



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Monsoon does it again....and again

It's becoming a broken record in big races for older horses: Monsoon Rain repeats as the winner of the \$30,000 Wheat City Stakes. And his trainer now has double the stakes wins of any other trainer at the track.

"You are not as shocked as you were in the Free Press," commented owner Larry Carter to Kirt Contois in the post-race interview.

In the Free Press Stakes, Monsoon Rain put away 2008 Sprinter of the Year Rock'n USA, in a much anticipated battle of the two champions where all eyes were on "The Rock" but the Wheat City was old hat this time for the 2008 Horse of the Year.



Figure 1 - Monsoon Rain winning 2008 Wheat City - photo by Rob Bye

Sitting off the flank of early leader Arthurlooksgood, Monsoon Rain with Carlos Marquez aboard made his move going into the final turn and looked like a champion heading home, winning easily.

Trainer Chad Torevell captured his fourth stakes race of the year with Monsoon twice as many as any other trainer on the grounds: two with Monsoon Rain, the Golden Boy with Theglow and the Frank Arnason with Percolating

No Reply, trained by Emile Corbel, finished a credible second after reversing tactics he had used against Monsoon Rain in their previous race. In that race, he

had challenged Monsoon for the early lead and faded to fifth but this time rider Gary Baze shrewdly saved the horse's energy to pick up horses in the turn then go after the leader down the stretch.

The Max, sent out by legendary trainer Bert Blake, saved ground along the rail down the backside and got up for third.

Setting up for Derby battle



Figure 2 Hilton's Cherokee captures 2008 Harry Jeffrey Memorial - photo by Gerry Hart

The Downs' primo 3-year-old colt, Theglow, unfortunately had to sit out Saturday's Harry Jeffrey stakes because of a virus which has affected horses in a couple of barns. So it was an Eastern interloper, Hilton's Cherokee, who towered over the field.

With only two lifetime starts, Hilton's Cherokee, trained by Emile Corbel, will be Theglow's early main challenger in the Manitoba Derby Aug. 3 providing Theglow gets healthy soon.

Having run his first two starts at Keeneland in Kentucky, and Woodbine in Toronto, Hilton's Cherokee appears to have class on his side. In his first start at Keeneland, home of champions, Hilton's Cherokee finished seventh behind Southdale. Southdale finished third in that race and went on to finish second in the Queen's Plate Trial.

With the horse breaking greenly out of the gate, three-time leading rider Alan Cuthbertson had his hands full down the homestretch. "He is known to break bad," said Cuthbertson. "He got a little confused just out of the gate. He seemed to want to take a left hand turn coming out of the chute."

"Once I got him straightened out he wanted to rock and roll and I didn't fight him."

And rock and roll he did, pulling Cuthbertson to the lead going around the first turn to collared early leader Secret Officer down the backstretch.

“He’s a classy horse,” said owner Phil Kives. “We’ll see how he shapes up.” referring to possible participation in the Manitoba Derby.

Morsel, the only filly in the race, sat behind leaders down the backstretch but could not get to the winner in the stretch. Trained by high-percentage trainer Charlie Smith, Morsel was in an all-out drive but came up second best.

Storm Ranger, also trained by Emile Corbel, was last going down the backside, but rallied to nose out early leader Secret Officer for third.

Stakes double-header features best Manitoba-breds and best babies

The first 2-year-old stakes race of the year, The Debutante, will share the spotlight with the RC Anderson Memorial Stakes for Manitoba-bred 3-year-old fillies this Friday.



Figure 3 Adventcia winning her first start of 2008 - photo by Gerry Hart

Adventcia, winner of the 2008 Buffalo Stakes as a 2-year-old, will be the one to beat in the first stakes race this year for Manitoba-bred fillies.

After winning her first start of the year, Adventcia went on to finish a very creditable third in the Chantilly Stakes behind Lady Countdown. In her five career starts Adventcia, bred by her owner Dr. Ross McKague of Brandon, has not finished worse than fourth.

Honorable Lady and No Maddy are the only two Assiniboia Downs winners nominated for the \$30,000 Debutante Stakes. The only other two winners nominated, Ruby’s Big Band and Rule of Twelfths, come for the powerful trailer of Charlie Smith based at Canterbury Park in Minneapolis.

Honorable Lady was the easy winner of the first 2-year-old race of the year. Trained by seven-time leading trainer Clayton Gray, Honorable Lady will have her work cut out taking on invaders from the south. No Maddy, trained by Shelley Brown for owner Mandy McDonald, would make it an all-ladies affair if she were to get the job done.

Texan Charlie Smith will be going for three Debutante Stakes in a row. He won in 2007 with Miss Missile (you might have heard of her) and Lady Countdown in 2008, winner of this year's Chantilly Stakes.

Entries will be taken on Tuesday, so nothing is confirmed as of yet, but this coming-out party should be fun to watch.

Next post for Assiniboia Downs will be Tuesday, July 14 at 7pm. It is the last Tuesday night of racing for the 2009 season. Racing continues Wednesday, Friday and Saturday's at 7pm.