

Justwhistledixie Seeks Grade I Win in Acorn



Justwhistledixie looks for her first grade I in the Acorn.

Photo: Coglianesse Photos

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By [Jack Shinar](#)

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Courtesy of The BloodHorse.com

[Justwhistledixie](#), the likely choice in the June 6 [Acorn Stakes](#) (gr. I), was a late scratch from the Kentucky Oaks (gr. I) May 1 when she was noticed limping in her stall shortly before the race.

“We scratched at about 2:45, and I felt terrible,” trainer Kieran McLaughlin said. “But then at about 5:45 after the race was run I thought maybe it wasn’t such a bad thing.”

That, of course, was because of [Rachel Alexandra](#)’s effortless 20-plus length victory in that race, after which she went on to beat colts in the Preakness (gr. I).

Justwhistledixie, on a five-race win streak, doesn't figure to run into anyone like Rachel Alexandra in the one-mile Acorn, a \$300,000 event that drew eight other 3-year-old fillies. McLaughlin thinks that the daughter of [Dixie Union](#) , who comes into the race off back-to-back grade II scores in Florida this spring, is more than ready to record her first grade I victory.

“The foot issue is over and behind us,” McLaughlin said. “The shoe had moved a little bit, and we thought there might be an abscess, but no. She’s been working very well since her return to Belmont.”

Owned by West Point Thoroughbreds, Justwhistledixie has not been out of the money in seven lifetime starts while earning \$337,927. Her five victories, beginning with a maiden tally at Belmont last fall, have come by a combined margin of more than 19 lengths. She easily won the Davona Dale and Bonnie Miss stakes at Gulfstream in her most recent tries.

Julien Leparoux, who was aboard Justwhistledixie for the first time in the March 27 Bonnie Miss, returns to ride. They'll break from post 8 under equal weight with their rivals of 121 pounds.

McLaughlin also entered Stewart Armstrong's [Dream Play](#), a 5 1/2-length victress in the Comely Stakes (gr. II) on a sloppy Aqueduct strip April 11.

“She has speed, so she should be forwardly placed,” McLaughlin said of the Hennessy filly. “We think she deserves a shot at a grade I. I’d love to get them both grade I placed or a grade I win because neither has grade I earnings, which is very important for fillies.”

After tracking early, [Be Fair](#) faded to fourth in the Kentucky Oaks, 25 1/2 lengths behind Rachel Alexandra. The daughter of [Exchange Rate](#) was fourth in the Ashland (gr. I) before that. She's seeking her first stakes win.

“She’s been in the deep end of the pool, that’s for sure,” trainer D. Wayne Lukas said. “She has a lot of quality, and I think the one-turn mile fits her really well. I don’t know how she’ll like the ‘Big Sandy’, but we think she merits a chance.”

Heiligbrodt Stable's [Four Gifts](#) won the Eight Belles Stakes (gr. III) by three lengths on a sloppy track on Kentucky Derby day at Churchill Downs, her second graded win for trainer Steve Asmussen. The daughter of [Even the Score](#) leads the field in earnings with \$483,168.

[Casanova Move](#) ran third as the choice in the Black-Eyed Susan Stakes (gr. II) May 15.

[Funny Moon](#) makes her fourth lifetime start for trainer Christophe Clement and the quickly-developing [Malibu Moon](#) miss is coming off a three-length win in a first-level allowance heat at Belmont.

[Gabby's Golden Gal](#) faded to sixth in the Kentucky Oaks after setting the pace. She romped by 13 lengths in the Sunland Park Oaks prior to that.

[Doremifasollatido](#) won Belmont's Matron (gr. II) as a 2-year-old and ran second in her only start this year.

[Livin Lovin](#), a grade III winner last year, makes her seasonal debut for Steve Klesaris.