

Courtesy of Ocala.com

## Taqarub, Justwhistledixie head south for stakes action

Trainer Kieran McLaughlin will send two three-year-olds into stakes action next weekend at Gulfstream Park.

Shadwell Stable's TAQARUB (Aldebaran) heads into Saturday's \$250,000 Fountain of Youth S. (G2) and West Point Thoroughbreds et al's filly JUSTWHISTLEDIXIE (Dixie Union) is set to run in Sunday's \$150,000 Davona Dale S. (G2). The two companion events will be run at one mile.

Taqarub, who is three-for-three so far, worked Saturday at Palm Meadows, going a bullet half-mile in :47 as he prepares for his first race over a track other than Aqueduct. He won the Jimmy Winkfield S. by 8 1/4 lengths in his last start on January 19.

Justwhistledixie dropped her initial two starts, but has since reeled off a seven-length maiden win, a 3 1/4-length score in the Love Affair S. and, most recently, a 3 1/2-length victory in the Ruthless S. She drilled a half-mile Sunday morning in :48 4/5 on the fast dirt Palm Meadows Training Center.

Both the colt and the filly have had plenty of time to acclimate to the South Florida winter. McLaughlin says his operation always prepares to ship into and out of any climate.

"The good thing about our team in New York is we always keep the stalls heated, blankets on them and we don't let them grow thick winter coats," McLaughlin explained. "They're ready to go anywhere we need them to go."

Justwhistledixie has been quick in her sprint races and will be stretching out to a mile for the first time in the Davona Dale. McLaughlin indicated a change could be coming in her running style when she teams up with Alan Garcia on Sunday.

"She was quick because that's what we needed her to be at that point," he said. "We used to have to really rub on her to get her to go from the gate and she eventually came around. Now she's out there with just mild urging and it's better. She should be close to the pace, but I think she'll be able to sit a little going a mile."