



- News, views and insights that matter to breeders, owners and racing industry professionals - May 2017 -

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2016 New Jersey-bred Champions

Dennis A. Drazin's homebred Sunny Ridge was named 2016 New Jersey-bred Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old male by the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association of New Jersey. The son of Holy Bull out of Lignum Vitae (by Songand-aprayer) was the leading New Jersey-bred money winner of 2016, earning \$308,250 from six starts while winning the Withers Stakes-G3 and finishing third in the betfair.com Haskell Invitational-G1 and Queens County Stakes.

Trained by Jason Servis, Sunny Ridge is from the last crop of champion Holy Bull. He was also a state-bred divisional champion at 2 when winning or placing in three stakes, two graded.

David Gruskos' Chublicious was honored as champion older male and champion sprinter based on his three stakes victories in six starts during his 2016 campaign. The Joe-Dan Farm bred son of New Jersey sire Hey Chub out of Sassy Broad, by Arch, won the John J. Reilly Handicap, Mr. Prospector Stakes (in open company) and New Jersey Breeders Handicap. Trained by Jorge Navarro for his stakes wins, Chublicious earned \$149,414 for the year.

Isabelle de Tomaso's homebred Irish War Cry was named champion 2-year-old after winning both of his starts in 2016. The son of Curlin out



NJ-Bred Horse of the Year Sunny Ridge kicked off his sophomore season with a win in Aqueduct's Withers Stakes-G3.



Champion older male and sprinter Chublicious had his best season ever at 5, winning three stakes at Monmouth Park.



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JIM MCCUE

Irish War Cry (right) was determined in winning Laurel Park's Marylander Stakes to close out his 2-year-old championship season.



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Champion older mare Bustin Out was first or second in all five starts in 2016, three in stakes.



BOB COGLIANESE PHOTOS INC.

Rainbow Heir added a turf champion title to his list as champion 3-year-old (2013) and older horse, sprinter and Horse of the Year (2014).

of Irish Sovereign, by Polish Numbers, debuted at Laurel Park Nov. 11, winning by 4½ lengths, and followed with a victory in Laurel's Marylander Stakes Dec. 31. The Graham Motion trainee finished the year with earnings of \$82,800.

Diamond Play, a fourth-generation New Jersey-bred, is the champion 3-year-old filly after winning three of nine starts in 2016 for Thoroughbred Investments Fund LLC. The daughter of E Dubai out of Forbidden Isle, by New Jersey-bred champion Belong to Me, won her three races in consecutive starts from July 30 to Oct. 3 by a combined 18¼ lengths. Bred by Colonial Farms and trained by Anthony Margotta Jr., she earned \$142,104 in 2016.

Joseph and Gayle Ioia's Bustin Out, trained by Chuck Spina, was named champion older female after winning three times and finishing second twice in five starts her 4-year-old season. Dianne Boyken bred the daughter of Bustin Stones and the Disco Rico mare Disco Shaker who won the Eleven North Handicap and finished second in the Open Mind Handicap and Regret Stakes while earning \$131,838.

New Farm's homebred Rainbow Heir was named champion turf runner after taking Gulfstream Park West's Gin Rummy Champ Stakes and Monmouth's Wolf Hill Stakes and finishing third in the Troy Stakes at Saratoga and Hall of Fame Stakes at Parx in four starts. The 2014 New Jersey-bred Horse of the Year made a successful transition to the turf after winning four stakes on the dirt, including the Grade 3 Jersey Shore. The son of Wildcat Heir out of Rainbow Pride, by Prospectors Gamble, earned \$113,985 under the direction of trainer Jason Servis to push his career total over the half-million dollar mark.

Irish Sovereign was honored as 2016 Broodmare of the Year. Isabelle de Tomaso bred and owns the 17-year-old Polish Numbers mare out of Irish Genius (by Beau Genius). Irish Sovereign has produced six winners from six foals, all New Jersey-breds, including graded stakes winner Irish War Cry, graded stakes-placed Irish Strait and stakes-placed Irish Politics. She has a yearling filly by Lookin At Lucky named Lucky Irish and is in foal to Graydar.

