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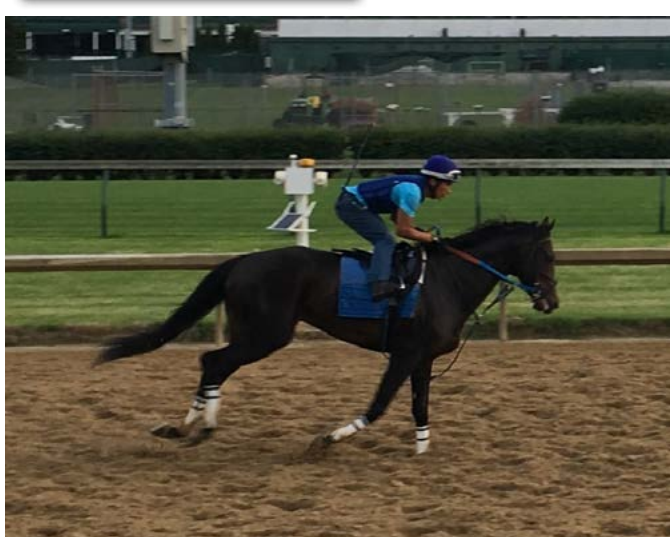


Indiana Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association



UNTRAPPED LOOKING FOR SIGNATURE VICTORY IN GRADE III \$500,000 INDIANA DERBY AT INDIANA GRAND RACING & CASINO

Story and Photos By Jennie Rees, Eclipse Award-winning freelance writer



SHELBYVILLE, Ind.; - July 10, 2017 - Trainer Steve Asmussen and owner Mike Langford are waiting for their 3-year-old colt Untrapped to come up with a signature victory. Saturday's \$500,000, Grade 2 Indiana Derby would be an excellent time.

Untrapped won on his second attempt last November at Churchill Downs, but in six stakes appearances since, he has two seconds and pair of thirds. His out-of-the-money starts were a sixth in the Arkansas Derby in what proved a one-race experiment with blinkers and 12th in the Kentucky Derby.

"He's a talented horse. He's had a lot of adjustments this year, starting off with being stuck in quarantine in New Orleans," Asmussen said, referring to horses being restricted to the Fair Grounds after an outbreak of equine herpes virus. "So you start off your year not getting to do exactly what you want. He's had a productive year, but we've not seen the best of him.

"We need to get into a good rhythm with him. I thought he ran solid in the Ohio Derby. I didn't think the race unfolded ideally for him, and he still ran on valiantly. I think he's capable of a better trip than he got on multiple occasions this year, and when it comes together he's going to win a good race."

In his last start, Untrapped closed into a moderate pace to finish third by 4 1/4 lengths in the Ohio Derby behind victorious Irap, who nosed out Louisiana Derby winner Girvin. Irap, also Keeneland's Grade 2 Toyota Blue Grass winner, is the anticipated favorite in the 1 1/16-mile Indiana Derby. Ricardo Santana Jr. will be back aboard Untrapped at Indiana Grand.

"I would have liked to have seen him break through in Ohio," said Langford, a real-estate developer in Arkansas who had his first Kentucky Derby starter in Untrapped. "I think he ran a good race. I would have liked to have seen him a little more forwardly placed, just to change what we're doing. But I'm an owner, not a jockey. I'm not going to say I'm disappointed, because those horses that beat him are pretty good horses. But I expect him to run pretty good in Indiana.

"In the Kentucky Derby, he cut himself pretty good coming out of the gate. We gave him some time, let that heal. I think he ran his race in Ohio. I do think there's a little more there. Steve really likes the way he's doing right now, I think more so than going into the Ohio Derby."

Untrapped is a son of Trappe Shot out of a Giant's Causeway mare. His co-breeder is Hall of Fame trainer Jonathan Sheppard, perhaps best known for his great steeplechase horses. The dark bay colt off a big win sprinting was second in the Fair Grounds' Lecomte (G3) and Risen Star (G2) and third in Oaklawn's Rebel (G2).

The colt tuned up for the Indiana Derby with a typical half-mile in 50 3/5 seconds workout Monday that Asmussen's horses generally have five days before a race.

"He's a beautiful horse, absolutely gorgeous and a very good mover," Asmussen said. "He's done well, but you easily think he's capable of doing better."

Because of that, just what is Untrapped's forte is "still evolving to a degree," he said.

"Early on, the condition he was in, he didn't stay on to the wire as well as he appeared to stay on in Ohio," Asmussen said. "With that being a mile and an eighth race and we're backing up to a mile and a sixteenth, we're hoping for a little better position that he had early in that race."

Asmussen has won numerous Derbys following the one at Churchill Downs, including the Indiana Derby in 2011 with Wilburn and in 2007 with Zanjero. Last week he won the Iowa Derby with Hence, the Kentucky Derby 11th-place finisher.

"They're nice horses," Asmussen said, "and even if that isn't their day in the Kentucky Derby, they are still quality horses and a lot of good races out there."

Entries will be taken and post positions drawn Wednesday for the Indiana Derby and five other stakes on the Midwest's biggest day of racing in July.

Trainer Dallas Stewart confirmed Monday that Hollywood Handsome will run in the Indiana Derby. Hollywood Handsome, off a snappy allowance victory at Churchill Downs, last started in the Belmont Stakes. His race was over early, however, as Hollywood Handsome clipped heels in traffic, with jockey Florent Geroux losing his irons and doing well to get the colt to the outside. Geroux will be back aboard Saturday.

"This is right up the road, \$500,000," Stewart said. "Hopefully we'll get to run our race this time. We just had a bad trip last time in the Belmont. First of all, you're like 'I can't believe this happened.' And second, you're hoping the horse isn't injured. He had a cut, wasn't bad (but) we had to put some staples in him. The jock didn't get hurt, so it was just a bad deal. Now he's had three good works. He's eating well; his weight is good. All of that plays into it for me."

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.

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.

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