



AFOOLSBROKENHEART WINS ANNIE STEELE MEMORIAL STARTER AT INDIANA GRAND RACING & CASINO

Story By Tammy Knox



Photo by John Engelhardt

SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (Thursday, July 20, 2017) – Fresh off his win in the \$100,000 Snack Stakes Wednesday, July 19, Trainer Randy Matthews was back in the winner’s circle for the third round of the \$30,000 Annie Steele Memorial Starter at Indiana Grand. Afoolsbrokenheart and Indiana Grand’s leading jockey Katie Clawson cruised to victory in the series named after Indiana’s first female outrider Annie Steele of Connersville, Ind., who passed away in 2012 at the age of 33 after a brief illness.

The field of six left the starting gate for the one and one-sixteenth mile turf race with Telling Metzle and Alex Contreras leading the way. Afoolsbrokenheart followed the leaders out of the gate but settled in a few lengths off their heels for the first half of the race. Heading into the final turn, Afoolsbrokenheart inched up toward the leader to close in the gap and by mid turn, the six-year-old daughter of Mutakddim was in full flight, overtaking Telling Metzle for the lead before the top of the stretch.

Afoolsbrokenheart kept up her momentum and continued her dominance in the field, rallying home to a three and three-quarter length win. Heavily favored Sugar Cube and James Graham came rallying up late to finish second, just a head over Bela Menina and Fernando De La Cruz for third. The time of the race was 1:43.97.

“She (Afoolsbrokenheart) is an easy horse to ride,” said Clawson, who just completed her first calendar year as a jockey. “When I put my hands back on her, she was content to follow. Under the wire the first time, she settled beautifully and we followed along. I eased her up a bit toward the leader to put a little bit of pressure on them because I didn’t want them to sprint away from us, and then when I asked her, she gave me everything she had. She made my job easy today.”

The second choice of the field, Afoolsbrokenheart paid \$5.40, \$2.20, \$2.10 across the board. The Texas bred mare has won 12 races over five different racetracks and varying distances and surfaces. Owned by Kari and Harlan Betlesky, Afoolsbrokenheart increased her career bankroll to more than \$217,000.

“Trainer Charles Kardoush is a friend of mine and he wanted to take some time off to work on his other business and asked me if I would take this mare to Indiana for the summer,” said Matthews, who is based in Southern Indiana. “She has fit very well here. She’s easy to have, we just keep her happy. I think she’s a little better on the turf but she can run anywhere. She’s just a nice hard knocking mare that is a pleasure to train.”

Since joining the Matthews barn, Afoolsbrokenheart has two wins and two seconds in four starts. She was claimed by the Betlesky’s for \$16,000 at Oaklawn Park in February. All of her Indiana starts have been with Clawson.

Clawson has taken the Indiana circuit by storm this year, rolling out to the lead in the jockey standings within the first month of action. Her win aboard Afoolsbrokenheart was her 53rd of the year and the win also pushed her over the \$1 million mark for purse earnings at Indiana Grand. The 20-year-old apprentice rider from Brazil, Ind. has accomplished a lot of firsts this meet, including her first triple win day, a feat she has accomplished numerous times this season. One item left on her list of things to do is to win a stakes race. Although the Annie Steele Memorial isn’t the highest purse she has won thus far in her career, it is one step closer to capturing her first career stakes win.

The 15th season of Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing continues through Saturday, Oct. 28. Racing is held Tuesday through Friday at 2:05 p.m. EST with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 p.m.

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