



CANTERBURY PARK

1100 Canterbury Road
Shakopee, MN 55379

Ready to Runaway Wins Again At Minnesota Festival of Champions

Wagering handle exceeds \$2 million, an event record

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Shakopee, Minn. -- Rain may have forced scratches and surface changes Wednesday at Canterbury Park, but it did not dampen the spirit of participants in the 27th Minnesota Festival of Champions, an evening of racing restricted to horses bred in the state and designed to celebrate the industry. The 12-race card, with eight stakes, was conducted over a sloppy main track with five races moved from the rain-saturated turf course to the slop in front of a capacity crowd limited to 750 spectators due to COVID-19 restrictions. On track handle was \$121,434 while total handle of \$2,048,915 was a record for the event.

Ready to Runaway continued her Canterbury dominance winning the \$100,000 Bella Notte Minnesota Distaff Sprint by 4 1/4 lengths in 1:10.12, her sixth stakes winner, including a 2019 Festival victory, since being claimed last summer for \$25,000 by John Mentz of Lakeville, Minn. The 4-year-old filly came from off the pace, before taking command in the stretch. "I was a little concerned because I thought she would get the lead," Mentz said. "But she has been so good. When you claim a horse you just hope to get a [winner's circle] picture taken, not win a \$100,000 stakes race." Roimes Chirinos rode the \$2.20 winner for trainer Mac Robertson.

Chirinos and Robertson teamed up again to win the \$100,000 Princess Elaine, moved from turf to the main track, with Clickbait who is co-owned by Mentz, Jeff Larson and Hugh Robertson. Clickbait won easily by 7 1/2 lengths and paid \$3.20 as the favorite. Robertson has won a record 37 Festival races.

Drop of Golden Sun raced gate to wire in the 1 1/16 mile \$100,000 Blair's Cove Stakes under Francisco Arrieta winning by two lengths over Dame Plata. The 5-year-old is owned and trained by Tony Rengstorf. Made the wagering favorite off a front running win in the Wally's Choice Stakes Aug. 19 at the same distance, Drop of Golden Sun paid \$5.20 to win covering the distance in 1:42.57.

Sneeky Diversion, a 2-year-old gelding who eight days earlier broke his maiden at first asking, battled for the lead with eventual fourth place finisher Well Pro for a half-mile in the six furlong \$100,000 Northern Lights Futurity before prevailing by 1 1/2 lengths over closer Fitzpatrick in 1:09.80. Sneeky Diversion, who paid \$9.80, was ridden by Dean Butler for leading owner Lothenbach Stables, Inc. and leading trainer Joel Berndt. This was the first Festival victory for Berndt.

Jockey Ry Eikleberry wasted no time sending 2-year-old filly Star of the North to the lead in the \$100,000 Northern Lights Debutante and was never challenged, winning by 4 1/2 lengths in 1:10.77 for six furlongs and paying \$8.00 to win. The filly is owned by Michael Grossman and trained by Francisco Bravo.

Trainer David Van Winkle won \$100,000 Crocrock Minnesota Sprint with Fireman Oscar who closed from last to win by three lengths after chasing a pace of 43.93 seconds for the half mile. The 6-year-old completed six furlongs in 1:08.80. Fireman Oscar is owned and was bred by Peter Mattson and was ridden by Alonso Quinonez.

The \$70,350 Minnesota Quarter Horse Futurity was decided by a head as Corona White Sox defeated favorite Western Reserve with Nik Goodwin aboard for trainer Patrick Swan and owner and breeder Dan Kjorsvik.

"I broke really, really well," Goodwin said. "I was pretty confident," he said after a photo finish determined the winner.

Eikleberry closed out the card winning the \$67,250 Minnesota Quarter Horse Derby on the favorite Vo Fantastic Aira who paid \$3.40. The 3-year-old was a head better than Johnee B. Vo Fantastic Aira is trained by Ed Ross Hardy for the meet's leading quarter horse owner Corey Wilmes.

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