

Connections worthy of some praise

By Michael Hammersly
Daily Racing Form

PHOENIX - We're always quick to point out a misstep or a poor decision, but it's time to recognize some good moves.

I've said before that the connections of Stardom Bound made the right move to keep her with the girls. The connections of Mr. Fantasy, likewise, deserve plaudits for not pushing the colt into the Kentucky Derby.

Mr. Fantasy, third in the Gotham, was to skip Saturday's Grade 1 Wood at 1 1/8 miles in favor of the one-mile Grade 2 Withers, said Terry Finley, president of the colt's co-owner West Point Thoroughbreds, earlier this week. Mr. Fantasy will not go in the Derby, he said, but could end up in the Preakness. Finley said the decision was made when trainer Kieran McLaughlin noticed the colt had lost weight since the Gotham.

By skipping the Wood, they avoid temptation. As Finley told Daily Racing Form earlier this week, "If he ran well enough [in the Wood] to get to the Derby, we'd be forced to go, and that's not a spot we wanted to be in."

If Mr. Fantasy ran in the Derby, considering his speed and the onslaught of other speed ready for Churchill Downs, he could end up another victim of Derby fever. Instead, his connections have an enormously talented New York-bred who can surely do some damage in big open races probably up to a mile at the very least - not to mention the three-race Big Apple Triple series.