

GREEN UP EARNS BERTH FOR GRADE 1 COTILLION IN HUGE PREP SCORE STAYS UNBEATEN IN 2022; RECORDS 100 BEYER AND 109 EQUIBASE FIGURES



Green Up cruising with ears pricked to the finish line in a super-fast edition of the \$150,000 Cathryn Sophia S. (Parx Racetrack photo)

Green Up's racing partners went into Tuesday's \$150,000 Cathryn Sophia Stakes at Parx not totally confident in light of the stiff competition and her having missed the Monmouth Oaks with a pair of sub-par morning moves—but they hoped for the best.

When the filly crossed the finish line while being eased on a near 4-length lead, they got more than they ever thought possible. Even the Upstart filly's most ardent admirers could not have expected the show the Virginia-bred filly put on in the prep for the \$1-million, Grade 1 Cotillion in Pennsylvania.

The task facing the 3-for-3 winner in 2022 was made somewhat easier with the morning-time scratch of Kenny McPeck's runaway Grade 3 Iowa Oaks heroine Butterbean and two others, reducing the field from 9 to 6 runners, and a further near-post-time withdrawal of yet another filly. So 5 sophomore fillies went into the gate for the race over a mile and 70 yards, the same distance of Green Up's victory in a \$100,000 stakes at Monmouth Park 7 weeks earlier.

Green Up had been scheduled to return to Monmouth for the \$250,000, Grade 3 Oaks, but in a couple of works at Saratoga following her romping, eased-up triumph in the Listed Boiling Sprints Stakes the filly was dull and not her usual effervescent self. Trainer Todd Pletcher wisely skipped the Oaks, backed off of the filly for a couple of weeks and waited until she signaled she was ready to get serious again.



In the last of a few works just in advance of the Cathryn Sophia Stakes, Green Up showed with great gusto in a morning trial at The Spa that she was more than ready, smoking home and then, in a real “tell,” galloping out after a half-mile breeze in :24 ³/₅—a time most horses can’t match when asked to keep on breezing. It caught a lot of folks’ attention, the most important of them being Pletcher.

Barry Irwin had told Pletcher that he really wanted to see the filly rate off the pace, especially from her number 1 post position and with the main speed right outside of her in the gate, and the sooner she was taken back and brought outside the leaders the better he would rate our chances.

The starting gate was positioned a couple of horse widths off of the rail, so when the Iron Monster’s gate doors sprung open, Green Up was not pinned down inside. The heavily-favored odds-on choice Interstatedaydream broke on top with Green Up leaving the gate on time but not super-alertly.

In a riding exhibition the likes of which fully illustrate why Irad Ortiz Jr. is the best rider currently plying his trade in North America, the Puerto Rican-born reinsman gathered up the filly, waited patiently for room and seamlessly maneuvered himself into exactly the position he wanted. He was between horses and outside of the pacesetter. It was a thing of beauty to behold and placed him in position to win the race.

Interstatedaydream set the fractions to the quarter pole and her splits were fast, as she stayed inside and reeled off clockings of :22 ⁴/₅, :46 ²/₅ and 1:10 ³/₅. Best in 4 of 6 including back-to-back Graded wins with 92-93 Beyers, the favorite made her 1 to 2 odds looks pretty good, as she clicked off her splits just in advance of the hard-knocking Shotgun Hottie.

Green Up began in next-to-last around the first turn, improved while 3 wide to third, then gradually into second going into the turn. She loomed up boldly nearing the curve for home, where Florent Geroux felt her presence and began to ask his filly to hang on to her rapidly diminishing lead. Alas it was for naught, as Green Up—while still under a hold and not yet asked for anything—went right by the public choice entering the stretch.

Ortiz let the filly balance herself at the top of the lane, then asked her to quicken, which she did at once. The filly had the lead at the quarter pole and she reached the mile in 1:35 $\frac{3}{5}$. She opened up an insurmountable lead of more than 4 lengths and was eased coming to the wire, as the favorite kept on trucking to finish in full stride, although beaten by 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ lengths. Third choice Morning Matcha finished 10 lengths behind Green Up. [RACE VIDEO LINK](#)

Final time of 1:39 $\frac{3}{5}$ was just two-fifths of a second shy of the Parx track record. She went her final 70 yards in a fast 4-seconds-flat. Extrapolating her projected time for a mile and a sixteenth, Irwin reckoned that she would have finished up in 1:41 $\frac{4}{5}$.

Best Actor, the 5-length winner of the next race—the Grade 3 prep for the \$1-million, Grade 1 Pennsylvania Derby—completed his mile and a sixteenth in 1:44—indicating the filly had run 8 to 9 lengths faster.