 million Monday at the first of two district court hearings that will determine how much majority owner Jess Jackson will pay for the remaining 20 percent of the horse.

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