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# THOROUGHBRED™

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 1994 \$2 Daily

## N • E • W • S T O D A Y

## W • E • E • K • E • N • D P R E V I E W

### REMINGTON PARK DERBY WINNER TO RUN

**FOR THE ROSES** Trainer Niall O'Callaghan reported Tuesday that his Remington Park Derby winner **Smilin Singin Sam** (Smile) will make his next start in the Kentucky Derby May 7. O'Callaghan made the decision after conferring with owner Cot Campbell of Dogwood Stable. "Cot and I felt that basically since the horse won a major Triple Crown prep and did it impressively that he warranted a shot at the Kentucky Derby," said O'Callaghan. "We will train him up to the race. He really likes to run hard and his races take a lot out of him, so a lot of races are not good for him. He runs his best when he's fresh." Smilin Singin Sam arrived at Churchill Downs late Sunday night.

### PURSES RAISED AT GARDEN STATE

Beginning today, purses will be raised \$4,500 a day at Garden State Park. "This raise is a direct result of our out-of-state, full-card simulcasting program," said Garden State General Manager Richard E. Orbann. "Despite the rough weather we had this winter, our handle has been pretty solid on races we've been bringing in from other states." The increase will raise nightly purses to an average of \$85,000.

### SARDULA TO KENTUCKY OAKS

Three-year-old filly **Sardula** (Storm Cat), who set a stakes record in the Santa Paula S. at Santa Anita in her '94 bow, will make her next start in the Kentucky Oaks May 6. Second in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies and winner of the Hollywood Starlet last year, the Brian Mayberry charge galloped to an eight-and-a-half length triumph in her first start this year despite stumbling at the start and nearly losing her left front shoe. "She didn't lose it, but it sprung on her leaving the gate," said Jeanne Mayberry, the trainer's wife and assistant. "She was lucky she didn't grab a quarter."

### Saturday, Oaklawn Park

GI \$750,000 Oaklawn Park H., 4yo/up, 9f

Eleven of the country's top older horses are expected to match up for Saturday's big event in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The race will be telecast live on ESPN from 3-4:00 p.m. EDT. The disqualified winner of the Santa Anita H., **The Wicked North** (Far North), heads the California contingent which also includes **Myrakalu** (Kaldoun), moved up to third in the Santa Anita H.; **Kissin Kris** (Kris S.) and **Hill Pass** (Temperence Hill). Representing the East Coast are GI winners **Devil His Due** (Devil's Bag), **Pistols and Roses** (Darn That Alarm), **Valley Crossing** (Private Account) and **Wallenda** (Gulch), while **Brother Brown** (Eminency), **Equalsmcsquared** (Lot o'Gold) and **Far Out Wadleigh** (Far Out East) are up from Louisiana. Kissin Kris will be under the care of trainer Bobby Barnett during his stay at Arkansas. Owner/trainer Sam Michael Cashio arrived from Louisiana Downs with **Equalsmcsquared**, second in the GI Donn and third in the New Orleans H. earlier this year, and hopes for a better experience than the last time he was at Oaklawn. "The last time I brought a horse to Oaklawn, the van broke down so we were on the road for 48 hours" said Cashio. "The horse finished last, and while I was there I got food poisoning."

### Saturday, Aqueduct

GI \$500,000 Wood Memorial, 3yo, 9f

Gotham winner **Irgun** (Sunny's Halo) had his final tune-up for the Wood Monday, going five-eighths of a mile. Said trainer Steve Young, "The Form got him in :58 and change; I thought he went in a minute and two-fifths. The truth is, we're both probably wrong. We did agree that he went the last three-eighths in :34 and change. He's the type of horse that when he goes out there, he wants to do more than you want him to do, so we don't work him too close to his races." Trainer Bobby Frankel has worked out the snags in the travel plans for **Wild Invader** (Seattle Slew). "He'll probably leave Thursday morning and fly into Newark. But we still don't have a jockey," said Frankel. **Bit of Puddin'** (Obligato) had his final Wood prep yesterday, going five furlongs in 1:01 over the Belmont training track. Also working at Belmont Tuesday was **Presently** (Affirmed); the full brother to champion **Flawlessly** went a mile in 1:40 1/5.  
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## W • R • I • T • E • R • S U P

### THE OLD MAN AND THE TRACK

by Bill Finley

It's been a long time since trainer Joe Dragna won a race, so long that he's not all together sure when the last one was. It will come soon. Then again, maybe it won't. It's just not that important.

That's for other trainers--those young fellas like Charlie Whittingham--to worry about. At 92, Joe Dragna is just happy that he feels so good and has something to do that he loves so much. Winning isn't everything.

