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## **TALENTED 3-YEAR-OLD EPIC RIDE HEADLINES FULL FIELD ENTERED IN \$150,000 JOHN BATTAGLIA MEMORIAL**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024)** – The Road to the Kentucky Derby “Prep Season” will conclude next Saturday at Turfway Park when **Welch Racing’s Epic Ride** headlines an oversubscribed field of 14 3-year-olds that were entered in the 42<sup>nd</sup> running of the \$150,000 John Battaglia Memorial (Listed).

The John Battaglia Memorial, named in honor of the longtime General Manager of Latonia Race Track and Turfway Park, will go as Race 6 at 8:25 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 5:55 p.m.

Run at 1 1/16 miles, the John Battaglia Memorial will award the Top 5 finishers qualifying points on a 20-10-6-4-2 towards a spot in the starting gate for the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I).

Epic Ride has been impressive in his young three-race career at Turfway Park where he won last month’s Leonatus Stakes by four lengths, the local prep for the John Battaglia Memorial. A son of Blame, Epic Ride just missed winning his career debut when he made a late surge up the rail and lost by a neck to **Smokey Smokey**. At second asking, Epic Ride was much the best winning by five lengths against 11 rivals in a maiden special weight contest. Jockey **Adam Beschizza**, who’s been aboard Epic Ride for all three of his starts, will once again have the call in the John Battaglia Memorial and break from post No. 6

Among Epic Ride’s rivals that entered the John Battaglia Memorial include a three-plied battle from top trainer **Brad Cox’s** stable – **Encino**, **Fidget** and **Gettysburg Address**.

**Godolphin’s** homebred Encino, who was supplemented for this race, recently won a maiden special weight contest at Turfway Park. Jockey **Axel Concepcion** will pilot Encino from post 12. His stablemates, **WinStar Farm** and **Siena Farm’s** Smarty Jones fourth-place finisher Gettysburg Address along with **Calumet Farm’s** allowance winner Fidget, will break from posts 5 and 1, respectively. Jockey **Gerardo Corrales** has the call on Gettysburg Address while Fidget will be ridden by **Fernando De La Cruz**.

Another breakthrough maiden special weight winner that is entered in the John Battaglia Memorial is **Ruis Racing’s Bolt At Midnight**. Trained by his owner **Mick Ruis Sr.**, Bolt at Midnight earned a stout 92 Brisnet Speed Rating when he broke his maiden three weeks ago at Turfway Park in front-running fashion. A son of the former Ruis-trained Bolt d’Oro, Bolt At Midnight will be ridden by **Martin Garcia** from post 4.

Here is the complete field for the John Battaglia Memorial from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): Gettysburg Address (Corrales, Cox); **Ode to Balius** (Sonny Leon, Concepcion Torres); **Mr. Faversham** (Orlando Mojica, Stephen Lyster); Bolt At Midnight (Garcia, Ruis); Fidget (De La Cruz, Cox); Epic Ride (Beschizza, Ennis); **Blue Eyed George** (Luan Machado, Michael McCarthy); **Break Out** (Tyler Conner, Saffie Joseph Jr.); **Mission Ready** (Gavin Ashton, Ed Fernandez); **Good Bali** (Colby Hernandez, Rusty Arnold); **Mugatu** (Joe Talamo, Jeff Engler); Encino (Concepcion, Cox). Also-eligibles: **Karlwithanarl** (Concepcion, Robert Medina); **Katheeb** (Declan Cannon, Brendan Walsh).

The John Battaglia Memorial is the first of two races on the Road to the Kentucky Derby at Turfway Park. The \$700,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII) is set for Saturday, March 23.

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