



STRONG STAKES UNDERCARD ON INDIANA DERBY NIGHT AT INDIANA GRAND RACING & CASINO



**Please Note –
Story provided by Jennie Rees, Eclipse
Award-winning freelance writer**

SHELBYVILLE, Ind.; – July 14, 2016 – Ian Wilkes knows a good horse when he's around one. He trained 2012 Breeders' Cup Classic winner Unbridled and Street Sense, among many others in his long association with Hall of Fame trainer Carl Nafzger.



Thatcher Street, trained by Louisville's Ian Wilkes, held Pleuven to win Churchill Downs' Opening Verse Stakes May 21 by a half-length under Brian Hernandez Jr. Pleuven turned the tables in Churchill's Firecracker and they meet for the third straight race in Indiana Grand's \$100,000 Warrior Veterans Saturday night. Credit: Coady Photography

And Wilkes knew Thatcher Street -- one of the favorites for Saturday's \$100,000 Warrior Veterans on Indiana Grand's Indiana Derby undercard -- was a good horse when he began training the gelding four years ago. What he didn't expect was that Thatcher Street would require 13 starts spread over three seasons to win a race, the first 10 on dirt before being switched to grass racing.

"He always ran well on the dirt; he didn't run bad," Wilkes said. "He just wouldn't win. I said, 'I've got to try him on the turf.' And he's done well since then. It's the surface. He'd run good and he wouldn't finish up a race like he does on the turf. That's why he's able to go to the next level. But he'd work good on the dirt; you'd run him and he'd get beat. You think, 'Maybe we'll try this.' 'Try that.'"

The now 5-year-old Thatcher Street, a son of Street Sense, possesses four wins, five seconds and a pair of thirds in 12 starts. His other turf race was a very close fourth in Keeneland's Grade III Sycamore last spring. After winning Churchill Downs' Opening Verse on May 21, Thatcher Street was a rallying third in Churchill Downs' Grade II Firecracker. The winner that day: Opening Verse runner-up Pleuven.

"Speed, you had to be 1-2 that day, you couldn't close from out of it," Wilkes said of the Firecracker. "And that horse (Pleuven), he got a good position and he was better than us that day."

Off a maiden and allowance victory in consecutive starts, Thatcher Street was second in his stakes debut in the 1 1/16-mile Warrior Veterans last year by a length to Glenard.

"Thatcher Street is a better horse right now," Wilkes said. "He's more mature. He's run some good races in graded stakes. Last year he was a bit of an unknown quantity for us going into that stakes race. He's a very honest, very genuine horse."

Thatcher Street is owned by breeders Randy Bloch of Louisville, John Seiler of Atlanta, Phil Milner of South Carolina, and Keith Basso of Nevada and the Philippines.

"Ian is a lot more patient than his owners!!!" Bloch joked in a text message.

Wilkes will be back as well with Ulanbator, who defends his title from last year's \$100,000 Michael G. Schaefer Memorial for older horses on dirt. Wilkes also is running maiden winner Walkabout in the \$200,000 Indiana Oaks.

Walkabout and Fort Larned are both out of the mare Arlucea, herself a daughter of the great Bayakoa, a \$2.7 million-earner whose 18 wins include the Breeders' Cup Distaff twice.

"She's on the upswing, really getting better," Wilkes said of Walkabout. "It's a big step from maiden to a Grade II, but she's got the pedigree and she's a nice filly. It would enhance her value big-time even if she could be second or third."

Thatcher Street-Pleuven: Round 3

Thatcher Street and Pleuven will meet for the third straight race in the Warrior Veterans. Thatcher Street won the Opening Verse by a half-length over Pleuven, who then won the Firecracker in which Thatcher Street was third by a total of 2 1/4 lengths.

Keeneland-based trainer Phil Sims has had Pleuven for three races. In the first, the 5-year-old gelding came in fifth, but lost by only a total of three-quarters of a length, in a Keeneland allowance race. The French-bred Pleuven, named for a town in France and who started his career in France, was coming off a 13-month layoff.

"Every race he shows up," Sims said. "He's a little horse, but he's a real neat, little horse. He's always ready to do whatever you want him to do."

Departing takes on Schaefer

The 6-year-old gelding Departing will try to end an eight-race losing streak in the Schaefer. Not that he's run poorly - losing by only a few lengths here and there while switching between dirt and turf, sprinting and route racing, en route to earning \$1.8 million for owner-breeders Claiborne Farm and Adele Dilschneider.

"You can make a case for about anything," Departing's new trainer, Tommy Drury, said of Departing's best surface and distance. "He won last year's Firecracker on grass. He's won plenty of dirt races. Won going short, long. He's won races doing it all."

Departing also won the Grade II Illinois Derby, West Virginia Derby and Super Derby in 2013 among his eight career victories while trained by Al Stall. His last win was the 2015 Firecracker. In Departing's last start, he was a creditable fifth in Churchill's Grade II Alysheba on dirt on Kentucky Oaks Day.

This will be Departing's first start since he was sent to Drury, who is based at the Skylight Training Center outside of Louisville. The gelding will be ridden by Brian Hernandez Jr.

"He's doing super; everything seems to be good," Drury said, adding of Claiborne head Seth Hancock, "Mr. Hancock kind of picked this race out for him, thought the timing was good. He allowed us to maybe freshen him back up just a touch.

"Any time you get to run one for Claiborne, you feel a little sense of accomplishment just that within itself. But to be able to lead one over like Departing, for me that's just a dream. More than anything I'm just hoping I can make the most of it and stay out of Departing's way and have him go run the way we know he's capable of.

"He's been very well-managed in the past and just really easy to get along with," Drury said. "Brian has had success on him in the past, and I'm just trying to keep it simple as much as anything."

