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TOP STORY

Still Having Fun is 2018's Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year

By Dede Biles dbiles@aikenstandard.com Jan 22, 2019



Still Having Fun, right, ridden by Joel Rosario, wins the Woody Stephens Stakes at Belmont Park last June. Still Having Fun is the 2018 Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year.

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Submitted photo by Adam Coglianese

Still Having Fun was the surprise winner of the Woody Stephens Stakes last June at Belmont Park in New York.

Sent off at odds of 13-1, the bay colt came from well off pace to defeat Engage by 1¼ lengths while favored World of Trouble finished fourth.

In large part because of that performance, Still Having Fun is the 2018 Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year honor.

The Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum announced his selection in a press release issued Monday.

Members of the Racing Hall of Fame and Museum Advisory Board chose Still Having Fun to receive the award.

Gary Barber, Wachtel Stable and Terp Racing own Still Having Fun. His trainer is Timothy Keefe, who bred the colt in partnership with Charles and Cynthia McGinnes in Maryland.

Keefe described Still Having Fun's Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year victory as "pretty phenomenal" and "truly an honor."

During his career, the 4-year-colt has captured four of his 13 races and earned \$516,653. In 2018, he won three of his 11 races while earning \$472,200.

Ridden by Joel Rosario in the Woody Stephens Stakes, Still Having Fun completed seven furlongs in 1:21.45.

The colt's other efforts last year included victories in the Miracle Wood and Frank Whitley, Jr. stakes at Laurel Park in Maryland.

Still Having Fun also finished third in the Malibu Stakes at Santa Anita Park in California.

"He's a really cool horse because he just loves what he's doing," Keefe said. "Nothing bothers him. Nothing gets under his skin."

Cary Frommer trained Still Having Fun while the colt was in Aiken from the fall of 2016 until the summer of 2017.

"He never did anything wrong to draw attention himself," Frommer said. "He also never really dazzled us. He just did his job every single day. He's a real workmanlike horse and that's the way he runs."



Still Having Fun, foreground, ridden by Joel Rosario, wins the Woody Stephens Stakes at Belmont Park last June. Still Having Fun is the 2018 Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year.

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Still Having Fun is the first Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year for Frommer, who is the president of the Aiken Training Track.

“Being that I’ve been in Aiken as long as I have (35 years) and trained a lot of horses, it’s very exciting,” Frommer said.

Still Having Fun’s sire (father) is Old Fashioned. The colt’s dam (mother) is Casual Kiss.

The other candidates for 2018 Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year were Concrete Rose, Decorated Soldier and Maximus Mischief.

Lisa Hall, coordinator of the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum, said the eligibility requirements for a thoroughbred to be considered for the Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year award were changed for 2018.

Previously, a horse that spent time in Aiken had to win a grade I stakes during the year for which it was being honored and/or surpass \$1 million in career earnings.

Now a thoroughbred that spent time in Aiken must capture a graded stakes during the year for which it is being honored and/or surpass \$500,000 in career earnings.

“We have fewer horses here than we’ve had in the past, and we want to make sure that this award is carried on,” said Hall of the decision to make the requirements easier. “We also want to be fair to the horses in training here and give them a better shot at winning this award.”

Still Having Fun qualified to be considered with his victory in the Woody Stephens Stakes, which is a grade II event.

Concrete Rose triumphed in the grade II JPMorgan Chase Jessamine Stakes at Keeneland in Kentucky. Decorated Soldier captured the grade III Seagram Cup Stakes at Woodbine in Canada. And Maximus Mischief won the grade II Remsen Stakes at Aqueduct in New York.

The Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year award has been around since 2002. The first recipient was Congaree.

Other winners have included Quality Road (2009 and 2010), Palace Malice (2013 and 2014) and Curalina (2015 and 2016).

Dickinson received the award in 2017.

The ceremony to recognize Still Having Fun as the Aiken-Trained Horse of the Year will be held Sunday, March 17, at 1:30 p.m. at the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum.

The event is free and open to the public.

The Hall of Fame and Museum is in Hopelands Gardens at 135 Dupree Place.

For more information, call 803-642-7631 or 803-643-2121.

Information also can be obtained by sending an email to halloffame@cityofaikensc.gov or visiting aikenracinghalloffame.com.

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