Hey Chub, owned by Daniel J. Lopez's Joe-Dan Farm, earns his first title as New Jersey Stallion of the Year. The 17-year-old son of Carson City out of Donna Doo, by Spend a Buck, was a multiple stakes-winning New Jersey-bred who hit the board in 30 of 36 starts and earned \$441,755. Hey Chub is the sire of 31 foals of racing age and 19 of his 24 starters have reached the winner's circle. Hey Chub has sired stakes winners Chubbicious (\$318,194) and Chubble Maker (\$209,066) along with stakes-placed Chubbiana (\$119,872) and Chub's Charmer. He has lifetime progeny earnings over \$1.7 million.

Voting for the 2016 New Jersey-bred champions were columnist Bill Finley, Monmouth Park handicapper Brad Thomas, *Daily Racing Form* handicapper Kenny Peck, The Racing Biz founder and publisher Frank Vespe, and Ben Massam, associate editor of *Thoroughbred Daily News*.



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Drazin thinking big with Sunny Ridge

By Bill Finley

After a five-race losing streak that stretched over a 9½-month span, New Jersey-bred Sunny Ridge has come back in a big way. He's won two straight stakes at Aqueduct and is in such good form that he has owner/breeder Dennis Drazin thinking Breeders' Cup.

"He is sound and healthy and doing terrific," said Drazin, who heads the management team that operates Monmouth. "He loves the inner track at Aqueduct and we've put together two very good performances now. He's at the top of his game."

Sunny Ridge ran one of the best races in his career in a losing effort when third in last year's Grade 1 Haskell, but the race may have taken something out of him. He followed that with a dreadful effort when finishing 35 lengths behind the winner in his next start, the Grade 2 Pennsylvania Derby. Losses in the Discovery-G3 and Queens County followed.

But 2017 has been good to the now 4-year-old son of Holy Bull. He kicked off the year with a win in the Jazil in January and followed that with a victory over a tough field in the Stymie in March. Though the Stymie was worth just \$125,000 and is not a graded stakes, the race was better than your typical wintertime New York stakes race. The field included millionaire New York-bred Royal Posse, Diversify, a previously undefeated gelding who had cracked the 100-mark in his Beyer numbers, and Send It In, who had won six of his last seven for Todd Pletcher. Sent off at 4-1, Sunny Ridge closed from fifth to win by three-quarters of a length under Manny Franco.

With his poor form cycle behind him, Sunny Ridge appears ready to live up to the expectations Drazin and trainer Jason Servis had for him when he was competitive in races like the Champagne, Delta Jackpot and Haskell and when he won the Grade 3 Withers to kick off his campaign last year. He may not be Arrogate, but he is certainly a quality horse capable of winning his share of stakes events.

"The horse is a nice horse," Drazin said. "Jason thinks he'll stay sound and if he stays sound he's going to earn a lot of money between now and the end of his career."

Drazin and Servis have yet to map out a plan when it comes to upcoming races, but were entered in the Grade 2 Charles Town Classic April 22, which has a purse of \$1.25 million. Sunny Ridge already proved he can handle a "bull ring" when second by a neck to eventual Preakness winner Exaggerator in the \$1 million Grade 3 Delta Jackpot at Delta Downs in 2015.

"I asked Jason about that race [Charles Town Classic] and he said that it's certainly something we should take a look at,"

Drazin said. "Sunny Ridge performed well in the Delta Jackpot around a track with tight turns. He's doing super, so that's a race we will certainly have to consider."

Beyond a possible start in the Charles Town Classic, Drazin has two goals, to stay loyal to Monmouth Park and to try Grade 1 company, perhaps, even, in the Breeders' Cup.

"I don't know what we're going to do, but we have a commitment to support Monmouth Park, so we will look at races like the Iselin and the Charlie Hesse," Drazin said. "He'd be going against Jersey-breds in the Hesse and I would think he'd be odds-on in that race."

But Drazin also wants to give Sunny Ridge a chance to show what he can do at a higher level.

"Following the Stymie, Jason kind of mentioned the Breeders' Cup," Drazin said. "He's not eligible because I didn't nominate him. I would have to pay \$100,000 to enter him and it's a little premature to think about that now. Given he's not eligible and that he's doing well and we want to run in the Breeders' Cup we'll probably circle a 'Win and You're In' race."

"He's 100 percent, he's doing well, he's put on some weight. He's doing everything right. So you have to give a horse a chance to perform. You don't want to beat them up to point where they're not competitive but when you have a horse who is doing well and with the way some of these big stakes races come up these days with small fields, well, sometimes you have to take your shot. He certainly ran third behind some good horses in the Haskell and he has done well against a lot of really good horses."