Also coming from Skylight are the Wilkes-trained Ulanbator and Thatcher Street. Said Drury: "That environment, I think it suits some of the older horses well. It's a little quieter, a little more green grass. Just not quite the commotion that goes on at the racetrack every day. I think sometimes the older horses seem to settle into that environment better."

Cash Control joins family in paying dividends for Kleins

Cash Control, one of the favorites for Saturday night's \$100,000 Indiana General Assembly Distaff, had a family legacy to continue, business she took care of last December. Now 5 and trained by Brad Cox, Cash Control joined the parade of stakes winners produced from the mare Hidden Assets, taking the Fair Grounds' Tiffany Lass on dirt. But it's been on turf where Cash Control is making a bigger splash, winning another two stakes, including Churchill Downs' Grade III Mint Julep in her last start to become Hidden Assets' first graded winner.

However, one of her most notable performances was Cash Control's respectable third in Churchill Downs' Grade II Distaff Turf Mile won by female turf champ and international star Tepin. For her career, Cash Control has eight wins and a pair of seconds and thirds in 15 races, earning \$343,600.

The Bernie Flint-trained Hidden Assets was purchased as a 2-year-old for \$230,000 at Keeneland's former April auction by Bert and the late Elaine Klein and their son Richard, who manages the stable and picked her out.

Cash Control is a daughter of Pioneerof the Nile, the 2009 Kentucky Derby runner-up best known as the sire of 2015 Triple Crown winner American Pharoah. But Hidden Assets, herself a Grade III winner, has been a superior broodmare. All nine of her foals to race - by nine different stallions - were winners, with Cash Control, Country Deed, Good Deed, Due Date and Cash Back all multiple stakes-winners. The 3-year-old Cash Back, who was 4 for 4 and a winner on turf and dirt, might have been the best yet but suffered fatal injuries galloping out after a work this spring.

"You just can't explain a mare that's had nine foals of racing age that are all winners and five are stakes-winners," Richard Klein said. "Cash Control has been a real consistent mare, and it seems like she got better now that she's gotten older and we switched her to the turf. Everything she's been running against has come back and won stakes races, graded-stakes races."



Cash Control, trained by Louisville's Brad Cox for Bert and Richard Klein of Louisville, won Churchill Downs' Grade III Mint Julep June 11 under Shaun Bridgmohan. She's one of the favorites in Saturday's \$100,000 Indiana General Assembly Distaff on the Indiana Derby undercard. Credit: Coady Photography

The Kleins also have Hidden Assets' unraced 2-year-old daughter by Tapit (named Cash In), a Broken Vow yearling colt (named Cash Reward) and a Proud Citizen filly foaled this year. Now 19, Hidden Assets is back in foal to 2007 Kentucky Derby runner-up Hard Spun.

"This is the reason why my family has bred and raced all of our lives," Richard Klein said. "Because you want to try to develop a nice broodmare band. We're looking forward to Cash Control still racing and when her career is over looking forward to her becoming a mom."

Cupid gets acquainted with track

Cupid, who could extend trainer Bob Baffert's record victories in the \$500,000, Grade II Indiana Derby to four, galloped a relaxed mile Thursday morning under exercise-rider Bryan Beccia.

Cupid, one of those beautiful light-gray sons of Tapit, looked like a leading contender for the Kentucky Derby when he won Oaklawn Park's \$900,000, Grade II Rebel Stakes over a field that included future Arkansas Derby and Belmont winner Creator. However, he suffered a breathing obstruction when well-beaten in the Arkansas Derby, had a surgical procedure to correct that, then was well beaten in the Easy Goer Stakes at cavernous Belmont Park.

Jimmy Barnes, Baffert's chief assistant, believes Cupid didn't care for Belmont, especially racing around one turn. Barnes has been on the scene for Baffert's three Indiana Derby victories: Misremembered (2009) and Preakness winner Lookin At Lucky (2010) at Hoosier Park and Power Broker (2013) the first year it was held at Indiana Grand.



Rebel Stakes winner Cupid, one of the favorites for the Indiana Derby, before going out to train Thursday morning at Indiana Grand. Credit: Jennie Rees

While Cupid and Indiana Oaks contender Emmzy shipped uneventfully from Los Angeles to Indianapolis via Fed-Ex and arrived at Indiana Grand about 3 p.m. Wednesday, Barnes had a far more eventful commercial flight from San Diego, where he'd been setting up Baffert's Del Mar division. His 6 a.m. flight to Chicago was an hour late - and that was the smooth portion of the trip because of Wednesday evening's severe thunderstorms in the region.

"We almost landed here and then flew to Cincinnati, an aborted landing thing," Barnes said. "We were an hour waiting in Chicago to takeoff, then two hours in Cincinnati" on the runway waiting for the storms to subside before flying back to Indianapolis. "When we were landing, you could see lightning all around us; it was crazy."

Barnes said he tried to deplane at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport but was told emphatically that wasn't allowed. Finally the flight was canceled for the night. Only then was Barnes able to get off, get his luggage and drive in blinding rain to Indiana Grand, arriving about 10 p.m.

"Anyway, it all worked out; I made it," he said. "I'd already checked and I knew the horses were here safe and sound. I'd have rather had me go through that than the horses. Absolutely."

Live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing is conducted Tuesday through Friday at 2:05 PM EST with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 PM. The 120-day season runs through Saturday, Oct. 29.

About Indiana Grand Racing & Casino: Indiana Grand Racing & Casino 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 dirt race course and a seven-eighths mile turf course offering live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing each year. Simulcast wagering is also offered year-round at Winner's Circle Brewpub & OTB located on the casino floor as well as an off-track betting facility located in Clarksville, Ind. For more information, please visit www.IndianaGrand.com.