

BARN NOTES

OCT. 2-24 | NO RACING Mondays & Tuesdays | First Post 1 p.m. | Gates Open 11 a.m.

Coal Battle Tops Thursday Work Tab; Voyager Heads to Juvenile Fillies

On Thursday, two horses pre-entered for the Oct. 30-31 Breeders' Cup World Championships breezed over the fast main track at Keeneland, while a decision for another contender was announced.

Coal Battle (Dirt Mile) breezed 5 furlongs after the second maintenance period in 1:00, the fastest of four at the distance.

Lonnie Briley, who trains the 4-year-old son of Coal Front for Robbie Norman's Norman Stables, said that although the Grade 2 winner went faster than expected, he will move forward with plans for the Oct. 31 Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1).

"He did the work pretty easy," Briley said while following Coal Battle back to the barn. "He will walk (Friday) and jog the next day and just do our regular routine. I was hoping he would go in 1:01 or 1:02. But 1:00 flat was a little quick. He looked like he did it pretty good, pretty easy."

Coal Battle finished second by a head to Bishops Bay in the Sept. 26 Ack Ack (G3) at Churchill Downs. He breezed 5 furlongs in 1:04.80 Oct. 14 at Keeneland after coming to Lexington from Briley's barn at Ellis Park.

The winner of five of 16 starts and \$1,442,150, Coal Battle finished 11th in last year's Kentucky Derby (G1) Presented by Woodford Reserve after winning the Smarty Jones (L) and the Rebel (G2) at Oaklawn Park.

Coal Battle is one of 16 runners pre-entered for the \$1 million Dirt Mile and ranks second on the preference list of horses not selected into the field by the Breeders' Cup Racing Directors/Secretaries Panel. He figures to land a spot with several runners ahead of him, including Built, Hymn, Napoleon Solo and T Kraft, showing first preference in other races on the Oct. 31 card.

Canada (Juvenile Turf) breezed a half-mile in :48.40 after the first maintenance period for trainer Mark Casse. D.J. Stable's 2-year-old Medaglia d'Oro colt breezed in company with the unraced 2-year-old Mandaloun colt Now Now Romeo, turning in the fastest time of 19 breezes at the distance.



The winner of the Oct. 4 Cup & Saucer at Woodbine in his second start, Canada is 22nd on the list of runners pre-entered for the \$1 million Brown Advisory Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G1). Casse has another race picked for the Ontario-bred colt.

"It doesn't look like he's going to get in the Breeders' Cup so he's going to run in the undercard stakes, the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (L)," Casse said of the 1-mile stakes on the turf for 2-year-olds. The Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance goes as the second race at 12:30 p.m. Oct. 30.

Casse also said Voyager, winner of the Johnny Walker Natalma (G1) on the turf Sept. 12 at Woodbine, would run in the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies on the dirt. The 2-year-old daughter of Justify, a \$300,000 purchase by D.J. Stable at the 2025 Keeneland January Horses of All Ages Sale, was pre-entered in the Juvenile Fillies and the John Deere Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf (G1).

"She's a good horse," Casse said. "And she worked as good as a horse can work on the dirt. Her first two races on the dirt were good."

Voyager finished second in her debut going 5½ furlongs on the dirt at Churchill Downs before a second to Harper's Corner in the Schuylerville (L) at 6 furlongs on the dirt at Saratoga. She made her last two starts on the grass, winning a 1 1/16-mile maiden at Saratoga before the Natalma.

■ By Tom Law and Liane Crossley

Race Day Essentials

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Upcoming Events

Saturday, Oct. 24
Teacher Appreciation Day

Free General Admission and access to Reserved Grandstand Seating for teachers, educators and staff



Sovereignty, Knightsbridge Take First Spins at Keeneland



Godolphin's 2025 Horse of the Year Sovereignty, who could vie for favoritism with Forever Young (JPN) in the Oct. 31 Breeders' Cup Classic (G1), trained at Keeneland Thursday for the first time since arriving early Wednesday morning.

The 4-year-old son of Into Mischief made the short walk from the Rice Road barn area, home to the runners for next week's Breeders' Cup World Championships, a little before 8 a.m. Accompanied by Bill Mott on his pony Rocky, Sovereignty galloped once around the main track. Godolphin's Knightsbridge, pre-entered in the Breeders' Cup Classic and Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1), followed the same routine and also galloped once around in the prior set.

"It was a nice first morning," Mott said. "Everybody went around good. They looked good out there. The big guy (Sovereignty) galloped really well over it."

Sovereignty and Knightsbridge are stabled with other members of Mott's stable. The group, which also includes T Kraft and Stars and Stripes, arrived from Mott's bases at Saratoga and Belmont Park. They're stabled with Pin Oak Stud's Veblen, a maiden entered for his third start Saturday at Keeneland, Sovereignty's regular workmate Thunder Roll and Rocky.

Sovereignty breezed 5 furlongs in 1:02.76 in company with Thunder Roll Sunday at Saratoga, while Knightsbridge went 3 furlongs in 1:01.40 Oct. 15 on Saratoga's Oklahoma training track. LRE Racing's T Kraft, winner of the Vosburgh (G2) and pre-entered in the Dirt Mile and Cygames Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1), breezed a half in :49.25 Oct. 16 at Belmont Park.

Mott said he plans to breeze his Breeders' Cup trio this weekend.

"We'll let them get settled a little more then get out there," Mott said.

