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Well-Timed Masterful Ride

Give Goodbye Norma Jean Win

RUIDOSO DOWNS, New Mexico (May 31, 2008) – A masterful ride by veteran Joe Martinez aboard the game Goodbye Norma Jean led to a victory in the \$50,000 Fern Sawyer Handicap on Saturday afternoon at Ruidoso Downs.

Martinez let Goodbye Norma Jean, the 1-2 favorite, gallop to the lead in a field reduced to four distaffers after three scratches on Saturday morning. Going down the backstretch in the seven-and-half-furlong stakes, Goodbye Norma Jean relaxed on the lead and that probably made the difference in the stretch.

About 200 yards before the wire, Goodbye Norma Jean still held the lead over the closing Snowdrop, but Goodbye Norma Jean then saw the tracks from the starting gate, which was moved following the start of the race. “When she saw the tracks she propped and the other mare got the lead,” said Martinez. “But she was able to come back and ran a game race.”

The outcome wasn’t clear for several minutes after the photo-finish message was displayed on the tote board. Then it was revealed that Goodbye Norma Jean had won by a short nose. It was over four lengths back to third-place finisher Let The Musicbegin.

“She had a great trip,” said trainer Henry Dominguez. “She got the lead and that’s always best in a small field.”

Goodbye Norma Jean was the overwhelming favorite after placing in three straight stakes at Sunland Park. She was third in two stakes at the El Paso-area track before finishing second in the Czaria Handicap on April 12.

Snowdrop, owned by Double Eagle Ranch and trained by Bennie Wooley Jr., was the 5-2 second choice after a gate-to-wire allowance win in her most recent start.

Goodbye Norma Jean paid \$3.00, \$2.10 and \$2.10. Snowdrop returned \$2.20 and \$2.10 and Let The Musicbegin was worth \$2.10.