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Indiana Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association



OVERTURE WINS GRADE III \$200,000 INDIANA OAKS AT INDIANA GRAND RACING & CASINO

Story By Jennie Rees, Eclipse Award-winning freelance writer



Photo by Indiana Grand

SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (Saturday, July 15, 2017) — On his 34th birthday, jockey Julien Leparoux took what he was given. And that was a wire-to-wire victory as WinStar Farm's Overture held off favored Mopotism for a length victory in the \$200,000, Grade 3 Indiana Oaks at Indiana Grand.

Overture, in her first stakes race, was in the clear through a tepid first quarter-mile in 24.68 seconds, the half-mile in a dawdling 49.63 and six furlongs in 1:13.94. She picked up the pace considerably to reach the mile in 1:37.67 and 1 1/16 miles in 1:43.79. She paid \$27.20 to win as the sixth choice in the field of eight 3-year-old fillies.

Leparoux said he was surprised to be so comfortably and unchallenged in front in 49 seconds. "Yes, I was," he said. "I didn't think I was even going to be on the lead. But they gave it to me, and I took it."

"We were surprised we ended up there in front," said Kenny McCarthy, who oversees Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott's Churchill Downs operation. "It looked like there might be a couple (others) that out-footed us. But Bill told me he'd told Julien that she leaves out of there good being in the 1 hole, go on and let her run a little bit. But I didn't necessarily think we'd be on the lead."

Overture never ran as a 2-year-old, finishing second in her first start in February at Gulfstream Park, then winning her second start there by four lengths. Shipped to Belmont Park, she was second in an allowance race, followed by a well-beaten third before being sent to Churchill Downs to train for the Indiana Oaks.

"He (Mott) obviously had an eye on her after she broke her maiden and tried her a little bit her last couple of races," McCarthy said. "Her last race, she was a little bit of a question mark when she backed up at the end there. But she trained well in between. We got her down to Churchill and she trained really well there."

Overture, a Florida-bred daughter of Congrats, picked up \$116,400 and tripled her earnings to \$169,080 with the \$116,400 payday.

"It's fantastic," said Sean Tugel, WinStar's director of bloodstock, thrilled to have another graded-stakes winner to someday join the farm's broodmare band. "Her running lines over her last couple of races have been very good. The filly that beat her last time out (Unchained Melody) came back and one the Mother Goose last week. She's a filly we thought would really appreciate the two turns, and we got her out of New York, which was a one-turn mile and a sixteenth. The first two fractions that got thrown out, we said, 'Well, we should have a chance.' And the track kind of wasn't playing in our favor today, I don't think. But she was real classy in the paddock, and really classy in the post parade and she showed her class here."

Tugel also weighed in on that half-mile legal thievery. "Oh, man that gave us hope," he said. "We were like, 'Fingers crossed, if she wants the distance, she'll get it with those fractions,' and she obviously did. She looked fantastic down the lane and maybe on to bigger and better things, hopefully."

Mopotism edged another California-based filly, Majestic Quality, who was 4 1/2 lengths in front of Awestruck, followed by Dutch Parrot, Wicked Lick, Stonetacular and I'mluckysgirl.

Owner Paul Reddam, trainer Doug O'Neill and jockey Mario Gutierrez 30 minutes later won the \$500,000 Indiana Derby with Irap but had to settle for second in the Oaks with Mopotism, who found herself bottled up until it was too late.

"She ran well," O'Neill said. "Mario was actually knocking himself a little bit after the race, saying he was trying to get out down the backside, could never get out. He said he wasn't able to let her run until down the lane. She's an honest filly, but she doesn't have that crazy turn of foot. So she kind of ran out of real estate. I think she showed up, ran her race, just didn't have the perfect trip. But she's solid."

Hall of Fame jockey Kent Desormeaux rode Majestic Quality for his brother, trainer Keith Desormeaux. "She ran her eyeballs out," Kent said. "She gave her all and tried very hard so I was proud of her."

The 15th season of Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing continues through Saturday, Oct. 28. Racing is conducted Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 2:05 p.m. EST with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 p.m. EST. Thursday racing will be held July 6 - Aug. 24 at 2:05 p.m. EST.

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