

March 15, 2010

GITANO HERNANDO'S SCHEDULE IN ADVANCE OF WORLD CUP REVEALED, TRAINER MARCO BOTTI THINKS THE GRADE 1 WINNER WILL BE "SPOT ON," KIEREN FALLON EXPECTED TO RIDE HIM FRIDAY FOR HIS FINAL BIG WORK



Gitano Hernando breezed 7½ furlongs on Saturday morning. The move went exactly as planned, reports trainer Marco Botti, who said "He traveled hard on the bridle behind Mesa Marauder for the first 4 ½ and then picked up strongly the final 3 furlongs. There's no doubt he's come forward since the Winter Derby Trial. He is right where I want him to be."



Gitano will have a standard week of galloping, with 1 and 2-furlong blowouts Wednesday and Thursday and his final serious work at 7½ furlongs Friday. Kieren Fallon (right) will return from Dubai for Friday's workout. "That will be a serious work and he will be as fit as he needs to be after that," Botti (left) proclaimed. On the morning of Saturday the March 20, Gitano Hernando will have an easy gallop and then be prepared to travel to Dubai.



The tall son of Hernando will be sent from the Green Ridge Stables at Newmarket to London Heathrow Airport, where he is expected to arrive at 6 in the evening for a flight to Copenhagen and then on to Dubai, where he arrives midday on Sunday. Traveling Head Lad Keith Williams will travel with the current fourth choice for the \$10-million World Cup, as will Claire Ricks. Once in Dubai, Gitano will have an easy lead-out on Monday morning and then have steady training throughout the week leading up to the big race on March 27 at the new Meydan track in the United Arab Emirates.



In other World Cup news, Life is Sweet, who won the Breeders' Cup Ladies and is considered to be a freak on synthetic racing surfaces, tied up on the track at Santa Anita over the weekend and not only will miss the big race, but has been retired by owner Marty Wygod.

Aron Wellman said "This is very interesting and noteworthy, because Garrett Gomez chose her over Bob Baffert's runner Richard's Kid, after winning impressively on that horse. This tells me that Gomez liked the filly more than the horse, so that may be one entrant we won't have to take very seriously." Richard's Kid is owned by the son of Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum.

A full field of 14 has been invited to the \$10-million World Cup in Dubai. Gitano Hernando, although 100-percent North American owned, will be representing Great Britain, because he is based in England. Gio Ponti is being called the "horse to beat" by Americans.

English bookies generally have settled on Gio Ponti now as the tepid 5 to 1 choice, ahead of French-based Vision d'Etat at 6 to 1, with Breeders' Cup runner-up Twice Over and Gitano Hernando locked as co-third choices at odds of 7 to 1.

Team Valor International colorbearer Gitano Hernando is expected to have a rooting section of some 20 partners, family and friends on hand to support his bid at Meydan race course on March 27.