

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Russell Road Hopes Third Time's a Charm in Wild & Wonderful June 27, 2012

(Charles Town, WV) – If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. That's exactly the motto that the connections of West Virginia-bred star **Russell Road** are living by as they send out the popular six-year-old gelding for a third crack in the \$100,000 Wild & Wonderful this Saturday night at Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races. The 7 furlong Wild & Wonderful is scheduled as Race 9 on the Sprint Festival card with a post time of 9:45pm.

Despite owning 20 wins and more than \$1.1 million in earnings from his 30 efforts at Charles Town, Russell Road has yet to conquer the Wild & Wonderful, holding a pair of third place finishes in the 2010 and 2011 editions. Sent off as the .90-to-1 favorite in 2010, Russell Road endured a wide trip and came up a half-length short against My Friend Nev. In 2011, he didn't display his normal turn of foot and finished 2 ¾ lengths behind winner Wink at the Girls.

The results haven't deterred owner Mark Russell and trainer James W. Casey from trying their hand in the Wild & Wonderful for a third time.

"We know it's going to be a tough race, but this is the one we wanted to run him in," said Casey, the patriarch of powerful local racing operation Taylor Mountain Farm. "He's just at the top of his game right now."

Russell Road's performance thus far in 2012 validates his trainer's assessment as he's made it look easy in his two starts this year, taking a pair of stakes by 4 ½ and 2 lengths respectively. The performances, coupled by a strong recent workout have Casey thinking his star hasn't lost a step at this stage of his career.

"Honestly, we worked him the other day and it was the best work he's ever had. I can't say he's going to win, but he'll run well. We're definitely optimistic about that."

Casey's optimistic view of Russell Road's chances bodes well for the bettors at Charles Town who have made the son of Wheaten the favorite in 24 of his last 27 starts over the track, with the three exceptions being the 2009 Red Legend when he faced eventual Eclipse Award winner Big Drama, a 2010 allowance race against two-time Charles Town Classic winner Researcher and last year's Wild & Wonderful. What's more is that in 21 of those 24 starts where he was favored, the popular gelding has gone off as the odds-on choice.

"We only have one race out of town we're looking at up at Mountaineer," Casey added. "He's a popular horse and we'll keep him at Charles Town other than that."

However, Russell Road finds himself in the unfamiliar spot of having competition for favoritism as Hillwood Stable's **Bandbox** returns to the site of his biggest win to date - the \$100,000 Charles Town Juvenile in September 2010.

Outside a pair of starts at Aqueduct, the New York-bred Bandbox hasn't been worse than second in his other 7 career outings, which includes three stakes wins – the 2010 Sleepy Hollow at Belmont Park, the aforementioned Charles Town Juvenile and the 2011 Private Terms at Laurel Park where he defeated 2011 West Virginia Derby (G2) runner-up Rush Now.

Despite only starting nine times over his career, and posting one victory since October 2010, trainer Rodney Jenkins has never wavered on his colt's ability.

"Oh yeah, he can run," Jenkins says simply about Bandbox. "He had a problem that developed early in his three-year-old year that kept him out and he's really had a lot of bad luck in his races."

Most recently, Bandbox finished second behind Hamazing Destiny in the Maryland Sprint Handicap (G3) on the Preakness undercard.

"I thought he ran very well in the race down in Maryland," Jenkins added. "He was coming off a three month layoff, made a nice middle move and flattened out a little in the lane. He's ready for Saturday."

Abel Castellano, Jr. has the mount on the gray son of Tapit.

When all is said done, the red hot **Guam Typhoon** could surpass both Bandbox and Russell Road in terms of public support in the Wild & Wonderful. Owned by Midwest Thoroughbreds and trained by Jamie Ness, Guam Typhoon comes into the race riding a 5 race winning streak, including a pair of dominating victories in optional claiming allowances at Delaware Park.

Claimed by Ness from trainer Ian Wilkes down at Tampa Bay Downs in February, Guam Typhoon has rolled in his 3 starts for his new connections. After winning his first start off the claim in a 5 furlong handicap over Tampa's turf course, he was switched back to the main track following his ship up to the Mid-Atlantic from Florida. After the pair of races at Delaware, Guam Typhoon makes his first start over the Charles Town oval as he tries to make it 6 straight wins on Saturday under jockey Daniel Centeno.