Dragna is believed to be the oldest active trainer in the United States. The key word is active. He's at the barn on the Santa Anita backstretch seven days a week, arriving by six every morning to care for his one horse, a bottom-claimer named April Mover. He's the trainer, the groom, the hotwalker.

"I'd be lost if I didn't have training," Dragna said. "I've got to do something to keep busy. I don't want to retire; I'll keep doing this as long as I feel good."

Which will probably be quite a while. The only sign of advancing age is the hearing aid in his left ear; otherwise he's perfectly sharp, an older man who refuses to act his age.

Dragna has been training since 1944. He was a bread salesman for the Continental Baking Company, but was persuaded to try racing by a neighbor who was a horseplayer who yearned to get into the training and owning aspect of the sport. Dragna went along for the ride and was quickly hooked on this fascinating new sport.

He's gone back and forth, to New York, over to Chicago, down to Caliente in Mexico, back to Southern California. Over the years, Dragna, along with his son, Matt, has had his share of success. The Dragnas' most significant victory came in the 1961 San Juan Capistrano at Santa Anita, which they won with Don't Alibi, a horse they bought off George D. Widen-er at Belmont Park for \$13,000.

Now it's just April Mover, a horse who was born to run, but just not that fast. A 5-year-old bred in Washington, she's 1-for-28 lifetime with no seconds or thirds. Her lone victory came before being trained by Dragna. In her last start, she showed some mildly encouraging signs of life, finishing fourth in a \$10,000 claiming race to pick up an \$825 check.

"She has a lot of ability, but she's not into it mentally," said Matt Dragna, who, nearing his 67th birthday, works side by side with his father when not selling real estate. "She works good but then won't run in the afternoon. She seems to be doing a little better, but doesn't have too much heart. She's a challenge, but some day we'll be back in the winner's circle."

In the meantime, Joe Dragna will keep at it. It's hard to say what keeps a person so healthy for so long. He has no vices--doesn't smoke, doesn't drink--he stays active and the mental and physical stimulus of training horses has to help. He dreads the thought of doing nothing, of wasting away in his later years in front of a television set or in a nursing home, because then he would feel old.

"I've been doing work like this all my life," said Dragna, who lives alone in El Monte, California. "I was born on a farm in Louisiana and back then there was no clock to watch. You'd work sun up to sun down.

"It's the enjoyment of being with the horses. Every once in a while you'd like to be in the winner's circle, but that's not important. Enjoying life is. We could probably get another couple of horses to train, but that's not a big deal. Sometimes there are more important things than making money. What else would I do, sit around and look at the walls?"

There will be none of that. At age 92, the spirit is healthy and it is young. Joe Dragna is a winner.

*Bill Finley is a sportswriter for the New York Daily News.*

#### Preview cont.

#### **GII \$500,000 Blue Grass S., 3yo, 9f**

The Blue Grass picked up a starter or two and lost one Tuesday, putting the probable field at six or seven for Saturday. **Game Coin** (Chief's Crown) has been sidelined with an injury that not only will put him out of the Blue Grass, but the Kentucky Derby as well. "It seems to be a combination of a wrenched ankle and a slight hoof injury," said trainer Gary Jones. "He's missed some training, so he's out of consideration." Joining the field are **Mahogany Hall** (Woodman) and possibly **Warn Me** (Warning). Mahogany Hall has won three of five starts but was a disappointing sixth in the Jim Beam S. last time out. Warn Me, a winner of five of seven starts in France, was last in the '93 Remsen in his lone U.S. outing. On the Tuesday work tab at Churchill, **Chimes Band** (Dixieland Band) went six furlongs in 1:14 2/5 over the muddy strip.

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## F • O • R • E • I • G • N R E P O R T

### Yesterday's Results:

**NELL GWYN S.-G3**, Newmarket, England, 4-12, \$50,291, 3yo, f, 7fT, 1:27 2/5, gd.

1--**MEHTHAAF**, f, 3, Nureyev (Walmac International-KY) --**Elle Seule**, by **Exclusive Native**. O-Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid al Maktoum; B-Shadwell Farm, Inc. (KY.); T-John L. Dunlop; \$30,263.

2--**Prophecy**, f, 3, Warning (GB) (Banstead Manor Stud-Eng) --**Andaleeb**, by Lyphard. O-Khalid Abdullah; \$11,205.

3--**Salvezza**, f, 3, Superpower (Sledmere Stud-Eng) --**Damezao**, by Alzao. O-Skyline Racing, Ltd.; \$5,382.

Margins: 4, head, head.

