

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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

FLORENCE, Ky. (Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025) – The Road to the \$777,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (Grade III) begins Saturday at Turfway Park Racing & Gaming with the 35th running of the \$125,000 Leonatus Stakes. The one-mile contest features recent impressive allowance winner **Banks**, who will face seven budding 3-year-olds in his stakes debut.

Carded as Race 6 of 10 at 8:25 p.m. (all times Eastern), the Leonatus Stakes serves as the local prep for the Feb. 22 \$175,000 John Battaglia Memorial (Listed), part of the Road to the Kentucky Derby Prep Season. It also leads to the March 22 Jeff Ruby Steaks, a Championship Series contest on the Road to the Kentucky Derby. First post for Saturday's program is 5:55 p.m.

Owned by **Tom Lambro** and trained by **Joe Sharp**, Banks has excelled over Turfway's Tapeta surface, breaking his maiden Dec. 5 in a restricted maiden special weight and returning three weeks later to defeat nine rivals in a first-level allowance contest. The son of Outwork will be ridden by **Adam Beschizza** from post No. 4.

Among Banks' seven rivals is the undefeated **Church and State**, owned by **Centennial Farms - Niagara** and trained by **Dale Desruisseaux**. The son of Caravaggio is 2-for-2 in Canada, with victories in a Nov. 15 maiden special weight and a Dec. 6 first-level allowance. Jockey **Rafael Hernandez**, who guided him in both Canadian victories, retains the mount from post 7.

The field for the Leonatus Stakes from the rail out (with jockey and trainer):

- **Chunk of Gold** (Luan Machado, Ethan West)
- **Baby Max** (Abel Cedillo, Kelsey Danner)
- **Up to No Good** (Santo Sanjur, Keith Kinmon)
- Banks (Beschizza, Sharp)
- **Shan** (Albin Jiminez, Ed Moger Jr.)
- **Can't Deny It** (Gerardo Corrales, Larry Rivelli)
- Church and State (Hernandez, Desruisseaux)
- **Hard as Life** (Walter Rodriguez, Michelle Nihei)

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