In addition to Veblen, Mott will run Frassetto Stables' Stars and Stripes in Saturday's Hagyard Fayette (G3). The 4-year-old Not This Time colt, a \$100,000 purchase at the 2023 Keeneland September Yearling Sale, finished second last time out behind Forever Young in the Sept. 18 Jockey Club Gold Cup (G1). Stars and Stripes won the Ben Ali (G3) at the Keeneland Spring Meet and the 1 3/4-mile Birdstone (L) in August at Saratoga.

"He's been running well," Mott said. "We're excited about running him in there." ■ *By Tom Law*

Stress Relief Holds Special Place for LaRose Before Dean Dorton Myrtlewood

For trainer Kinnon LaRose, Stress Relief is more than a promising 2-year-old filly. Stress Relief helped deliver one of the biggest moments of his young training career when she won the Aug. 2 Adirondack (G3) at Saratoga for his first graded stakes victory.

"It was a fun moment," LaRose, 28, said. "I never really dreamed I'd be in that position, and for it to all come to fruition this summer was a great moment to share with my wife and family. (Former trainer) Tom Amoss and his family were there, which made it even more special. Tom trained (Stress Relief's dam) Littlestitious for (owner) Joel Politi, so for it to kind of come full circle like that, it was a really cool moment."

Bred and owned by Joel Politi, the daughter of Not This Time enters the 6-furlong dirt sprint for 2-year-old fillies with two wins in three career starts.

"She's doing well," LaRose said. "We got her back to Churchill Downs and got her back on the work tab, and we've been very pleased with her works. When she first came to us as a 2-year-old, she was stabled at Keeneland, so she's been over that track before. We're very happy with how she's doing and excited for Friday."

Stress Relief finished fourth in her most recent effort Sept. 5 in the Spinaway (G1) at Saratoga. LaRose said she was too far back early in the race and hopes she leaves the gate more effectively Friday.

"When she broke her maiden and when she won the Adirondack, she was up close to the pace," LaRose said. "In the Spinaway, she just didn't break as sharp as she normally does and kind of put us behind the eight ball with a lot of work left to do. The speed just didn't really come back to us that day. I thought she tried hard, all things considered. We just had a lot of ground to make up in a short period of time to do it; hopefully we are a little closer on Friday."

For the duo of LaRose and Stress Relief, the opportunity to return to the races carries added meaning after what they accomplished together at Saratoga. Their Adirondack victory will always stand as a milestone, and Friday's Myrtlewood offers another chance for the pair to add to the story.

"Any stakes at Keeneland is always going to be tough, but we're happy with our draw," LaRose said about drawing post six in the field of seven. "There looks to be some other speed in there, obviously inside of us and even the (Dale) Romans filly (Elewene) to our outside. We'll just kind of leave that up to (jockey) Luis (Saez). Luis has been around the block many times and certainly is a good judge of pace. We're excited for Friday and ready to get her back up and running." ■ *By Jax Rogers*

PERSONAL

PICK 5

JOSEPH JACKSON

**Keeneland Guest Services
Supervisor**

Birthdate: Aug. 1, 1960

Birthplace: Versailles, Kentucky



Q: When did you first come to Keeneland?

A: My first memories were when I was about 6 years old and my dad would bring us kids to the races and we would stand by the finish line. Keeneland was always a place for us to go as a family.

Q: What was your first job here?

A: My first go-round, I was 17 or 18 and my friends and I cleaned the popcorn machines after the races. All my family worked here: mom, dad, sisters, brother, aunts, uncles. It was tradition. I guess that is why I am still here. My second time around started about 5 years ago. I started working in the Saddling Paddock and then they asked me to be a supervisor. I love working with people, especially older people. I love talking to them and finding out more about them.

Q: What did you do before you came back to Keeneland?

A: I worked for United Parcel Service (UPS) for several years. Then when Toyota (Motor Manufacturing Kentucky) came (to Georgetown, Kentucky, in the late 1980s) I went to work there for 32 years. I helped open every plant they have in the world: Australia, all over Japan, different parts of the United States. My last job there, we ordered all the parts – big responsibility. Every day, every hour there were deadlines.

Q: What is your favorite Keeneland memory?

A: Flightline at the 2022 Breeders' Cup. They brought him to the Paddock for schooling, and I was amazed. I was still kind of new to all this. Seeing him – his size and how muscular he is. He was just different than the other Thoroughbreds we see.

Q: What is something people might not know about you?

A: I have been a choir director; I play trumpet and a little bit of piano; and I was a model for Dawahares and McAlpin's (department stores). And I was director of a modeling agency in Lexington.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

OTZELBERGER



OT-zul-ber-ger

Race 3

Named after the head coach of the Iowa State Cyclones men's basketball team, T.J. Otzelberger.

MEET LEADERS

**LEADERS THROUGH
WEDNESDAY'S 14TH DAY OF
THE FALL MEET BY WINS:**

Jockeys

17 | Tyler Gaffalione

16 | Irad Ortiz Jr.

Trainers

10 | Steve Asmussen

9 | Brendan Walsh

Owners

3 | Klaravich Stables
(Seth Klarman)

2 | Steve Asmussen
Gainesway Stable (Antony Beck) and Andrew Rosen
Lael Stables (Roy Jackson)
Rigney Racing
(Richard Rigney)
Southwest Racing Stables
(Genaro Garcia) and
William J. Wargel
Wesley Ward

Barn Notes Contributors

Liane Crossley | Meredith Daugherty
Gabby Gaudet | Tom Law | Amy Owens
Jax Rogers | Keeneland Photos

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