

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CONCEPCION RETURNS TO TURFWAY PARK AN ECLIPSE AWARD WINNER

FLORENCE, Ky. (Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024) – **Axel Concepcion** will return to the Turfway Park jockey colony Friday night after being awarded the 2023 Eclipse Award champion apprentice rider at Thursday night's award ceremony in South Florida.

"It is a moment full of happiness," Concepcion said. "I want to thank God for giving me the moment and thank you to my family. It was a very happy moment. There was a lot of work, a lot of dedication and a lot of effort. But, that's why we worked so hard. It's been a year full of blessings. I'm very happy. It's sincerely a dream come true and very grateful to all the people who have helped."

Concepcion, an 18-year-old native of Puerto Rico, began riding at Turfway in the 2023 Holiday Meet and has since amassed 26 victories at the Florence oval. Overall in 2023, Concepcion tallied 199 wins from 1,005 starts at 12 different tracks across North America.

Most of the Concepcion's apprenticeship came at tracks in the Mid-Atlantic. However, in November, he began riding at Churchill Downs under the representation of **Bryson Cox**, the oldest son of multiple Eclipse Award-winning outstanding trainer **Brad Cox**.

Concepcion is slated to ride in 18 of 20 races across Friday and Saturday at Turfway Park.

TURFWAY ALUMNA IDIOMATIC WINS CHAMPION OLDER FILLY & MARE AT ECLIPSE AWARDS –

Juddmonte's homebred **Idiomatic** was crowned the Champion Older Filly & Mare at the 2023 Eclipse Awards Thursday night.

The now 5-year-old daughter of Curlin began her stellar 2023 season at Turfway Park when she won back-to-back allowance races and cruised to a two-length victory in the Latonia Stakes. After her Turfway campaign, the **Brad Cox** trainee went on to win the Personal Ensign (GI), Spinster (GI) and Breeders' Cup Distaff (GI).

Recently, Juddmonte announced Idiomatic would return for her 5-year-old campaign and Cox expects her to be back in his care in the coming weeks.

TURFWAY PREVUE STAKES WINNER VOTE NO DRAWS POST 6 FOR RESCHEDULED LEONATUS STAKES –

The road to the \$700,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (Grade III) begins next Friday at Turfway Park Racing & Gaming as **Joseph P. Morey Jr.**'s impressive Turfway Prevue Stakes winner **Vote No** headlines a field of eight 3-year-olds entered in the rescheduled 34th running of the \$125,000 Leonatus Stakes.

Run at one-mile, the Leonatus Stakes was originally scheduled to run Jan. 20 but was canceled due to inclement weather. The race will now go as Race 6 on Friday with a post time of 8:25 p.m. First post is 5:55 p.m.

Trainer **Bill Morey** stated after Vote No won the Turfway Prevue 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 1/4-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. 6.

The Leonatus field includes several horses that were entered for the original date but a new competitor in the mix is **Welch Racing's** impressive maiden special weight winner **Epic Ride**. Trained by **John Ennis**, Epic Ride debuted on Dec. 8 at Turfway and finished a tough-luck second after a bad start and a bold, rail rally at odds of 9-1. In his second start, the son of Blame dominated a six furlong maiden contest by five lengths under jockey **Adam Beschizza**. The same tandem will take on their seven rivals in the Leonatus from post 5.

Here is the complete field for the Leonatus stakes from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Good Bali** (Colby Hernandez, Rusty Arnold); **Awesome Road** (Axel Concepcion, Brad Cox); **Blue Eyed George** (Luan Machado, Michael McCarthy); **Mugatu** (Joe Talamo, Jeff Engler); **Epic Ride** (Beschizza, Ennis); **Vote No** (Corrales, Morey); **Salvatore Prince** (Tyler Connor, Jose D'Angelo); **Bettering** (Yarmarie Correa, Genaro Garcia).

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 at Turfway on the Road to the Kentucky Derby.

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