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ROAD TO JEFF RUBY STEAKES BEGINS SATURDAY WITH \$125,000 LEONATUS STAKES

FLORENCE, Ky. (Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024) – The road to the \$700,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (Grade III) begins next Saturday at Turfway Park Racing & Gaming as **Joseph P. Morey Jr.**'s impressive Turfway Prevue Stakes winner **Vote No** will wheel back on short rest and take on 10 rivals that entered the 34th running of the \$125,000 Leonatus Stakes.

Run at 1 1/16 miles, the Leonatus Stakes will go as Race 8 on the nine-race card at 9:25 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 5:55 p.m.

Trainer **Bill Morey** stated after Vote No won the Turfway Prevue, just seven days ago, that he's aiming for the Jeff Ruby Steaks for the improving son of Divisidero. In the Turfway Prevue, Vote No made a bold last-to-first rally for a 5 ¼-length score. Prior to that victory, as a 2-year-old, Vote No broke his maiden at Presque Isle Downs and returned three weeks later for a gutsy three-quarters of a length victory in the Juvenile Sprint Stakes at Kentucky Downs. In his final start as a 2-year-old, Vote No finished third in the 1 1/16-mile Bourbon (GII), beaten only one-length by **Can Group** and **Noted**.

Jockey **Gerardo Corrales** will once again pilot Vote No from post No. 8.

Among Vote No's other rivals in the Leonatus Stakes include a trio of entrants from **Albaugh Family Stable – Awesome Road** (who is owned in partnership with **Donegal Racing**), **J Bird Time** and **Time Muse**.

J Bird Time and Time Muse, both sired by Albaugh's homebred Not This Time, broke their maidens at Turfway Park in their most recent starts. J Bird Time won his lone start on Dec. 15 in a 1 1/16-mile maiden special weight contest at odds of 10-1 while his stablemate broke his maiden by a scant nose in a one-mile maiden special weight event on Dec. 1. Both horses have **Martin Garcia** listed to ride on the overnight. J Bird Time drew the rail while Time Muse drew post 6.

Albaugh's third entrant, the **Brad Cox**-trained Awesome Road, impressively won on debut at Ellis Park by 2 ¾ lengths. However, in his subsequent two starts, the son of Quality Road finished a disappointing seventh in the Breeders' Futurity and fifth in the Kentucky Jockey Club (GII). Eclipse Award Leading Apprentice nominee **Axel Concepcion** will have the call on Awesome Road from post 4.

Other accomplished 3-year-olds that entered the Leonatus Stakes include **Chiefswood Stables** Grey Stakes (GIII) runner-up **Piper's Factor**; **Pin Oak Stud**'s undefeated local allowance winner **Record Time**; **BG Stables'** Keeneland allowance winner **Blue Eyed George** and **Zingales Racing Stable Corp** and **RM18 Stable**'s Gulfstream Park allowance winner **Salvatore Prince**

Here is the complete field for the Leonatus Stakes from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): J Bird Time (Garcia, Romans); Salvatore Prince (Tyler Connor, Jose D'Angelo); **Good Bali** (Colby Hernandez, Rusty Arnold); Awesome Road (Concepcion, Cox); Piper's Factor (Abel Cedillo, Katerina Vassilieva); Time Muse (Garcia, Romans); Blue Eyed George (Luan Machado, Michael McCarthy); Vote No (Corrales, Morey); **Woodcourt** (Orlando Mojica, Cipriano Contreras); **Noahs Ark** (Alex Achard, Rodolphe Brisset); Record Time (Joe Talamo, Mike Stidham).

The Leonatus Stakes can be used as a prep toward the March 2, \$150,000 John Battaglia Memorial and March 23, Jeff Ruby Steaks – both qualifying races on the Road to the Kentucky Derby run at Turfway Park.

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