

New York-Breds to Shine on Memorial Day at Belmont Park

ELMONT, N.Y. - Nearly 100 New York-breds will take center stage at Belmont Park on Memorial Day for Big Apple Showcase Day, featuring six stakes races worth \$900,000. The 10-race program, with a scheduled first-race post time of 1:30 p.m., is only for horses bred in the Empire State.

Fan favorites **King Kreesa**, **Kharafa** and **Lubash** will renew their rivalry once again in the \$125,000 Kingston, carded as Race 7. The redoubtable trio has split the past three editions of the one-mile turf race, with Lubash taking the 2015 running in his fifth appearance.

Most recently, the Aliyu Ben J Stables' color-bearer finished fifth in the Danger's Hour at Aqueduct Racetrack in his 9-year-old debut.

"He ran badly last time," said trainer Christophe Clement. "I'm not exactly sure why, but he's training well so we just need to try him back."

Among those challenging the threesome's supremacy in the Kingston will be **Macagone**, who turned in a career-best 103 Beyer Speed Figure in winning the Danger's Hour over a yielding turf course in his first start of the year, and multiple stakes winner **Notacatbutallama**, returning to the turf after a second-place finish in an allowance in April at the Big A.

Weekend Hideaway, who kicked off his 6-year-old campaign with a rousing victory in the Affirmed Success on April 29, stretches out to a mile for the day's first stakes, the \$200,000 Commentator. Back to challenge him from the six-furlong Affirmed Success will be third-place finisher **Drama King**, fourth-place **Ostrolenka**, and **Eye Luv Lulu**, who was seventh.

Sheriffa will attempt to return to the winner's circle for the first time this year as she defends her title in the \$200,000 Critical Eye for fillies and mares, also at a mile. The 5-year-old Posse mare hasn't raced since a sixth-place finish behind winner and fellow Critical Eye entrant **Storied Lady** in the Biogio's Rose in February at the Big A.

"It's off the layoff and she was off for a while, so I don't know if she'll be tight enough," said trainer Linda Rice of Sheriffa. "But, she's been training well and we've done as much as we can with her."

Expected to attract support are multiple stakes winner **Quezon**, who made a victorious return from a 10-month layoff in March at Gulfstream Park; graded stakes-placed **Bar of Gold**, most recently third in the Grade 3 Distaff Handicap at Aqueduct; and Oaklawn Park stakes winner **Haveyogoneaway**, making her New York debut.

The day's stakes action includes a pair of stakes for sophomores, the \$125,000 Bouwerie for fillies and the \$125,000 Mie Lee, both at seven furlongs.

Bag of Tricks, who has won her two 2016 starts by a combined margin of 10 ¼ lengths, will attempt to stretch her win streak to three in the Bouwerie as she faces last year's Lynbrook winner **Wonderment**, 2015 East View winner **Absatootly**, and the consistent **Frosty**

Margarita, who is 4-4-1 from nine career starts including victories in the Maddie May, New York Stallion Series and the Key Cents.

Trainer Todd Pletcher will be represented by a formidable trio in the Mike Lee, headed by multiple stakes winner **Sudden Surprise**. The Repole Stable color-bearer, winner of five of his six starts last year, finished second to Grade 1 Belmont Stakes hopeful Governor Malibu in the Gander at the Big A in his 3-year-old debut. After finishing last of six in the Jimmy Winkfield behind stablemate **Awesome Gent**, Sudden Surprise was a front-running winner of the New York Stallion Series on April 24.

Joining Sudden Surprise and Awesome Gent from the Pletcher barn is **Cards of Stone**, who most recently was fifth in an optional claimer after taking on Grade 1 company in the Blue Grass, in which he was 10th.

Among the challengers is **Championofthenile**, an \$840,000 2-year-old in training purchase who was recently gelded, and **Lucky Lurie**, second to Sudden Surprise on April 24.

Rounding out the day's stakes action is the \$125,000 Mount Vernon for fillies and mares going a mile on the turf, in which **Invading Humor** will attempt to defend her title against last year's runner-up, **Mah Jong Maddnes**. The full field also boasts **Jc's Shooting Star**, attempting to improve on her perfect 2-for-2 record on the Belmont turf for trainer David Donk, who also sends out **Selenite** and **Lady Kreesa**.