



MEDIA RELEASE

Assiniboia Downs
March 8, 2009

Will it be a Monsoon or a Missile?

The battle for Assiniboia Downs Horse of the Year, presented by the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (HBPA), will come down to two of the best horses ever to set foot on the local track. Sounds of cash registers could be heard when both Miss Missile and Monsoon Rain set their hooves on the track. Will it be a direct hit or a wash out?

Monsoon Rain, owned by Larry Carter and trained by Marty Drexler, won five in a row making his record for the year at Assiniboia Downs: 7 starts, 5 wins, 1 second and a fourth and earnings of \$100,125. His victories included the \$30,000 The Wheat City Stakes, the \$30,000 R. J. Speers Memorial, and the \$75,000 Gold Cup where he garnered the best speed figure of any horse at Assiniboia Downs last year.

Texan Charlie Smith had perfection on his hands in the form of Miss Missile. The 3-year-old filly went four for four at Assiniboia Downs winning the \$50,000 Chantilly Stakes, the \$30,000 Canada Day Stakes, the \$50,000 Assiniboia Oaks and the \$30,000 Jack Hardy Memorial. With her front running-style Miss Missile was never bested but will she be able to keep her head in front for this award?

The Manitoba-bred Horse of the Year, presented by the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society, Manitoba Chapter (CTHS), could also be a close race with three horses deserving the title. Brinello, last year's Older Horse of the Year, won convincingly the only time he was challenged by strictly Manitoba-breds. The 6-year-old gelding, owned and bred by Dr. Ross McKague of Brandon, defended his Agassiz Stakes win of 2007 with an easy wire-to-wire victory in the 2008 addition of the Agassiz. Brinello was trained by Carl Anderson.

Queen Tina, owned and bred by Winnipeg based Starfield Stables and trained by Harry Kube, won two stakes in 2008 including the \$50,000 R. C. Anderson Memorial and the \$50,000 Distaff Stakes. She also finished a respectable third to Miss Missile in the Chantilly Stakes. The 3-year-old filly made more than \$78,000 with a record of 3 wins and 2 thirds from 7 starts.

Spying Eyes, bred by Cam Ziprick of Russell, owned by Martilet Stables and trained by Randy Gray, was also a duel-stakes winner. The 3-year-old gelding won the \$20,000 Gold Strike Mile and the \$50,000 J. W. Sifton Memorial. Spying also finished third in the \$30,000 Frank Arnason Sires Stakes and fourth in the Agassiz behind Brinello. The winner of more than \$70,000 in 2008, Spying Eyes had 4 wins, 2 second, and 2 thirds from 10 starts.

Along with Horse of the Year, the HBPA will present Sprinter of the Year, Claimer of the Year, leading trainer, highest percentage trainer, leading jockey and divisional awards for each age group. Here are the nominees for each award:

Best 2-year-old filly: Adventcia (owner: Dr. Ross McKague, trainer: Carl Anderson), Dreamin and Schemin (owner: Off 2 Win Stable, trainer: Ardell Saylor)

Best 2-year-old colt or gelding: Copper Badges (owner: William Larson, trainer: Blair Miller), One on One (owner: Ken Lee & Dennis Mitchell, trainer: Chad Torvell), Prayforthesoldiers (owner: Play 2 Win, trainer: Aaron Saylor)

Best 3-year-old filly: Bella Mariella (owner: Larry Falloon & Garry Nahemiak, trainer: Marty Drexler), Blueberry Blonde (owner: Dr. Betty Hughes, trainer: Lorna Gray), Miss Missile (owner/trainer: Charlie Smith), Queen Tina (owner Starfield Stable, trainer: Harry Kube)

Best 3-year-old colt of gelding: Best Westerner (owner: P. Mattson & Jagger, Inc., trainer: Jamie Ness), Cabooseontheloose (owner: Off 2 Win, trainer: Ardell Saylor), Custody Battle (owner: Arnason Farms, Torvell, & Ziprick, trainer: Chad Torvell), Mikayla's Baby (owner: Play 2 Win, trainer: Aaron Saylor), Mr. Exspeedient (owner/trainer: Clint Willson), Spying Eyes (owner: Martilet Stables, trainer: Randy Gray)

Best Older Mare: Britannia Road (owner: Ken Lee & Dennis Mitchell, trainer: Carl Anderson), Polynesian Kitty (owner: Bradley Butcher, trainer: Jamie Ness)

Best Older Horse: Brinello (owner: Dr. Ross McKague, trainer: Carl Anderson) Illusive Force (owner: Canyon Farms, trainer: Carl Anderson), Monsoon Rain (owner: Larry Carter, trainer, Marty Drexler)

The CTHS presents Manitoba-bred Horse of the Year, Breeder of the Year, Stallion of the Year and Broodmare of the Year, but with a change in format will also present awards to all Manitoba-bred stakes winners for 2008.

The Manitoba-bred stakes winners for 2008 are: Adventcia, Copper Badges, One on One, Bella Mariella, Blueberry Blonde, Custody Battle, La Wildcat, Queen Tina, Spying Eyes, and Brinello.

All of the awards will be presented at the annual Horse of the Year Awards Dinner to be held on Saturday, March 14 at Assiniboia Downs. Tickets are on sale for \$50 each from Assiniboia Downs, the HBPA and the CTHS.

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