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Triple Crown

Breeders' Cup

Special Events

Breeding

International

Sports Betting

Stock Watch

Classifieds

DRF News Archives



Track Reports

'Nicole' worth far more than \$7,500 now

By MARCUS HERSH

CHICAGO - Whatever else the Dare to Dream Stable may have gotten, it surely has found a crack starter-allowance horse.

The Dare to Dream partnership purchased Nicole's Dream shortly after she finished third on Aug. 2 in the \$50,000 Trenton Stakes at Monmouth. But stakes racing is a far cry from where Nicole's Dream began this season.

To start with, Nicole's Dream launched her career on the Great Lakes Downs-Tampa Bay Downs circuit. At Tampa, in her first race of the season, Nicole's Dream lost a one-mile turf allowance by 4 lengths, a race that turned out to be a red herring. Back less than a week later, sprinting on dirt in a \$7,500 claimer, Nicole's Dream won by almost four lengths, and in 12 starts since then she has won five times, never again racing for a claiming tag.

Thursday at Arlington, she is one of seven fillies and mares entered in a five-furlong turf sprint, for open allowance horses or \$100,000 claimers.

"The people that had her before said they ran her right off the farm and she wasn't fit when she got beat so bad at Tampa," said Larry Rivelli, Nicole's Dream's new trainer. "That gave them a free pass to run where they wanted."

Indeed, Nicole's Dream is far better than a \$7,500 claiming horse. She was cooked on a fast pace in the Monmouth stakes try, but two races ago, in an overnight handicap at Arlington, she won a turf sprint like Thursday's race by four lengths, sizzling five furlongs in 56.60 seconds.

"We just hope she can at least stay in the same form," said Rivelli. "She'll be eligible for \$7,500 starter races for a long time."

On paper, there is little to stop Nicole's Dream from winning again Thursday. She is the speed of the race and has drawn well in post 4, where jockey E.T. Baird can survey his options after the break.

Paige's Boo heads the opposition, though she comes off a subpar race in a \$50,000 stakes Aug. 16 at Monmouth. There, Paige's Boo failed to show her typical early speed and checked in sixth of 12, but she stands a reasonable chance of returning to better form.

Galatea Cat comes off a turf-sprint win over this course in a \$50,000 claiming race, while Chilling Effect, a one-run closer even in route races, must hope a hot pace burns out the speed horses.

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