

El Gato Malo Holds On

By Chuck Dybdal

Heavily favored El Gato Malo survived a stern stretch challenge from Cover Magic to win the \$54,500 McCann's Mojave at Golden Gate Fields.

El Gato Malo sat behind stablemate Ghetto, who opened a big lead early. He moved up and put a head in front at the half-mile pole as he, Ghetto, and Cover Magic were bunched together going around the turn.

Cover Magic seemed to put his head in front in the stretch, but El Gato Malo dug in and was inching clear at the end, winning by a half-length in 1:44.35. He paid \$2.80.

"I'd rather win by farther, but this horse kind of got a little lackadaisical on the lead," said winning jockey Russell Baze. "But when he saw that horse [Cover Magic] come running up to him, he rose to the challenge and outran him to the wire."

El Gato Malo, who won the Gold Rush locally as a 2-year-old, got his first victory since winning last the Lone Star Derby last May. The colt was taken out of training after that victory and had lost his last three starts since returning.

An El Corredor gelding, El Gato Malo is owned by West Point Thoroughbreds and trained by Craig Dollase. He has won 5 of 10 starts and \$486,460.