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FIRST RESORT SET TO REJOIN ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY IN \$175,000 JOHN BATTAGLIA MEMORIAL

FLORENCE, Ky. (Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025) – The Road to the Kentucky Derby rolls into Turfway Park Racing & Gaming next Saturday for the 43rd running of the \$175,000 John Battaglia Memorial, where **Godolphin's** Kentucky Jockey Club (Grade II) winner **First Resort** leads an over-subscribed field of 12 3-year-olds plus two also-eligibles.

Run at 1 1/16 miles, the John Battaglia Memorial will go as the featured seventh race on the 10-race program with a post time of 8:55 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 5:55 p.m.

First Resort, a homebred son of Uncle Mo, has been training at Turfway Park through the winter in preparation for his 3-year-old debut. Under the care of **Eoin Harty**, First Resort stamped himself as a Kentucky Derby prospect with a 2 ¼-length victory in the Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) at Churchill Downs. Prior to that start, First Resort won his debut at Ellis Park by 3 ½ lengths before finishing second in the Saratoga Special (GII). Jockey **Luis Saez**, who guided First Resort to victory in the Kentucky Jockey Club, retains the mount from post No. 9.

Among First Resort's challengers are several of Turfway Park's most accomplished 3-year-olds including **J S Stables'** Leonatus Stakes winner **Baby Max**; **Rose Hill Farm**, **Vincent Colbert**, **John Trumbulovic** and **James Connor's** Turfway Prevue winner **Comin in Hot** and **Aaron and Victoria Haberman's** **California Burrito**, an eye-catching allowance winner over the Tapeta surface.

Several accomplished 3-year-olds are set to make their first start at Turfway, including **Three Diamonds Farm's** **Calling Card**, a New York-bred maiden special weight winner by 17 ¼ lengths; **Back Racing** and **Run for LaRoses' Maximum Promise**, who scored a 14 ½-length maiden victory at Ellis Park and **Mens Grille Racing's** two-time stakes winner **Studlydoright**.

The complete field for the John Battaglia Memorial from the rail out (with jockey and trainer):

- **Spirit Rags** (Santo Sanjur, Marcelino Salas)
- **Shan** (Albin Jiminez, Ed Moger Jr.)
- Studlydoright (Xavier Perez, John Robb)
- Calling Card (Gerardo Corrales, Mike Maker)
- California Burrito (Irving Moncada, Tom Drury Jr.)
- **Banks** (Adam Beschizza, Joe Sharp)
- Baby Max (Abel Cedillo, Kelsey Danner)
- **King of Ashes** (Declan Cannon, Brendan Walsh)
- First Resort (Saez, Harty)
- Coming in Hot (Edgar Morales, John Ennis)
- **Brereton's Baytown** (Marshall Mendez, Paul McEntee)
- Maximum Promise (Luan Machado, Kenny McPeck)
- AE: **Special Caliber** (Evin Roman, Michel Douaihy)
- AE: **Maitre D** (Evin Roman, Doug O'Neill)

The John Battaglia Memorial will award the top 5 finishers qualifying points on a 20-10-6-4-2 scale toward a spot in the starting gate for the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI).

The Road to the Kentucky Derby returns to Turfway Park on Saturday, March 22, for the \$777,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII), a key stop in the Championship Series.

For more information about racing and gaming from Turfway Park, visit www.turfway.com.

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