

SPORTS *news & commentary*



The Sports Brew

By Danny Brewer

Danny Brewer is a member of the College Football Writers Association, United States Basketball Writers Association, Turf Publicists of America, a voter in the National Thoroughbred Racing Association national poll, and has covered Rutherford county high school sports since 1993. He can be contacted via e-mail - sportzbrew@comcast.net

Shared Belief looks for a classic win

Way back in February, if you said two-year old champion Thoroughbred Shared Belief had a real chance at a Classic win in his three-year old season the response would have likely been...Doy! Unfortunately the injury bug took a bite out of this astronomical athlete and he missed the 2014 Triple Crown races. After a little soul-searching and some serious rehab, Shared Belief is now ready to make a run at a Classic win, it just won't be the one most were thinking of.

An impressive two-year old campaign for Shard Belief culminated with a jaw-dropping performance in the CashCall Futurity at Hollywood Park and the top Juvenile selection. As the early favorite for the Kentucky Derby, this unbeaten son of Candy Ride was already being measured for his blanket of roses. The Triple Crown Classic races were going to see his remarkable turn of foot and dare we think he would end the long-standing drought and sweep them all?

Then an abscess on his right front foot in February of 2014 changed all of that. Taken out of train-



Shared Belief will look for a Classic win at Del Mar on August 24. The three-year old gelding is currently unbeaten in 5 career starts.

ing to let it heal properly, the speedy gelding and his lofty goals were sidelined until May. Wins in a six-furlong allowance race at Golden Gate Fields on May 26 and another rambunctious run in the Los Alamitos Derby on July 5 kept his unbeaten record (5 wins in 5 starts) intact and renewed those thoughts of greatness. The victory in the mile and an eighth Los Al Derby over a quality field was especially impressive and may have opened a few more eyes.

"That run was almost scary good," says hall of fame jockey Mike Smith who was aboard Shared Belief for the first time in the Los Alamitos Derby. "He is one of the most talented horse I have been on and certainly the best three-year old I have ridden this year."

The Triple Crown races may be a distant memory now, but Shared Belief has his sights now set

Dogs learning to win



Preseason high school football practice is especially about teaching and learning. Hoping to dig their way back into state title contention, the Smyrna Bulldogs are hoping to build off last season's playoff appearance. Assistant Gabe Villarreal is shown here teaching one his Dogs to sic'em on defense. Smyrna opens the season on August 21 when they host arch rival LaVergne. Kickoff is slated for 7pm.

on another Classic. The mile and a quarter Pacific Classic is in his crosshairs and provides a chance for him to step way up and win the richest annual race in California.

"This doesn't really compare to the Kentucky Derby because that is the toughest race in the world to win," says trainer and co-owner Jerry Hollendorfer. "But the Pacific Classic is our big summer race here in California and one that every trainer wants to win. Shared Belief is doing real good right now and if everything works out we are going to run in the Pacific Classic."

A twenty horse field and the challenges of the mile and a quarter on the first Saturday in May will not be there, but Del Mar's biggest race does present other obstacles. First there is the distance. Having never run that far in a race, that is always a question. Also, the field will not be as large, but it will feature older horses which will likely include salty veterans like Game On Dude. Experience and maturity can be a factor in such a big event like the million-dollar Pacific Classic, but three other three-year olds (Dullahan 2012, Came Home 2002, Best Pal 1991) have made their way to the winner's circle at the seaside oval in the previous 23 runnings.

"Taking on older horses is always a challenge," says Hollendorfer. "In this race I don't think it is a requirement that you be older to win. Of course they have a bit of an advantage because they have covered the distance before and distance is always a question for a horse that hasn't been that far before, but I think he can cover it."

The ease with which Shared Belief has won his races certainly suggests he has plenty in the tank to go a mile and a quarter. Also his bloodlines suggest stamina as his pappy, Candy Ride, ran to glory at Del Mar in winning the 2003 Classic. With a big stretch move seemingly always ready, things might just be setting up for Shared Belief to get that classic win.

"He always consistently runs and has good balance," says Hollendorfer. "We think he is ready to run big."

The Pacific Classic will be run at Del Mar on August 24.

Rutherford County Track Club compete in Iowa



Rutherford County Track Club took over 20 athletes from their team to compete in the AAU National Championships in Des Moines, IA. The team earned three national medals for finishing in the top eight for the event. Jordan Barnes was the National Champion the 10-year old boys 400M, placing 1st with a time of

59.62 and also finished in 6th place in the 10-year old boys 200M with a time of 26.61. Vaughn Marion placed 5th in the 8-under boys Turbo Javelin with a throw of 70 feet and 1 inch. The club had several other great performances at the meet with several top 25 finishes at the AAU National in Des Moines, IA. The following

individuals also competed at the AAU National: Di'Anna Wright, Dymanique Thompson, Kelea Barnett, Kalissa Marion, KeAsyia Ward, Kennedy Gilbert, Kyleigh King, Lauren Bass, Michaela Flowers, Mikah Charley, Treasure Howard, Chris Stokes, Jr., Daniel Smith, Desmond Campbell, Jonathan Charley, Kristiahn Marks, Mikah Bailey, Quinten Bowden and Sean Williams.

Rutherford County Track Club is a local, 501 (C) 3, track club that has been in existence for 8 years that trains athletes from the age of 7 - 18 in track and field. The club currently practices at Smyrna High School for its indoor and outdoor seasons. For further information about the track club including contact information please visit their website www.rctrackclub.org.



The medal winners were Vaughn Marion (left) and Jordan Barnes.

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