

Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Sunland Park live racing season begins Friday, December 30

\$600,000 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) set for Sunday, March 26, 2023

Live horse racing at Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino begins on Friday, December 30. Post time to start the 63rd season will be 12:25 p.m. A 55-day meet is planned and extends through Sunday, April 2, 2023.

Loaded with rich stakes races, Sunland Park offers some of the most attractive races for Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses in the Southwest. The \$16 million dollar season will dish out over \$275,000 in purses per race day.

The sparkling jewel of the lucrative season is the enriched \$600,000 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) to be run on Sunday, March 26, 2023. The Kentucky Derby prep race offers 50 qualifying points to the winner for entry to the 2023 Run for the Roses. The 18th edition of the one and one-eighth mile classic anchors a huge day worth over \$1.6 million. The \$300,000 Sunland Park Oaks, \$250,000 New Mexico Breeders' Derby, \$250,000 New Mexico Breeders' Oaks, \$120,000 New Mexico State University Stakes, \$100,000 Bill Thomas Memorial Stakes and \$100,000 Harry W. Henson Handicap are also part of Sunland Park's biggest day.

2022 Sunland Derby (Gr. III) winner Slow Down Andy catapulted to a tremendous three-year-old campaign. Trained by 3-time Sunland Derby (Gr. III) winning conditioner Doug O'Neill, Slow Down Andy marched his way to victory in the Del Mar Derby (Gr. II) and was stakes placed in the prestigious Awesome Again Stakes (Gr. II) at Santa Anita Park and the Breeders' Cup Mile (Gr. I) at Keeneland. The overachieving son of Nyquist ran boldly against the best sophomores in the country and now has 4 careers wins and earnings topping \$909,000.

The 2019 Sunland Derby day program handled an all-time New Mexico State record all-sources handle of over \$4.8 million. National interest for the Sunland Park racing product continues to rise.

The 2022-23 season starts fast and furiously with an excellent opening weekend menu. The \$350,000 Championship at Sunland Park (Gr. III) will be run on Saturday, Dec. 31. The world's best Quarter Horses will collide in 21st running of this 440 yard feature. Defending champion Instygator remains razor sharp and is a possible finalist. The \$100,000 New Mexico State Racing Commission Handicap and the \$65,000 KLAQ Handicap will be run for Thoroughbred Sprinters on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023. The sensational New Mexico-bred stakes star mare Bella Dona may run in the New Mexico State Racing Commission Handicap.

Lead up races to the Sunland Derby (Gr. III) include the \$100,000 Riley Allison Derby at one mile on Sunday, Jan. 29 and the \$100,000 Mine That Derby at one mile and one sixteenth on Sunday, Feb. 26.

Prep races for the Sunland Park Oaks are the \$65,000 Borderplex Stakes on Sunday, Jan. 29, and the \$75,000 Island Fashion Stakes at one mile on Sunday, Feb. 26. The Sunland Park Oaks offers 50 points to the winner

for entry to the 2022 Kentucky Oaks. Both the Sunland Derby (Gr. III) and Sunland Park Oaks will be Lasix-free events. Additionally, all Thoroughbred stakes races will be Lasix-free.

Six figure stakes races are plentiful throughout the season. The \$300,000 estimated New Mexican Spring Futurity and \$250,000 estimated West Texas Futurity for two-year-old Quarter Horses will be showcased on Saturday, April 1. The meet ends with the 62nd running of the \$100,000 Sunland Park Handicap at 9 furlongs on Sunday, April 2. Sheriff Brown closed from last to first in last year's edition.

Racing will be held on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday basis for the entire meeting.