



SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2014
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Heitai Dominates Inaugural \$300,000 Evangeline Downs Turf Sprint with front running victory

OPELOUSAS, La.,—Frank and Barbara Rowell's 4-year-old homebred gelding Heitai went to the front early and never looked back, winning Saturday's inaugural running of the \$300,000 Evangeline Downs Turf Sprint by 3-¾ lengths over Whiskey Bravo at Evangeline Downs Racetrack Casino & Hotel in the richest Thoroughbred race in the track's 49-year history.

Trained by Karl Broberg and ridden by Diego Saenz, Heitai, a Louisiana-bred son of 2000 Kentucky Derby winner Fusaichi Pegasus, dominated throughout the five furlong race on the grass course, winning for the sixth time in seven starts this year. After brushing with Whiskey Bravo at the start, Heitai shot to a two-length lead two furlongs in into the race and increased his advantage to 4-½ lengths into the stretch, and held a comfortable advantage to the wire over Whiskey Bravo and the 4-year-old filly Snappy Girl.

Heitai, who paid \$6.60 to win, completed the five furlongs in 56.03 over a firm turf course. "When they first announced this race (in February), I said 'He is going to win it, and he did,'" said Broberg, who is second leading trainer by wins in the nation behind Steve Asmussen. "If they don't get to him early, they don't catch him. My only instructions to Diego before the race was to go to the front."

"He was really running and pulling on my reins," said Saenz. "I just rode him like a winner."

Klaravich Stables' Sum of the Parts finished fourth, followed in order by second choice Gantry, Lemon Drop Dream, Solar Charge, Redhotrush, Berlino Di Tiger (BRZ) and Unitas.

Heitai, (pronounced Hay-Tie, Japanese for soldier), came into the Turf Sprint following a two-length victory in the Louisiana Legends Night Sprint at Evangeline on the dirt on May 24 against Louisiana bred, which was preceded by a one-length victory on turf also at Evangeline in the Need for Speed Stakes. Heitai's only defeat this year came in the Count Fleet Sprint Handicap (GIII) at Oaklawn Park on April 10.

The \$300,000 Evangeline Downs Turf Sprint was the richest five furlong turf sprint thus far in the U.S. in 2014.

In stakes action earlier on the program, the Jerry Namy's 5-year-old mare Malibu Yankee won the 1 1/16 mile \$100,000 Opelousas Stakes on turf by a neck over Sister Ginger. A dark bay or brown daughter of Malibu Moon, trained by Tom Amoss and ridden by Gerard Melancon, Malibu Yankee won her first race in five attempts this year, coming from 10th place in a 12 horse field of fillies and mares to get home first at the wire in 1:45.00 over a firm turf course.

Brittlyn Stables 4-year-old Louisiana homebred gelding Sunbean forged ahead in the stretch of the \$100,000 Evangeline Mile to prevail by 1 ½ lengths on the main track over Pushingonastring in 1:37.33. Trained by Ron Faucheux and ridden by Richard Eramia, Sunbean, a bay son of Brahms, improved his career mark to 10 wins in 16 starts, registering

his fourth win in five starts this year.

The favored Louisiana Flyboy won the, seven furlong, \$70,000 Lafayette Stakes for 3-year-old Louisiana bred by 3 ¾ lengths over Sir Genghis in 1:23.60.

In the complimentary Louisiana-bred event, Off Cycle, ridden by Diego Saenz, won the \$70,000 Acadiana Stakes for 3-year-old fillies by 2 ¾ lengths over Chaotic Kitty. Trained and co-owned by Ron Faucheux and Thomas Arnaud, Off Cycle defeated eight fillies while increasing her record to five wins in seven starts this year, completing the seven furlongs in 1:25.04.

The total handle for the 11-race card was \$2,280,847.

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About Evangeline Downs

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