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Pimlico

Nicole's Dream ready to do her specialty

By JAY PRIVMAN

BALTIMORE - Nicole's Dream is based in Chicago, but trainer Larry Rivelli looks everywhere in the Midwest and East for appropriate spots for the swift mare. Five furlongs on turf is her specialty, and when Rivelli finds something fitting that narrow parameter, Nicole's Dream is there.

Two weeks ago, the 5-year-old mare shipped into Churchill Downs and made off with the Mamzelle Stakes. On Friday, she's on the road again, this time to Pimlico, where she will be the one to catch in the \$75,000 The Very One Stakes.

"She's a specialty horse, and that's her specialty," Rivelli said from Hawthorne Race Course, where Nicole's Dream has trained since her victory in the Mamzelle. "She's doing super. She's never been better."

Nicole's Dream - who has won 16 of 34 starts, including 12 of 20 in turf sprints - has wicked early speed, and ran her rivals off their feet at Churchill Downs.

"That was unbelievable," Rivelli said. "She beat the gate. It almost looked like a false start. No one's beaten her out of the gate since I had her. Once she gets an easy lead like that, she's tough."

Nicole's Dream drew the rail in the field of 13, which pleased Rivelli.

"I couldn't be happier," he said. "Scoot and go."

Nicole's Dream carries co-high weight of 124 pounds. Her primary rival should be Elusive Diva, who is using The Very One as a consolation prize after missing last week's Genuine Risk Stakes at Belmont Park.

Elusive Diva is based in California, but after shipping to New York she spiked a fever. She comes off a turf sprint victory at Santa Anita, in the Las Cienegas Handicap, but that was at about 6 1/2 furlongs, three-sixteenths of a mile farther than Friday's race. She rallied for that victory, and cannot afford to fall too far back early in this abbreviated sprint.

Miss Victory won a pair of turf sprints this spring at Gulfstream. She was a Group 1 winner in her native Argentina. She carries six pounds fewer than Nicole's Dream and Elusive Diva.

Ambition Unbridled is stuck in post 12, and is burdened with 124 pounds, but her best race makes her a threat. She has won her last two starts, on the turf at Fair Grounds, and on a sloppy main track at Sam Houston.

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