

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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EPIC RIDE CRUISES TO VICTORY IN \$125,000 LEONATUS STAKES

FLORENCE, Ky. (Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024) – Welch Racing's **Epic Ride** proved Friday night he may be the best 3-year-old based at Turfway Park when he drew off to a convincing four-length victory under jockey **Adam Beschizza** in the \$125,000 Leonatus Stakes.

Trained by **John Ennis**, Epic Ride has been the picture of consistency to begin his young career, winning two of his first three starts.

The Leonatus was Epic Ride's first try against stakes company and he used his sharp turn of foot early in the one-mile contest to assume the lead as the field of six 3-year-olds entered the first turn. As Epic Ride easily completed a quarter-mile in :24.63, race favorite **Vote No** joined the early pace to his outside. The duo continued through a half-mile in a modest :48.76 before Epic Ride began to edge clear entering the far turn. At the top of the stretch, Beschizza began to ask Epic Ride for his best run and, even while drifting out in the stretch, easily opened up on the field to the wire in a final time of 1:39.24.

Blue Eyed George was able to close ground from the back of the pack to finish second by 1 ³/₄ lengths over **Good Bali** who was followed by **Salvatore Prince**, **Vote No** and **Bettering**.

Epic Ride was sent off as the second choice in the race and returned \$5.56, \$4.28 and \$2.68. Blue Eyed George, under jockey **Luan Machado**, paid \$6.12 and \$4.36 while Good Bali and **Colby Hernandez** returned \$6.20.

Epic Ride banked \$76,005 for his victory in the Leonatus to improve his overall purse earnings to \$130,517.

A son of Blame, Epic Ride is out of the Gio Ponti mare Pick a Time. He was bred in Kentucky by Fred W. Hertrich III.

The Leonatus Stakes, which was rescheduled from Jan. 20 due to inclement weather, is the second of three local preps toward the \$700,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII), a Championship Series event on the Road to the Kentucky Derby. Next up is the March 2, \$150,000 John Battaglia Memorial.

Live racing resumes Saturday at Turfway Park for a nine-race program that begins at 5:55 p.m.

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