

**GULFSTREAM****Corinthian won't be denied****Half Ours might be best of day for Pletcher****By DAVID GRENING**

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. – Saturday wasn't just the day for Todd Pletcher to showcase his 3-year-old talent. He has a pretty good older sprinter as well.

On a day when Pletcher won five races at Gulfstream Park – three of them stakes – the most impressive performance might have been put in by Half Ours, a 4-year-old who contested fast early fractions and was still running fast at the end to take the Grade 2, \$225,000 Richter Scale Breeders' Cup Handicap by a half-length. Park Avenue Ball rallied down the center of the course to get second by a half-length over Diabolical.

The race was marred by the breakdown of Bright One, who broke the sesamoid bone in his left foreleg and had to be euthanized. He finished fourth in the race.

The victory was the fifth in as many starts for Half Ours, his first in a graded stakes.

Half Ours was bumped while breaking sharply and had the lead a few jumps out of the gate and ran an opening quarter in 21.76 seconds. Bright One, who broke slowly, rushed up to take the lead soon after and John Velazquez, aboard Half Ours, was content to sit off Bright One as the half-mile went in 43.72 seconds.

"I didn't want to be head-and-head; I kept a length behind the other horse," Velazquez said. "He's never been too far back so I didn't want to get him too far back and get discouraged. I put him right behind the other horse where he could see the other horse and be competitive."

Half Ours continued to stalk Bright One until just outside the sixteenth pole when he took command. Half Ours, a son of Unbridled's Song owned by Aaron and Marie Jones, covered the seven furlongs in 1:22.21 and returned \$5.60 as the favorite.

"I thought he ran huge," Pletcher said. "Johnny said he got sideswiped at the start, he said it knocked the air out of him. He got up and prompted very fast fractions, put away a couple of nice horses and dug in when a couple of nice horses came to him. He's a superstar."

Pletcher said Half Ours would be pointed to the Grade 1 Carter Handicap at Aqueduct on April 7.



MATT DEAN/E

Corinthian comes off the turn with the lead in the Gulfstream Park Handicap. He held off the late challenge of Hesanoltsalt for the victory.

**By DAVID GRENING**

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. – This time, Corinthian gets to keep his Gulfstream Park stakes win.

One year after being disqualified from first place in the Fountain of Youth Stakes here, Corinthian hung on for a neck victory over Hesanoltsalt in the Grade 2, \$350,000 Gulfstream Park Handicap for his first official career stakes win. Remembering what happened last year when Corinthian veered in on two horses in the stretch of the Fountain of Youth, trainer Jimmy Jerkens was nervous after Corinthian held off Hesanoltsalt at the wire.

"I was asking everybody if he drifted out," Jerkens said. "Last year,

I couldn't tell watching the pan shot, and it was blatant."

There was no reason for concern Saturday. Under Javier Castellano, Corinthian stalked the pacesetter Noble Causeway through fractions of 24.18 seconds, 48.20, and 1:12.25. Corinthian took over from Noble Causeway around the turn and appeared to open up approaching the quarter pole.

According to Castellano, Corinthian began to wait on horses turning for home, and Hesanoltsalt was coming under Rafael Bejarano. Though the inside part of the track was the best, Bejarano guided Hesanoltsalt off the rail for the stretch drive, saying that Hesanoltsalt wasn't comfortable

being down on the inside.

Corinthian opened up again in the stretch, but Hesanoltsalt was resurgent and kept coming, only to fall just short. It was another half-length back to A. P. Arrow in third. Noble Causeway, Rehoboth and Summer Book completed the order of finish.

Corinthian, a 4-year-old son of Pulpit owned by the Centennial Farm, covered the 1 3/16 miles in 1:55.06 and returned \$4 as the even-money favorite.

"He hesitated a little bit at the top of the stretch," Castellano said. "That's the only concern. If you move too soon he hangs out and waits for the horses. But he was much calmer and more relaxed in the gate, super. He saw that horse

coming at the sixteenth [pole] when he took off again."

Jerkens said that Corinthian was brilliant winning an all-race earlier this meet, went back to New York in about two weeks and could possibly point to a Grade 2, \$200,000 Excelsior Handicap at Aqueduct on April 7.

For trainer Nick Zito, another second-place finish in graded stakes. Since Jan. 1, 2006, horses have finished second in graded events. Earlier this year, Hesanoltsalt finished second in the Grade 1 Donn Handicap.

Bejarano, said Zito, "said I was disappointed when he went inside."

"It's very frustrating. So many second-place finishes, I can't count

**Pletcher wins fifth Hutcheson in row****By MIKE WELSCH**

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. – Trainer Todd Pletcher continued his unprecedented dominance of the Hutcheson Stakes, winning the Grade 2, \$150,000 dash for the fifth consecutive year with King of the Roxy's impressive 2 1/4-length victory over Bold Start on Saturday at Gulfstream Park.

King of the Roxy joined Lion Tamer, Limehouse, Proud Accolade, and Keyed Entry as Pletcher trainees to have won the 7 1/2-furlong Hutcheson since 2003. John Velazquez had been aboard Pletcher's

four previous Hutcheson winners. Edgar Prado rode King of the Roxy.

King of the Roxy won despite being forced to race wide throughout over a main track that had seemingly been favoring horses racing on or near the inner rail earlier in the day. A son of Littleexpectations, King of the Roxy joined the leaders, including stablemate Out of Gwedda, entering the stretch before gradually edging away in the final furlong. Bold Start, forced to steady along behind the leaders while saving ground around the turn, angled wide for clearance into the stretch and finished willingly to easily be second-best.

Forefathers broke poorly from the rail, steadied in traffic down the backstretch, then lost considerable ground around the turn and into the stretch. He ultimately finished a non-threatening seventh as the 2-1 favorite in a field of nine 3-year-olds.

King of the Roxy paid \$15.40 after covering the distance in 1:28.00 over a fast track.

"It's been a great streak," Pletcher said of his fifth consecutive Hutcheson victory. "He showed last year he was a quality horse but he wasn't seasoned enough when he ran in the Breeders' Cup."

King of the Roxy finished eighth in

last year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile. "We just backed off on him. He's really filled out and matured physically since his last start. I think this race was a great jump start out and have been pointed for a while."

Pletcher said he would point Barry Irwin, head of Team Stables, before making a decision about King of the Roxy's next

"I think he's best in a one-furlong situation, maybe up to a mile," Pletcher said. "He didn't appear to be done going 7 1/2 furlongs to whether he'll go a mile and a half. I'm not sure."