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Heartswideopen Rallies To Win

Ruidoso Derby On Saturday

RUIDOSO DOWNS, New Mexico (June 7, 2008) – Javier and Manny Rodriguez's Heartswideopen, the 2-5 favorite, reran her winning form of last year's Grade 1, \$2 million All American Futurity to win the Grade 1, \$388,000 Ruidoso Derby on Saturday at Ruidoso Downs.

It was the richest Ruidoso Derby run, surpassing the \$273,935 purse in the 2005 running won by world champion DM Shicago.

The powerful, nearly black filly broke from the outside post position, drifted out towards the outside rail and then powered to the win. That's the same scenario from the same post position as her All American Futurity victory that secured her champion two-year-old and champion two-year-old filly titles.

Oscar Hernandez, who returned from an injury to ride Heartswideopen, piloted her to the half-length win in :19.763 for the 400 yards.

"I feel great," Hernandez said after the win. "She made a few mistakes, but she's fast and she can overcome her mistakes.

Those mistakes started when Hawkin Had It in the eighth post position broke open his starting gate doors before the start of the race.

Trainer Carl Draper explained: "When the eight horse broke through the gate, Heartswideopen false broke, but settled back down. She stumbled the second jump just like she did in her trial, but Oscar knows her and took a hold of her."

Finishing second in the full field of derby horses was Strong Hope. "He ran a great race," said trainer Fred Danley. "He's been training well and I thought we had a good chance to finish second through fourth."

Strong Hope showed his Grade 1 class last year when he qualified for the All American Futurity and finished eighth behind Heartswideopen. After a winter's rest he returned to action in the Ruidoso Derby trials and finished second behind Eye Of Glory.

All attention in the Ruidoso Derby was focused on Heartswideopen with many of the competing trainers openly saying they were probably running for second place. This

respect came after Heartswideopen dominated her division last year and then impressed when making her seasonal debut in the Ruidoso Derby trials.

Last year, the daughter of Feature Mr Jess and Dashing Phoebe won six of seven starts highlighted by her All American Futurity victory and a stakes-record win in the Ruidoso Futurity. She also raced the fastest quarter mile ever by a filly or mare when she won her All American Futurity trial in :20.921, the all-time fastest qualifying time to the All American Futurity.

Heartswideopen made her 2008 debut in the Ruidoso Derby trials and easily ran to a length-and-a-quarter win in :19.628 for the 400 yards, the fastest times from the four trials.

The winner's share of \$194,416 from the record Ruidoso Derby purse raised her career earnings to \$1,477,106 and places her in 14th position among the all-time leading money-earning quarter horses and fourth among quarter horse fillies and mares. The only mares above Heartswideopen are Blues Girl Too (2nd), Dashlingly (8th) and Corona Cash (13th).

Draper has stated that his goal with Heartswideopen is to repeat the derby sweep at Ruidoso Downs that he achieved in 2005 with DM Shicago, the only All American Futurity winner to win the three derbies at Ruidoso Downs the following summer.

"That's one," Draper said about trying to win the three derbies. Heartswideopen will now point to the Rainbow Derby trials on July 4. The Rainbow Derby will be run on July 19 and the All American Derby is on August 31.