**ABERNANT S.**, Newmarket, England, 4-12, \$25,646, 6fT, 1:13 3/5, gd.

1--=**MIDHISH (GB)**, c, 4, **Green Desert (Shadwell Stud-Eng)** --**Swanilda**, by **Habitat**. O-Saeed Suhail; B-Gerald W. Leigh (GB.); T-Ben Hanbury; \$15,478.

2--**Splice**, m, 5, Sharpo (Woodland Stud-Eng) --**Soluce (Ire)**, by Junius. O-Cheveley Park Stud; \$5,717.

3--**Rafferty's Rules**, c, 3, **Ballad Rock (Simmonstown Stud-Ire)** --**River Maiden**, by Riverman. O-J. E. Swiers; \$2,741.

Margins: 1 1/4, 2, neck.



## E • A • S • T • E • R • N R E P O R T

### Yesterday's Results:

**8th-Pim**, \$25,000 Alw., 4yo/up, 8.5f, 1:43 2/5, ft. **TAKING RISKS (g, 4, Two Punch--Shiitake, by Green Dancer)**, claimed for \$20,000 Nov. 27 and rested 'til Feb., earned his fourth victory in five starts for his new connections with a powerful 6 1/2-length score. Climbing through the allowance ranks, the Maryland-bred won the four races by a total of 26 1/4 lengths; he was beaten a head in his lone loss under new management. New stats for the SP runner move to 27-6-7-5 with a bankroll of \$104,965. O-Lakeville Stables. B-Liberty Hill Farm (Md.). T-K. T. Leatherbury.

## B • R • E • E • D • E • R • S E D I T I O N

### ALLOWANCE RESULTS:

**6th-Pim**, \$22,000, 3yo/up, f/m, 8.5f, 1:45 1/5, ft. **SHAFTA (f, 4, It's Freezing--Miss Czara {SW, \$130,600}, by Czaravich)**. Record: 23-7-4-4, \$77,022. O-Seven Valleys Stable. B-W. Reynolds (Ky.). T-A. Merryman.

**4th-Pim**, \$20,000, 4yo/up, f/m, 9f, 1:53, ft. **STRAWBERRY GAL (f, 4, Mogambo--Ruby Wax, by Gallant Romeo)**. Record: 13-3-2-3, \$44,535. O/B-P. Robsham (Ky.). T-G. Motion.

**9th-Pha**, \$18,225, State-bred, 3/up, 6f, 1:13 2/5, ft. **SUGAR BARON (c, 3, Lord Carlos--Natmar, by Silver Badge)**. Record: 10-2-0-2, \$27,130. O/T-C. Cuprill. B-Mr. & Mrs. C. Cuprill (Pa.).

**9th-Hia**, \$16,500, 4yo/up, abt. 9fT, 1:49 4/5, fm. **OJIN (c, 4, Explosive Bid--Mornin' Jig, by Jig Time)**. Record: 19-3-4-1, \$44,110. O-G. Thompson & J. Velsor. B-Capricorn Farm (Fla.). T-G. Handy.

### MAIDEN WINNERS:

**Giana**, f, 3, **Exclusive Era--Lucky I Might**, by **Alhambra**. Pha, 4-12, 6f, 1:13. B-Mr. & Mrs. L. Buse & J. Rine (Oh.). \*\$8,500 FTM May 2yo. **Delta Danielle**, f, 3, **Lord Avie--Damasco Danielle**, by **Same Direction**. WO, 4-12, 6f, 1:10 3/5. B-Cooksmere Farm (Ont-C). \*\$8,799 CBS Oct. yearling.

+ **Christinachristina**, f, 3, **Lord of the Sea--Roses for Mindy**, by **Lot o'Gold**. Hia, 4-12, 6f, 1:12 1/5. B-J. Devers & N. Storob (Fla.). \*Won by 11 1/2.

**Foreign Film**, f, 3, **Skywalker--Kildare**, by **Flying Past-er**. Pim, 4-12, 8.5f, 1:47 3/5. B-M. & S. Malmuth (Cal.). \*Won wire-towire, paying \$80.60. \*\*\$8,500 **Kee. Nov. weanling**, \$12,000 FTM Feb. yearling. **Silly's Philly**, f, 4, **Baldski--Silly Heels**, by **Mr. Leader**. Hia, 4-12, abt. 8.5fT, 1:44. B-Mrs. M. Phelan (Fla.). **Harper Jim**, g, 4, **Strike the Anvil--Budding Rose**, by **Nose for Money**. Hia, 4-12, 7f, 1:25 2/5. B-Rolling Meadows Farm (Fla.).

**A #** will distinguish first-time stakes-winners, **a @** will indicate first-time graded stakes-winners and **a +** will denote winners who are first-time starters.