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Noconi Upsets Heartswideopen  
In Thrilling All American Derby

RUIDOSO DOWNS, New Mexico (August 31, 2008) – Noconi, a maiden just two starts ago, upset champion Heartswideopen in her bid to become quarter horse racing's all-time leading money earner in the Grade 1, \$1,065,648 All American Derby on Sunday afternoon at Ruidoso Downs.

R.D. Hubbard and Johnny T.L. Jones' homebred Noconi, trained by Paul Jones, made the lead with 100 yards left in the 440-yard stakes and Heartswideopen made a furious late bid, but came up a neck short at the wire. Ramon Sanchez guided Noconi over the sloppy track to the win in :21.16, equaling the stakes record set by Significant Speed in 2002.

"My horse won last time and kind of built his heart up a little bit," said Jones. "Sometimes when you win, you get a little confidence. The horse is getting better. He just ran the perfect race, and that's what I knew he needed to do to beat her [Heartswideopen]. It worked out great."

Richard Frandsen's Decati finished third in the year's richest quarter horse derby.

It was the fourth stakes win in three days at Ruidoso Downs for Hubbard-Jones connection. On Saturday, Hubbard's Ketel Won captured the All American Gold Cup and Joan Dale Hubbard's Tricky Dust won the 870-yard Brigand Handicap. In Friday's Zip Pocket Overnight Stakes for thoroughbreds, R.D. Hubbard's Going Wild won.

"From the time we ran the trials I thought we had a good shot," said Hubbard. "I really thought we'd run first or second."

Manny and Javier Rodriguez's Heartswideopen was sent off as the strong favorite in her quest to surpass world champion Refrigerator as quarter horse racing's all-time leading money earner. World champion Refrigerator earned \$2,126,309 and Heartswideopen has earned \$1,885,282, fourth on the all-time leading money-earning list.

It was Heartswideopen's second defeat from 13 career starts and ended a nine-race winning streak for the 2007 champion two-year-old and champion two-year-old filly. She had made each of her 12 previous starts on a fast track.

“The racetrack kind of got away from her and she couldn't make her comfortable run when I asked her,” said Heartswideopen’s jockey Bonifacio Perez.

It is likely the final career start for Heartswideopen. Trainer Carl Draper has said that she will be bred in 2009, but left open the option that she could return to racing after the breeding season for a limited campaign. She will only race again unless she is completely sound and happy, according to Draper.

Noconi, a gelded son of Mr Jess Perry, earned \$532,824 for his second career win. He won his maiden in his All American Derby trial when he raced the 440 yards in :20.983, the fastest qualifying time from the five trials.

Noconi, the 5-1 second choice, was winless in his first 10 starts, but was a respected stakes horse with a second in last year’s Hobbs America Futurity and thirds, each behind Heartswideopen in the Grade 1 Ruidoso and Rainbow derbies.

The All American Derby victory gives Noconi a berth in the Grade 1, \$1 million Champion Of Champions at Los Alamitos Race Course on December 13. “Looks like the Champion of Champions is our goal,” said Jones “I was going to go to Zia Park, but I'm thinking he has to go to California now. We'd like to get him over the track.”

The Denny Ekins-trained Decati has stepped forward in the All American Derby. The gelding finished second in his All American Derby trial behind Heartswideopen, beaten by three quarters of a length.

The complete order of finish in the All American Derby was Noconi, Heartswideopen, Decati, Wild Six, Possum Fast, First Moonflash, White Or Wrong, First Timber, MBN Finest Hour and Captain Courage.

The supporting stakes on the All American Derby card were all thoroughbred stakes, the Ruidoso Thoroughbred Derby and three other stakes for New Mexico-breds that were rescheduled after they were postponed from the cancelled Zia Festival program on July 27.

In the Ruidoso Thoroughbred Derby, odds-on favorite Quiet Again, owned by Paul Bruce Thompson, drew out in the stretch for his third win from nine career starts. The gelding from the Jimmie Claridge stable raced the one-and-a-sixteenth mile on a sloppy track in 1:47 1/5 with Duane Sterling aboard.

The son of Kentucky Derby winner Real Quiet won by an expanding three-and-three-quarters lengths over Youarefun. Lord Gallop was third, another six lengths back in third.

Bob Haynsworth and Sue May's Dixieland Chime dominated the \$67,500 Road Runner Handicap by seven lengths as the strongly backed 5-2 second choice. He raced the five-and-a-half furlongs in 1:04 on a sloppy track.

Elegant Time finished second and I Can Cope was third in the field of seven New Mexico-bred sophomores.

The Greg Green-trained Elegant Time won his first four starts, including the Dine Stakes, before finishing fourth in the Don Juan Ornate Handicap in his start before the Road Runner.

The makeup of the \$67,500 Lincoln Handicap for New Mexico-bred distaffers was drastically changed after Peppers Pride was scratched in her quest for an all-time record 17-consecutive wins.

In Peppers Pride's absence, Charlie's Pizzazz withstood a mild late challenge from Silver Expression to get her third win from her latest five starts. Let The Musicbegin finished third.

With Alejandro Medellin up for trainer Thomas Peirce Sr., Charlie's Pizzazz was timed in 1:11 1/5 for the six furlongs for the diminishing one-length victory.

In the \$67,500 Sierra Starlet Handicap for sophomore New Mexico-bred fillies, the Ray Ashford-trained Askmetodance got the one-and-a-quarter length verdict over Inexcessive Choke. Rapid Bull was third in the field of 11 runners.

Askmetodance, owned by the Double Eagle Racing Stable, raced to her fifth win from seven career starts.