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AQUEDUCT
CHURCHILL
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INSIDE

Track reports

With 1,997 lifetime victories, jockey Rosemary Homeister Jr. has returned to Calder in a bid to get memorable No. 2,000. **Page 6**

Hawthorne will not be seeing any money from a legislatively mandated impact fee imposed upon four northern Illinois casinos until at least next summer. **Page 6**

Pioneer of the Nile, who finished a close fifth in the BC Juvenile, is returning to California, knocking Chocolate Candy off his perch as favorite for the CashCall Futurity. **Page 7**

The year 2008 has been a watershed year in the career of jockey Eurico Rosa Da Silva at Woodbine. **Page 8**

News and notes

Texas racetracks and the state horsemen's group have reached an agreement that will end an eight-month blackout of state racetrack signals on two major account-wagering platforms. **Page 3**

With Sam Houston Race Park's canceled due to storm damage, some of the dates have been moved to Retama Park for a meet that opens Thursday. **Page 3**



ADAM COGLIANESE/NYRA

It's always tough to see great ones go

First he was going to race next year, perhaps. Then he was going to run once more this year, maybe. Now, with few if any options left, Curlin is all but retired, although owner Jess Jackson can be forgiven for wishing that the music would never end.

It must be hard to let go, to climb down from the giddy heights of campaigning America's best, most consistent racehorse for two solid seasons. And let there be no doubt. Curlin was worth every conference call, every speculation, every dangled possibility of where he might run next. In an era of one-hit wonders, this horse was the real deal, and probably ready and willing to do it again as a 5-year-old if the bitter economics of the business did not get in the way. Curlin laid his big, gorgeous body down every time he ran, under all manner of circumstance, leaving behind a trail of loyal admirers to go along with an impressive pile of beaten opposition.

Curlin's people liked to point out that their hero did things never done before, and they have a point, even though that description fits most of the great ones.

Until Kelso came along, no other horse had raced so well for so long and earned so much money. Until Affirmed came along, no horse could boast three such comprehensively superior seasons at ages 2, 3, and 4. Until Cigar came along, no horse had won so many consecutive races against all comers at the top of the game and carried his form halfway around the world and back again, while earning record sums.

And yes, until Curlin came along, no other horse ever commenced his 3-year-old season as a maiden, emerged the star of an unforgettable Triple



JAY HOVDEY

Owned for most of his career by Jess Jackson, Curlin won 11 of 16 starts for record lifetime earnings of \$10.5 million.

Legal complications could affect stud plan for Curlin, page 4

AQUEDUCT

Etched key off absence

By Dave Litfin

OZONE PARK, N.Y. – Etched, who wowed observers winning his first two starts as a 2-year-old last fall, returns from a layoff of more than nine months and will be the key point of interest on Thursday's program at the Big A.

Etched was 26-1 in Pool 1 of the Kentucky Derby Future Wager on the strength of a blowout win in the Nashua Stakes on Aqueduct's main track last fall. A homebred from the Darley Stable, Etched returns in Thursday's third race, a \$48,000 nonwinners of three allowance and optional claimer at a mile.

After winning his maiden debut and the Nashua for Kiaran McLaughlin without so much as drawing a deep breath, Etched was "promoted" to Godolphin Stable and sent to Dubai, where he ran a disappointing fourth in the UAE 2000 Guineas on Feb. 14. He was taken out of training soon after.

Etched returned to the U.S. in late summer. "He can be a difficult horse to train – he's got a mind of his own," said McLaughlin. "First time out he won easy, and when he pulled up he went to the gap to go home. My exercise rider Lorenzo Morales has done a great job with him. We think he's a nice horse with a bright future. He looks great and has loads of ability."

Etched will also be reunited with Alan Garcia, who was aboard for both of his victories last year. He breaks from post 5 in a field of eight, which also includes Helsinki, the third-place finisher in last year's Travers and Brooklyn Handicap. Helsinki has been sidelined for nearly a year.

Helsinki ended a busy 3-year-old season with a fifth in the Discovery Handicap here for trainer Nick Zito, and returns 361 days later with a trainer change to John Terranova.

A deep closer who may require a bit more ground than a mile, Helsinki was scratched from Saturday's Stuyvesant Handicap in the mud in favor of this spot.

Others, with more recent form, are Screen to Screen and Papa Bear, both last-out allowance winners at Belmont; Amped, fourth in the mud on opening day; and My Golden Opinion, who has been freshened since chasing Discovery-bound Lieutenant Ron in the slop nearly seven weeks ago.

The David Jacobson-trained entry of Last Wave and El Chile Dog are both in for the optional \$35,000 claiming price.