As a three-year-old, Ike and Dawn Thrash's **Hurricane Ike** looked on his way to establishing himself as a fixture in graded stakes competition with a victory in the Derby Trial (G3), fourth place finish in the Kings Bishop (G1) and third in the Super Derby (G2) in consecutive starts as a three-year-old. But after a poor outing in the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1), Hurricane Ike was given nearly a half-year off and couldn't find his stride when returning to the races in April of his four-year-old season.

However, after a trio of subpar efforts, his connections dropped back him back into softer company in his last half dozen starts and the now five-year-old responded with a pair of wins and three runner-up finishes, including a narrow defeat by a neck at the hands of Glenwood Canyon in the \$100,000 Michael Schaefer Memorial at Hoosier Park last October. In his lone stakes try this year, Hurricane Ike didn't fire finishing tenth in April's Texas Mile (G3) at Lone Star Park.

Kentucky Derby and Preakness winning jockey Mario Gutierrez will ride Hurricane Ike for trainer Jeff Thornbury on Saturday.

Another horse whose connections have always held him in high regard shows up at Charles Town in the form of R.A. Hill Stable's **Malibu Glow**, trained by New York based conditioner George Weaver. As a three-year-old, the \$100,000 yearling purchase was given a chance against some of the tops in the division, contesting races like the Travers (G1) and Super Derby (G2) before his trainer put him back in allowance company at Gulfstream Park for his first start as a four-year-old.

After responding with a victory in the 7-furlong allowance, the son of Malibu Moon took another jump back into graded stakes company in the Skip Away (G3). An eighth place finish behind Fort Larned compelled Weaver to place him back in listed stakes company in Delaware Park's Joseph French Memorial where he ran a good third to Not Abroad and former Oaklawn Handicap (G2) winner Win Willy.

Malibu Glow will now seek the first stakes win of his career in the Wild & Wonderful and has the services of jockey Javier Castellano.

While not as experienced in the Wild & Wonderful as his WV-bred counterpart, Thomas Shank and Stan Young's **Good Lord** is back to contest the race for a second year in a row. Fourth in last year's Wild & Wonderful, Good Lord exits a fourth place finish in the Aristides (G3) at Churchill Downs on June 2.

Despite banking over \$200,000 in his career, the five-year-old has only been able to find the winners' circle 4 times in his career and hasn't done so since May 2011. Leandro Goncalves will ride Good Lord for trainer Forest Kaelin.

Bobby Rankin's **Dynamite Bob** completes the Wild & Wonderful field.

Post time for the Wild & Wonderful is scheduled for 9:45pm.

\$100,000 Wild & Wonderful

June 30, 2012

Race 9 – Post time 9:45pm EST

3&up, 7 Furlongs

PP. Horse, Jockey, Weight, Trainer

1. Hurricane Ike, Mario Gutierrez, 121, Jeffrey D. Thornbury
2. Malibu Glow, Javier Castellano, 121, George Weaver
3. Dynamite Bob, Marco A. Ccamaque, 121, Jose L. Lopez
4. Russell Road, Mathew C. McGowan, 124, James W. Casey
5. Good Lord, Leandro R. Goncalves, 121, Forrest Kaelin
6. Guam Typhoon, Daniel Centeno, 121, Jamie Ness
7. Bandbox, Abel Castellano, Jr., 121, Rodney Jenkins

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Hotel accommodations can be found on property at the Inn at Charles Town, which features 153 comfortable guest rooms, including 18 spacious suites that overlook live thoroughbred racing action. Guests can enjoy a complimentary breakfast buffet and wireless internet access. They can further unwind by taking the complimentary shuttle service to enjoy racing, table and slot action and a diverse selection of dining options at Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races. The Inn at Charles Town offers a variety of venues to host business or social functions.

Conveniently located about an hour from the Baltimore and Washington DC beltways, Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races is one of the region's fastest growing gaming and entertainment destinations with more than 4 million visitors each year.

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