

# It's Official: American Pharoah to Travers

By Jeremy Balan

Courtesy BloodHorse.com



Photo: Benoit Photography

American Pharoah works at Del Mar August 23, 2015.

Triple Crown winner **American Pharoah** will head to **Saratoga Race Course** for the Aug. 29 Travers Stakes (gr. I), his connections announced Aug. 23 after the colt worked at **Del Mar**.

After evaluating the colt following the breeze, owner Ahmed Zayat made it official. Zayat Stables racing manager Justin Zayat said he will travel to New York Aug. 26.

American Pharoah's seven-furlong breeze at the seaside racetrack was as impressive as it was easy. The son of **Pioneerof the Nile** covered the distance in 1:23  $\frac{1}{5}$ , according to Del Mar's clockers, and clicked off fractions of :23 flat, :47  $\frac{1}{5}$ , :58  $\frac{4}{5}$ , and 1:10  $\frac{3}{5}$ .

The round of applause from the several hundred in attendance at Del Mar was appropriate for the colt who seemingly hasn't had a bad workout.

"Saratoga here we come!" Ahmed Zayat said on Twitter.

Trainer Bob Baffert was impressed as always.

"It was very positive," Baffert said in the Del Mar grandstand after the drill. "He always works well, but we wanted to see if he still has that energy level. It was a pretty incredible work and he's a pretty incredible horse."

Baffert also got immediate feedback from the colt's regular exercise rider, Martin Garcia, while he was still on the track.

"Is he ready to go a mile and a quarter?" Baffert asked Garcia playfully. "Si," Garcia said emphatically in Spanish through the hiss of the two-way radio.

The trainer also commented on potentially racing against dual champion filly **Beholder**, who blew away a field of males the previous day in the Pacific Classic (gr. I) and could race against American Pharoah if they both run in the Breeders' Cup Classic (gr. I).

"Racing is so good right now," Baffert said. "I just hope she's his first date next year. They need to date."

Contingent upon American Pharoah starting in the Travers, the New York Racing Association, as announced earlier, will raise the total purse to \$1.6 million from \$1.25 million. Travers Day attendance will be capped at 50,000.

"This is a great day for racing fans in Saratoga, across the state of New York, and throughout our nation," NYRA president and chief executive officer Christopher Kay said.