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Photos by Linscott Photography



## COUNTRY MINISTER LEADS GATE TO WIRE IN GUS GRISSOM STAKES AT INDIANA GRAND RACING & CASINO

SHELBYVILLE, Ind.; – Oct. 7, 2015 – Early speed proved to be the key for Country Minister and Jockey Rolando Aragon in the 15th running of the \$85,000-added Gus Grissom Stakes Wednesday, Oct. 7 at Indiana Grand Racing & Casino. The duo led from gate to wire in the one and one-sixteenth mile event to score the win in a time of 1:44.32.

The first four horses in the full field of 12, including Country Minister, showed good early foot from the starting gate, leaving a question as to who would prevail in the early stages. Country Minister broke sharp for Aragon and was able to secure the top position as the rest of the early speed settled in behind through early fractions of :23.57 and :47.36. Race favorite Sucess is Racing and Orlando Mojica worked their way toward the leaders early on from the outside post and got into good positioning on the outside heading into the final turn. Country Minister continued to hold his own on the front and emerged as the leader at the top of the stretch.

In the stretch, Country Minister had increased his lead to three, making it difficult for the rest of the field to catch up. Sucess is Racing, a big powerful horse, worked his way into full speed halfway through the lane and began to chase down Country Minister, but the finish line came too quick for him as Country Minister held on for a three-quarter length win at the wire. Sucess is Racing was a strong second followed by Short Round and Malcolm Franklin, who closed in well late in the race for third.

Country Minister was an upset in the field, paying \$37.60, \$9.60, \$5.40 across the board. The five-year-old son of Evil Minister earned his fourth win of the year for Trainer Genaro Garcia after being claimed at the beginning of the 2015 meet at Indiana Grand.

“I talked with Rolando (Aragon) before the race and told him to try to send him to the lead if he could because a couple others (horses) would try to take the lead,” said Garcia. “It looked like we would have a better

shot being up close. This horse (Country Minister) has shown me he’s a racehorse this year and we are glad to have him in our stable.”

Country Minister increased his career earnings to more than \$280,000 with his win in the Grissom Stakes for Garcia’s Southwest Racing Stables and Tosha and Dan Smart, all owners of the Indiana-bred gelding. It was the first stakes win of Country Minister’s career and the first stakes win for Aragon at Indiana Grand. He had one prior stakes win at Turfway Park last winter.

Aragon has been a welcome addition to the jockey’s quarters at Indiana Grand this season. He came into the meet from his home base in Chicago as an apprentice and won 23 races, second only to Cheyanna Patrick, before losing his “bug” in August. Since that time, Aragon has continued his winning ways, remaining in the top 10 among all jockeys at the track. Always quick to assist and participate in activities, such as a recent visit to Riley Hospital for Children during PDJF Week at Indiana Grand, Aragon and Garcia have formed a great partnership that has produced 11 winners during the meet. Garcia, who is in 11th place in the trainer standings and has nearly a 50% top three average this year, plans to move to Turfway Park at the conclusion of the Indiana Grand meet Oct. 31. He then plans to relocate to Oaklawn Park in Arkansas in January for the first time in his career.

*Live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing continues at Indiana Grand through Saturday, Oct. 31, racing at 2:05 p.m. Tuesday through Friday with Saturday racing held at 6:05 p.m.*

*About Indiana Grand Racing & Casino: Indiana Grand Racing & Casino, a Centaur Gaming destination, holds multiple awards from industry publications for customer service, entertainment, gaming and dining. Located in Shelbyville, Ind., Indiana Grand features 2,200 of the latest slots and electronic table games in addition to a one-mile oval race course offering live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing each year. Simulcast wagering is also offered year-round at Indiana Grand Racing & Casino as well as an off-track betting facility located in Clarksville, Ind. For more information, please visit [www.IndianaGrand.com](http://www.IndianaGrand.com) or [www.CentaurGaming.net](http://www.CentaurGaming.net).*



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