

Matz 3-year-old wins despite trip

By MIKE WELSCH

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. — Trainer Michael Matz, who became the biggest story on the Kentucky Derby trail and beyond a year ago with Barbaro, may find himself back on the Derby road again this spring following Chelokee's game victory over a strong field of first-level

Gulfstream Notes

allowance 3-year-olds going a mile and one-eighth here Saturday. Chelokee, a son of Cherokee Run owned by the Centennial Farms, overcame a strange trip to post his second victory in five starts. Chelokee finished full of run under jockey Mark Guidry after dropping back to rear of the pack around the second turn to defeat the highly regarded pair of For You Reppo and Sightseeing.

"We could have run him in a stakes but I thought this was the best way to go, in an allowance race, and let him show us if he wants to go the next step," said Matz. "This was a pretty good field he beat, especially for him to make a move like that today over this speed-biased track. I'm real pleased and I think off of this effort he deserves the chance to do something good."

Matz, who won the \$1 million Florida Derby here a year ago with Barbaro as a prelude to his smashing



Sun King, shown winning the Commonwealth BC, worked on Saturday.

victory in the Kentucky Derby, would not commit to any specific race for Chelokee's next start.

"He came back a little close today, in just three weeks," said Matz, "so we'll see how he comes out of the race first before deciding where he'll

go next."

Deadly Dealer passes first test

Trainer Todd Pletcher also sent out a potential Derby contender on Saturday's undercard — Deadly Dealer, who dominated nine other 3-

year-olds going 7 1/2 furlongs in the third race. The win was the second in three starts for the son of Concerto and his first since being purchased privately by Charles Wacker III and turned over to Pletcher seven weeks earlier.

"We weren't positive when we got him how far he'd go since his first two races were sprints on wet tracks," said Pletcher. "And it still might be hard to say since the race-track is so fast today and they went so fast on the front end."

Like Matz, Pletcher also remains uncertain what will be next for his improving 3-year-old.

"It's March 3 and it might be rushing him to get two more starts before May 5, so we might have to just take one shot with him somewhere on April 7 and see what happens," said Pletcher.

Another outside post for Loconia

Loconia, perhaps a victim of bad luck at the post position draw in his two allowance races this meet, once again will have to try to overcome a bad draw when he heads a full field in Monday's featured entry-level allowance race at 1 1/16 miles over the turf course.

On Jan. 4, Loconia broke from post 9 in a field of 12, encountered trouble entering the first turn and was out-finished by Broadway Producer and lost by 1 1/4 lengths. Nineteen days

later, Loconia broke from post 11 in a field of 12 and was caught late by Nombre de Dios to lose by a head.

Once again Loconia will have to deal with post 11, but figures to be right there again under Edgar Prado for trainer Graham Motion.

Trainer Bill Mott sends out the uncoupled entry of Exton and Olympic with the latter seemingly the stronger of the two. Olympic was coming late when fourth, beaten a half-length by Nombre de Dios in the same race Loconia exits. Leading jockey Cornelio Velasquez has the return call on Olympic.

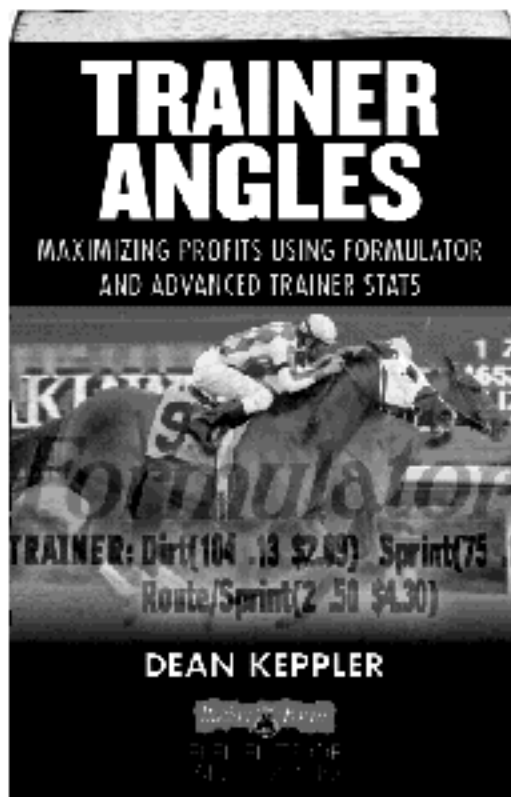
Sun King has first workout of year

The multiple stakes-winning Sun King worked three furlongs in 37 seconds Saturday at Palm Meadows, his first official breeze of the year. Sun King, who finished second in the Grade 1 Met Mile and Whitney handicaps last year, has not run since he finished 10th in the Breeders' Cup Classic.

Zito said his first major goal of the year is the Met Mile, though he will likely have one start before that May 28 race. Last year, Sun King won the Commonwealth Breeders' Cup at Keeneland before running second to Silver Train in the Met Mile. This year's Commonwealth will be run on April 14.

— additional reporting by David Grening

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