



Fireball Baby sizzles in Miss Indiana Stakes at Indiana Grand Racing & Casino

Story By Tammy Knox
Pictures By Linscott Photography (unless noted)



SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (Nov. 7, 2018) – It was her first attempt at two turns and she handled it like a pro. Fireball Baby and Fernando De La Cruz took home the title in the 21st running of the \$100,000 Miss Indiana Stakes Wednesday, Nov. 7 at Indiana Grand marking her second consecutive stakes victory.

Fireball Baby was in the center of the 12-horse field as they left the starting gate for the one mile and 70-yard race. Horses were five across the track heading into the first turn and Fireball Baby held her ground in the middle. As the field hit the backstretch, the horses began to fan out, leaving Beentheledonethat and John McKee with the slight lead over Incrediblee and Malcolm Franklin with Fireball Baby sticking close to them on the outside.

In the turn, De La Cruz began to urge Fireball Baby to the front and by the time they had hit the top of the stretch, the lead was accomplished. Fireball Baby dug in gamely for the stretch drive and fended off her opponents for the win by one-half length over the fast closing The Beauty's Tale and Jesus Castanon. Discreet Beauty and Marcelino Pedroza also closed well for third. The time of the race was 1:43.65.

"We really didn't do too much to prepare her for this race today other than stretch out her gallops a little," said trainer Phil Bauer. "She has progressed well all year and we figured once this race came around, she would be in pretty good shape for it. I told Fernando (De La Cruz) to be patient with her and ride her like she was the best."

Fireball Baby returned \$5.80, \$3.00, and \$2.60 across the board. The win was her third of her young career in five starts for Richard and Tammy Rigney of Rigney Racing. The Nobles Promise filly completes her freshman season with earnings in excess of more than \$150,000.

"We will turn her out for the winter," added Bauer, who is a former assistant for Trainer Ken McPeck. "Then, we will get her ready for the meet here next year."

Fireball Baby represents a strong family base for the Rigneys. They raced her mother, Bubbles and Babies, and her sire, Noble's Promise, who competed in the Kentucky Derby during his career. He was retired to stud at Breakway Farm in Dillsboro, Ind. but unfortunately passed away in August 2018. The dam, Bubbles and Babies, was a homebred for the Rigneys and she was one of the first horses in training for Bauer when he branched out on his own to be the private trainer for Rigney Racing in 2013.



The 16th season of Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horse concluded Wednesday, Nov. 7. Racing will resume in April 2019.

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Trophy presentation, from left to right, Jon Schuster, vice president and general manager of racing, Jessica Barnes, Director of Indiana Breed Development, Fernando De La Cruz, Tammy and Richard Rigney, owners, Phil Bauer, trainer and Kevin Greely, director of racing.