No matter what happens from here, Sunny Ridge is already writing one of the better stories in recent history when it comes to New Jersey-breds. He is owned by the head of Monmouth, he is by perhaps the greatest horse ever stabled at Monmouth Park in Holy Bull and he finished third in the track's signature race.

"The Haskell last year was special to me because I had a horse in the race that performed very well," Drazin said. "You would think from the outreach from the community that he had won the race. People were very excited. Running third in the Haskell against that kind of quality, to me, it was like winning."

Drazin says "anything can happen" in racing, and he's right. Can Sunny Ridge make a mark in the Breeders' Cup? Stay tuned.



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2017 Monmouth Park Stakes Schedule

| Run Date | Stakes Name | | Purse | Division | Distance |
|----------|--|--------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| 5/13/17 | Wolf Hill Stakes | | \$60,000 | 3 and up | 5 F (T) |
| 5/27/17 | Red Bank Stakes | G3 | \$100,000 | 3 and up | 1 M (T) |
| 5/28/17 | Blue Sparkler Stakes | | \$60,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 5 F (T) |
| 6/3/17 | Eatontown Stakes | G3 | \$100,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 1½ M (T) |
| 6/10/17 | Crank It Up Stakes | | \$60,000 | F, 3YO | 5 F (T) |
| 6/11/17 | Decathlon Stakes | | \$60,000 | 3 and up | 6 F |
| 6/17/17 | Salvator Mile | G3 | \$100,000 | 3 and up | 1 M |
| 6/18/17 | Betfair.com Pegasus Stakes | G3 | \$100,000 | 3YO | 1½ M |
| 6/24/17 | Jersey Shore Stakes | | \$60,000 | 3YO | 6 F |
| 7/1/17 | United Nations Stakes | G1 | \$300,000 | 3 and up | 1¾ M (T) |
| 7/2/17 | Lady's Secret Stakes | Listed | \$75,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 1 M & 70 Y |
| 7/8/17 | Long Branch Stakes | Listed | \$100,000 | 3YO | 1½ M |
| 7/15/17 | Boiling Springs Stakes | Listed | \$75,000 | F, 3YO | 1½ M (T) |
| 7/16/17 | Regret Stakes | | \$60,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 6 F |
| 7/22/17 | My Frenchman Stakes | | \$60,000 | 3 and up | 5½ F (T) |
| 7/29/17 | Lamplighter Stakes | | \$60,000 | 3YO | 1½ M (T) |
| 7/30/17 | Betfair.com Haskell Invitational | G1 | \$1,000,000 | 3YO | 1½ M |
| 7/30/17 | WinStar Matchmaker Stakes | G3 | \$100,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 1½ M (T) |
| 7/30/17 | Monmouth Stakes | G2 | \$150,000 | 3 and up | 1½ M (T) |
| 7/30/17 | Monmouth Cup | G3 | \$100,000 | 3 and up | 1½ M |
| 7/30/17 | Molly Pitcher Stakes | G3 | \$100,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 1½ M |
| 7/30/17 | John J. Reilly Handicap (NJ Bred) | | \$60,000 | 3 and up | 6 F |
| 8/5/17 | Colleen Stakes | | \$60,000 | F, 2YO | 5½ F (T) |
| 8/6/17 | Tyro Stakes | | \$60,000 | 2YO | 5½ F (T) |
| 8/12/17 | Monmouth Oaks | G3 | \$100,000 | F, 3YO | 1½ M |
| 8/19/17 | Violet Stakes | G3 | \$100,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 1 M (T) |
| 8/26/17 | Philip H. Iselin Stakes | G3 | \$100,000 | 3 and up | 1½ M |
| 8/27/17 | NJ Breeders Hcp. (NJ Bred) | NJB | \$60,000 | 3 and up | 5½ F (T) |
| 8/27/17 | Charles Hesse III Hcp. (NJ Bred) | NJB | \$60,000 | 3 and up | 1½ M |
| 8/27/17 | Eleven North Hcp. (NJ Bred) | NJB | \$60,000 | F&M, 3 and up | 6 F |
| 9/2/17 | Sorority Stakes | | \$60,000 | F, 2YO | 6 F |
| 9/3/17 | Sapling Stakes | Listed | \$75,000 | 2YO | 1 M |



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