

Home Team

Stakes card pays tribute to success of Turning for Home retirement program

BY LINDA DOUGHERTY. PHOTO BY EQUI-PHOTO, INC.



Chilly in Charge won the Crowd Pleaser Stakes for Pennsylvania-breds for his first stakes win.

Parx Racing's Turning for Home program has become a leader in the industry since its inception more than a decade ago, as it has rehabilitated, retrained and rehomed nearly 2,700 horses that had been stabled on its backstretch.

Celebrating the program's success, as well as serving as a fundraising effort, was the sixth annual Turning for Home Day June 22. Two \$100,000 stakes for Pennsylvania-breds were carded, as well as the \$75,000 Turning for Home Starter Handicap.

Prior to the kickoff of the stakes action, however, was the return to the winner's circle for Natalie Baffert's The Man, who humbled his opponents in a \$64,930 allowance at 6 furlongs under Frankie Pennington.

Bred by Glenn Brok in Pennsylvania, The Man was a three-time winner in

2018, including an impressive score in the Banjo Picker Stakes for state-breds at the Bensalem course. Trainer John Servis gave the 7-year-old son of Ecclesiastic a six-month break after he was fourth in the Fabulous Strike Stakes at Penn National last November, and he returned with a third at Parx in mid-May. His victory on Turning for Home Day was his 11th from 19 starts, and increased his lifetime earnings to just shy of \$500,000.

The \$100,000 Crowd Pleaser Stakes for state-bred 3-year-olds started the stakes parade, and was taken by Newtown Anner Stud's Chilly in Charge at 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ miles on the main track although originally carded for the turf. With Angel Rodriguez riding for Miguel Vera, Chilly in Charge sat in the garden spot just off two frontrunners through 6 furlongs before taking command on the far turn and then sailing for the wire, win-

ning by 12 lengths over Wrong Color. The son of Take Charge Indy, who broke his maiden in a special weight at Woodbine May 5, was dispatched as the heavy favorite and was timed in 1:47.51.

The \$100,000 Power by Far Stake named after the talented sprinter who holds court as a stallion in Pennsylvania was also washed off the turf, but Lynn Maraspin's Wildcat Combat adapted to the surface change nicely as she took the 5-furlong sprint for state-bred fillies and maidens to win by a length over Afleet Tizzy and Dexter Haddock.

A 5-year-old daughter of Messner bred by Donald L. Brown Jr., Wildcat Combat was overlooked at 7-1 and covered the distance in :58.72. It was her second win of the year and her first in a stakes; she had been sidelined for nearly a year due to injury.

"We took our time bringing her back, watching every work very carefully, and I'm very proud of her and all the people that helped her become a stakes filly," said trainer Miguel Penaloza.

His Royal Majesty rallied from far back and launched a powerful stretch drive under Pennington to win the Turning Home Stakes by 3 lengths at 16-1 over Moon Gate Warrior. Claimed in December for \$12,500 by Morris Kernan Jr. and M-Z Racing Partnership and trained by Marcos Zulueta, he covered the 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ miles in 1:46.71.

"We claimed him back in January at a low tag and he needed some time to get back in shape," said co-owner Shawn Mitchell of the Racing Partnership. "Marcos [Zulueta] brought him back very slowly and he did an amazing job."

■ Two-year-olds made their debuts in June, with two notables breaking their maidens in impressive style.

Uptowncharlybrown Stud's heifer, Lula's Roadrunner was substituted for a 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ -furlong \$58,780 maiden special on June 24 for her slightly injured sister but proved to be more than up to the task.

Bettors dispatched the daughter of Uptowncharlybrown and the Uptown Song mare Be Bop a Lula as the favorite choice in the field of nine behind Colby, from the John Servis barn, who ran to her backing.

With Mychel Sanchez in the driver's seat, Lula's Roadrunner engaged in a duel with Briardale Stable's Double Deuce through a quarter in :22.92 and a half in :47.03, and then continued to