



Mr Ritz puts on show in \$200,000 Caesars Stakes at Indiana Grand Racing & Casino

Story by Tammy Knox - Photos by Linscott Photography (unless noted)



SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (Sept. 5, 2018) – Mr Ritz has been impressive this summer at Woodbine Racecourse and it was time to step up into stakes action. The son of Oasis Dream didn't disappoint, rolling home to victory in the 13th running of the \$200,000-guaranteed Caesars Stakes (Listed) at Indiana Grand Wednesday, Sept. 5. Trained by Josie Carroll, it was the third career win in five starts for Mr Ritz.

Starting from post five in the eight horse lineup, Mr Ritz, ridden by Jose Valdivia Jr. for the first time, was able to rally out for good positioning from the gate as Factor This and Florent Geroux secured the top spot along the inside heading by the grandstand for the first time. Mr Ritz kept close to the leader and Valdivia moved out to sit right on the outside flank of Factor This with Nobrag Justfact and Brian Hernandez Jr. sitting along the inside in third.

Valdivia never asked Mr. Ritz for another gear until well into the final turn. From there, the three-year-old dug in deep and rallied up to the lead, eventually putting several lengths between him and the front of the pack. The closers of the race began to kick in but had too much ground to make up, leaving Mr Ritz all alone on the lead for the win by two and three-quarter lengths. Untamed Domain, ridden by Jose Vargas Jr., came from the back of the pack to be the second place finisher, just a neck over Factor This, who held gamely for third. The time of the stakes race was 1:36.20.

"I'd like to thank the Carrolls for giving me this opportunity to ride this colt," said Valdivia, who is the leading rider at Arlington Park. "Hats off to them. I'd never seen this horse until I walked out in the paddock today. My agent told me I had a chance to ride him a few days before the draw. The Carrolls told me to put him into the race and he would come through for me. He gave me everything he's got the entire way and never slowed down."

Mr Ritz, a bit of a longshot in the field, paid \$22.80, \$9.40, \$5.80 across the board. The Great Britain born colt won his first career start in England before shipping to Woodbine earlier this year to the Carroll Stable. He tripled his career bankroll with his win in the Caesars Stakes and now has more than \$160,000 in career earnings. Mr. Ritz is still owned by Great Britain's Earle I. Mack, who is also the breeder.

"We thought this was a nice spot for him going a mile around two turns on the turf," said Charlie Carroll, who accompanied the colt to Indiana. "It worked out really well for us, and the jockey (Jose Valdivia Jr.) rode fantastic. He followed everything Josie told him. He was able to carry himself through the first turn and not get locked down along the inside. This horse doesn't like to be in along the rail. He can be pretty aggressive."

The Carroll Stable has had good luck before in the state of Indiana. Shipping the occasional horse in for stakes races, Josie Carroll, who is the first female trainer to ever win Canada's premier race, the Queen's Plate, won the 1999 Indiana Oaks at Hoosier Park with Brushed Halory.

Ron Baumann, senior vice president and general manager of Indiana Grand, made the trophy and blanket presentation to Charlie Carroll and Valdivia for their win with Mr Ritz. Joining Baumann in the winner's circle was Jon Schuster, vice president and general manager of racing and Kevin Greely, director of racing.



The 16th season of Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horse racing continues through Wednesday, Nov. 7. Racing is conducted Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 2:05 p.m. with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 p.m. A special Thursday racing program will be held Sept. 6 with a 2:05 p.m. post time.

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