

OHIO CHAMPIONS SQUARE OFF IN BABST/MEMORIAL HANDICAP

Three-time Ohio Champion Sprinter Rivers Run Deep lost only one race last year and that was a five-furlong turf stake at Churchill Downs where he closed fast for the second spot. 2016 Ohio Horse of the Year Mo Dont No lost to only one Ohio-bred last season – Rivers Run Deep. The 6-furlong Edward Babst/Albert Palacios Memorial Handicap on April 29 at Belterra Park provided the stage for these two Buckeye Stars.

It was to be the seasonal debut for Mo Dont No and owner Ron Paolucci knew it was a tough spot. “Rivers Run Deep loves this track and 6 furlongs is his game,” said the head of Looch Stable. “But Jeff (Radosevich) has him training great and he’s jumping out of his skin for a start and here we are.” Rivers Run Deep came into the race off a third-place finish in a \$83,000 allowance race at Oaklawn Park where he was forced to check hard at down the backstretch.

Radosevich also entered the speedy stakes winner Dubacious who drew the rail. Last year he ran second in this race to Rivers Run Deep. As expected, when the gates flew open Dubacious sprinted to the front while Albin Jimenez took Rivers Run Deep in hand, though he was never very far off the pacesetter. Around the turn, Rivers Run Deep effortlessly took the lead, while Mo Dont No commenced his rally from fourth. Rivers Run Deep increased his lead through the stretch and pulled away to win by six in 1:08.75, just missing the track record he established at Belterra Park last year in this race. Mo Dont No finished an easy second, four lengths ahead of longshot La Nina Bronca.

“We never felt pressured by the horse in front,” said Jimenez who won four stakes on the son of Ready’s Image last season. “I had a ton of horse the whole way and just let him out a notch into the stretch, never had to ask him for much.” Trainer Chris Hartman gave all the credit to the horse and rider. “He is so easy to train, he gets himself ready and he is easy to maintain. We’ll probably keep him in Ohio and we may try to stretch him out – especially with this guy (Jimenez) on him he is awfully good and has a great set of hands.”

Rivers Run Deep may well spend a lot of time in Ohio. “I’ve spoken with owners Jim and Ywachetta Driver and we believe that when his career is over, we’d like to stand him at stud in Ohio,” said Hartman. “The program is getting stronger and this could be an awesome opportunity, definitely the best spot to

stand him.” Rivers Run Deep has been advertising his speed before Ohioans for years. Now 6-years-old, the win in the Babst/Palacios was the 17th in his career that has earned his connections \$959,940.