

Rain Doesn't Dampen Legends Night

by Chad Cooper Photos by Coady Photography

Many of Louisiana's top four-legged athletes convened June 5 at the annual Louisiana Legends Night program hosted by Evangeline Downs in Opelousas that featured nine-state bred races, which included six-stakes, with purses totaling \$467,000.

Despite the soggy weather created by Mother

Nature, Evangeline Downs's biggest night of racing drew a spectacular crowd. Combined with off-track-betting, the night saw a betting handle of \$1,649,559.

Four horses posed with a trophy for the first time in their respected race careers, one, of which, earned her first stakes win by more than 20 lengths.

Louisiana Legends Turf Soiree

\$70,000 Guaranteed, 3YO Fillies, 1 Mile

WINNING ROMANCE

First Samurai – Lipstick Junky, by Flatter

Breeder: Allied Racing Stable, LLC • Owner: Allied Racing Stable, LLC • Trainer: Bret Calhoun • Jockey: Diego Saenz

The Legends Soiree was the first stakes competition on the night and it wasn't much of a competition. Originally scheduled for one mile on the turf, the race was moved to the dirt, which was muddy "sealed," and had no effect on the 2/5 betting favorite Winning Romance.

The 3-year-old daughter of First Samurai broke out on top and set quarterly fractions of 23.60 and 47.09 before taking off and leaving her three competitors behind with jockey Diego Saenz keeping the filly to task. As the race went longer, she got stronger and won by 20 3/4 lengths to cover the mile in 1:38.75.

"There is not much to say," said Saenz. "She was very comfortable out there and I didn't have to do much. At the three-quarter pole we just took off. It was over from there."

Winning Romance (\$2.60) unfortunately ran behind the previ-

ously undefeated Australasia in her last two starts, but is now has a stakes victory of her own.

The Bret Calhoun trainee, who is owned and bred by Allied Racing

Stable, LLC, improved to 3-8 with career earnings of \$135,441.

The final order of finish was Winning Romance, Inawic, Tecate Time and Half Koo Koo.



Louisiana Legends Cheval

\$70,000 Guaranteed • 3YOs • One Mile

CHU CHU'S LEGACY

Bind – Bond's Babe, by Johannesburg

Breeder: J. Adcock & Hume Wornall • Owner: Allen Landry • Trainer: Allen Landry • Jockey: Joe Stokes

Buckets of rain began to fall from the sky just minutes before post time of the \$70,000 Legends Cheval, but instead of worrying, trainer Allen Landry gained more confidence in his entry, Chu Chu's Legacy, who had never tried a mile in her previous eight starts.

"As soon as it started raining, I thought we had a very good shot to go a mile," said Landry. "If we could get the lead and throw some dirt in the other horses' faces, then we had a chance."

Rider Joe Stokes and the 3-year-

old daughter of Bind was the first out of the gate to set all the pace at 23.59, 47.41 and 1:12.36. The front runner appeared to have no issues on her way to her third career stakes win by 6 lengths and cover on mile in 1:39.18.

"We broke sharp and I wanted to get on the rail and save ground, and we were able to do that," replied Stokes. "The track was very muddy and he was looking around a bit, but he rated really well. I had a lot of horse left."

Sent to the gate at 4-1, Chu Chu's Legacy (\$10.60) improved to

5-9 with earnings of \$176,350, for Landry, who is also the owner and purchased the colt for \$4,000 at the 2019 Equine Louisiana Open Yearling and Mixed Sale.

"This is an iron horse," added Landry. "He can run short, run long. "J. Adcock and Hume Wornall bred a good horse."

The official order of finish was Chu Chu's Legacy, Wise Verdict, Beauregard, Touchdown Joe, Highland Creek, Unanimously, Get Them Justin, Magawildtime and Micajah.



Louisiana Legends Sprint

\$70,000 Guaranteed, 3YO & Upward, 5 1/2 Furlongs

BERTIE'S GALAXY

Greeley's Galaxy – Wild Bertie, by Wild Rush

Breeder: Margie K. Averett • Owner: Allen Cassedy • Trainer: Ron Faucheux • Jockey: Diego Saenz

The \$70,000 Legends Sprint has become one of the most anticipated races and competitive races of the season. This year's version included multiple stakes winner Monte Man, last year's winner Laughingsaintsong and half-siblings Bertie's Galaxy and Wild Bert, who coincidentally battled one-two throughout the entire race.

Set at a distance of 5 1/2 furlongs, Wild Bert grabbed the early with a blistering fraction of 21.86 and 45.04 but it was short lived as Bertie's Galaxy, the younger half-sibling, shook clear in the turn then was "gone goodbye" to win by 3 1/4 lengths in 1:03.53.

The \$70,000 Sprint, over a distance of 5-1/2 furlongs, was a family affair as half-siblings Bertie's Galaxy and Wild Bert battled from the start and finished one-two. Both runners are out of the Wild Rush dam, Wild Bertie, with the winner being the younger brother and sired by Greeley's Galaxy.

"I thought it set up great for Bertie's Galaxy," said winning trainer Ron Faucheux. "I really didn't want him on the lead early, but Diego (Saenz) let him take him to the lead. We got hooked by No Parole in the

Louisiana Premier Night Sprint at Delta, but we weren't facing No Parole tonight."

Bertie's Galaxy (\$6) earned his first stakes win and has since returned to the track to win an Allowance Optional Claimer at Evangeline Downs on July 1. The 5-year-old gelded son of Greeley's Galaxy has 7 wins in 18 starts with a bankroll of \$243,750.

The final order of finish was Bertie's Galaxy, Wild Bert, Laughingsaintsong, Monte Man, Born Again George, Double Barrel Man, Saltee Stark, C'Mon Ve, Black Sword and Little Can.



Louisiana Legends Turf Distaff

\$70,000 Guaranteed, 3YO & Upward, Fillies & Mares, 1 Mile Turf

OFFSPRING

Into Mischief – Pioneer Gal, by Pioneering

Breeder: Oak Tree Stables, LLC • Owner: Oak Tree Stable • Trainer: Edward Johnston • Jockey: Roberto Morales

Offspring began her career in the Sunshine State at Gulfstream Park in Florida. After six starts, the daughter of Into Mischief broke her maiden at the Fair Grounds in her home state of Louisiana, before venturing back out to Arlington Park and Keeneland. Since her return back to the Pelican State in late 2020, she has won consecutive stakes races for Oak Tree Stables.

Never far back off the pace, pilot Robert Morales kept the horse within a length of the leaders as Saber Cut along with Distractor Factor led the way in splits of 25.06 and 49.68. As the field reached the far turn, Offspring (\$780) managed to surge between rivals to poke a head in front before holding off Quikfast N Ahurry to cover a mile in 1:39.57.

“She was training good coming into the race and I didn’t think the mud would be a problem,” said Morales. “We sat right off the pace and she made a perfect move when she needed to.”

Trained by Edward Johnston, Offspring returned to Evangeline Downs on July 2 and finished second in the \$60,000 Opelousas

Stakes. She now has a record of 5-19 with earnings of \$231,478.

Until now, Offspring (\$7.80) had been 0-2 of an off-track surface. The move from grass to a muddy surface provided no issues for the 5-year-old mare.

The final order of finish in the Turf Distaff was Offspring, Quikfast N Ahurry, Net a Bear, Saber Cut, Distractor Factor and Blessed Anna.



Louisiana Legends Mademoiselle

\$70,000 Guaranteed, 3YO & Upward, Filles & Mares, 5 1/2 Furlongs

CILLA

California Chrome – Sittin At the Bar, by Into Mischief

Breeder: Brett A. Brinkman & P. Dale Ladner • Owner: P. Dale Ladner • Trainer: Brett Brinkman • Jockey: Joel Dominguez

Cilla has finally become the runner that trainer and co-breeder Brett Brinkman always thought they had in the daughter of Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Dubai World Cup winner California Chrome.

Brinkman scratched the 3-year-old out of the one-mile Legends Soiree to face older fillies and mares for the 5 1/2-furlong Mademoiselle. That decision paid off.

The sensational turn of foot that Cilla produced on the far turn while going 7-wide was the most impressive move of the night. Traveling in mid-pack as Strong Beauty and

Southern Beauty battled through fractions of 21.64 and 45.05, jockey Joel Dominguez sent Cilla up to challenge with a sweeping move at the top of the lane to storm away to win by 4 1/4 lengths in 1:03.74. Evangeline Downs Distaff winner Snowball rallied up the rail to finish second.

“She was easy to ride,” said Dominguez. “I wanted to track the 5-horse (Southern Beauty), so I kept my eyes on her. When we hit the turn, I asked her and she kicked home really strong.”

The final order of finish was Cilla, Snowball, Strong Beauty, Southern Beauty, Saints N

Muskets, Tensas Thought, Lady Rad, Galaxy Thirtysix and Diva’s Ransom.

Cilla (\$19.60) has since won the \$75,000 Blue Sparkler Stakes at Monmouth Park on July 10. She has 4 wins in 9 starts for \$188,500.

“We knew she was fast,” said Brinkman. “We tried a few different things with her and she is more like her mother (Sittin At the Bar). We had some bad luck with her at the end of last season and we laid her up. It looks like she is putting it all together now.”

Who was her mom? A winner of nine stakes races.



Louisiana Legends Turf

\$70,000 Guaranteed, 3YO & Upward, 1 Mile Turf

MAGA MAN

Musket Man – Lew’s Gray, by Pulling Punches

Breeder: Steven M. Renshaw • Owner: Whispering Oaks Farm, LLC • Trainer: Steve Flint • Jockey: Kevin Smith

Maga Man is finally a stakes winner. After 26 starts, the 6-year-old son of Musket Man has black type on his resume. Though it looked relatively easy on paper (a gate-to-wire victory), there were some tense moments after a jockey’s objection and stewards’ inquiry.

With yet another turf stakes sent to the muddy surface, rider Kevin Smith and Maga Man shot out of the gates and set the modest pace on the inside at 24.34, 48.17 and 1:12.74. Jax Man, ridden by Casey Fusilier, began to rally on the rail yet came up 1 1/4 lengths short in 1:45.24 over 1 1/16 miles. Fusilier

immediately filed an objection after he felt he and his horse had been squeezed by Smith and Maga Man. The stewards found there was insufficient evidence to change the order of finish.

“I had more horse tonight,” said Smith. “I never touched the horse.”

Owned by Whispering Oaks Farm, LLC, Maga Man (\$11.80) was claimed by trainer Steve Flint earlier this year in January for \$12,500 at the Fair Grounds.

“I saw the horse at Delta Downs last year and I thought, ‘If the horse ever runs for a tag, I want it.’ He is the first horse I have claimed in years and he is a big, beautiful

horse. He was a little light, so we put some weight on him and also removed the two steel bars from his front two feet. Once we did all that, he became a good horse.”

Maga Man has since returned to the track and finished fourth in the \$60,000 John Henry Stakes at Evangeline Downs on July 3. He has 6 wins in 27 starts for \$236,960.

The finish of the Legends Turf was Maga Man, Jax Man, Grand Luwegee, Treys Midnite Moon, Mageez, Langs Day and Unrestricted.

