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## **TOUCHUPONASTAR DEFENDS HIS CROWN IN THE \$150,000 LOUISIANA PREMIER NIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP AT DELTA DOWNS**

**- WHOLELOTTAMO UPSETS FREE LIKE A GIRL IN THE DISTAFF -**

VINTON, LA. – Delta Downs hosted its richest program of the season on Saturday evening as the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of Louisiana Premier Night took center stage. The 11-race program featured 10 stakes races and over \$900,000 in total purse money for Louisiana-bred horses.

The featured race on the program was the \$150,000 Louisiana Premier Night Championship and it was won for the second straight year by Set Hut, LLC (Jake Delhomme)'s Touchuponastar under jockey Tim Thornton. The Jeff Delhomme trainee defeated five rivals in the 1 1/16-mile affair over a muddy sealed racetrack. Touchuponastar is now five-for-five at Delta Downs and has won three stakes races this season.

After breaking sharply from post position three, Touchuponastar went to the lead and dictated the pace throughout, covering the opening quarter mile in 24.35 seconds and the half mile in 49.61. He hit the ¾ mile timer in 1:14.08 and had yet to be asked for his best run by Thornton. In the upper-stretch he drew clear from Play Mo, who had been chasing the leader since the start and wound up second. The winning margin was 6-3/4 lengths on the wire. Wise Verdict rounded out the top three finishers another 1-1/4 lengths behind the runner-up. Touchuponastar covered the distance in a time of 1:45.03.

“This horse is all class; I’m thankful to be on him”, Thornton said in the winner’s circle. “He makes it look easy. He just keeps getting better and better and that’s what makes him so special.”

Overall, Touchuponastar has won 11 of his 14 career starts. He earned \$90,000 on Saturday night which raised his lifetime bankroll to \$708,100.

“We are blessed to have him,” said owner Jake Delhomme after the race. “There was no pace in the race so Timmy just loped him along. This horse takes his racetrack with him, but he really likes Delta Downs.”



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Bred in Louisiana by Coteau Grove Farms, Touchuponastar is a 5-year-old bay gelding by all-time Louisiana-bred earner Star Guitar. He is out of the Lion Heart mare Touch Magic. Touchuponastar was sold for just \$15,000 in Texas as a yearling in 2020.

Fans made Touchuponastar the lowest of favorites at odds of 1-9. He paid \$2.10 to win, \$2.10 to place and \$2.10 to show. Play Mo returned \$4.80 to place and \$2.40 to show. Wise Verdict was worth \$3 to show.

All eyes were on Louisiana millionaire and 1-9 wagering favorite Free Like a Girl in the \$125,000 Distaff but 23-1 longshot Wholelottamo had other ideas.

The race unfolded as it appeared it would on paper with Free Like a Girl stalking the early pace set by Vale Male, who covered the opening quarter mile in 23.34 seconds and the half mile in 47.91. As the field of eight fillies and mares entered the second turn of the one-mile affair, Free Like a Girl under jockey Vicente Del Cid used a quick turn of foot to go by the leader and open a four-length lead at the top of the lane after going three quarters of a mile in 1:13.27.

Another win for Free Like a Girl looked to be in the cards before Wholelottamo and jockey C. J. McMahon launched a furious rally from far behind to run down the accomplished mare and win by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a length at the wire. Thetruthisthetruth finished another 5- $\frac{3}{4}$  lengths behind the runner-up. The final time for Wholelottamo was 1:41.20.

The win by Wholelottamo was the sixth of her 28-race career. She earned \$75,000 for her connections of owner Thompson Racing LLC (Stephen Thompson) and trainer Jayde Gelner. Overall, she has taken home \$383,865 during her career.

Bred in Louisiana by Cloyce C. Clark, Jr., Wholelottamo is a 5-year-old mare by Mo Tom, out of the A. P. Jet mare Jet's Tradition. She was purchased as a yearling for \$17,000 in 2020.

Wholelottamo paid \$48.20 to win, \$6.20 to place and \$3.60 to show. Free Like a Girl was worth \$2.10 to place and \$2.10 to show. Thetruthisthetruth returned \$3.20 to show.

The Mark Casse trainee Bron and Brow (\$3.40) returned to Delta Downs and defended his title in the \$100,000 Sprint this year under jockey Reylu Gutierrez. The Gary Barber-owned gelding used a dazzling late kick to slip through at the rail late and win the five-furlong dash going away. It was the seventh win from 17 career starts for Bron and Brow.

Bred in Louisiana by J. Adcock & Hume Wornall, Bron and Brow is a 5-year-old gelding by Gormley, out of the Changeintheweather mare Changing Vista. He was a \$200,000 purchase as a 2-year-old in 2021.



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TAV Enterprises, LLC's El Dinero (\$6) used a strong late kick to get by Good and Stout and win the \$100,000 Prince on Saturday under jockey Juan Vargas. The Patrick Devereux, Jr. trainee has now won three stakes races during his seven-race career. The dark bay or brown runner broke his maiden last August in the D. S. 'Shine' Young Futurity at Evangeline Downs.

Bred in Louisiana by J. Adcock & Hume Wornall, El Dinero is a 3-year-old gelding by El Deal, out of the Forestry mare Money for Makeup. He was purchased for \$36,000 as a 2-year-old in 2023.

Longshot Lightofmaine (\$34) held off a late charge by Magnolia Avenue to capture this year's \$100,000 Starlet under jockey Jansen Melancon. The W. Bret Calhoun trainee has now won three of six career starts for owners Maury Harrington and Christopher Harrington. The Starlet was her first stakes tally.

Bred in Louisiana by Baronne Farms LLC, Lightofmaine is a 3-year-old filly by Tapwrit, out of the Deputy Minister mare Pontiana. She was purchased for \$45,000 at the Keeneland September Sale in 2022.

Charlie T (\$17.80), under jockey Carlos Lozada, proved best in the \$100,000 Matron on Louisiana Premier Night. The Lee M. Thomas trainee held off several challengers in the five-furlong test and reported home  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a length in front of runner-up Blessed Assurance. It was the seventh win for the homebred and she earned \$60,000 for the effort.

Charlie T is a 5-year-old mare by My Pal Charlie, out of the Roger That mare That Real World. She was bred in Louisiana by her owner Elite Thoroughbred Racing LLC (Michelle Rodriguez).

Muchmorethanready (\$3) was an easy winner in this year's \$60,000 Ladies Starter under jockey Juan Vargas. The Juan Larrosa trainee came from far behind to win by  $9\frac{3}{4}$  lengths going away for owner Laurence Jones and Evans Thoroughbred Racing, LLC. The win was her fifth from 16 career starts and her fourth in the last five trips to the starting gate.

Bred in Louisiana by T & G Farm of KY LLC, Muchmorethanready is a 4-year-old filly by Tom's Ready, out of the Street Sense mare Astarte. She was originally sold for \$20,000 at the Keeneland September sale in 2021 and was claimed by her current connections for \$5,000 in November at Delta Downs.

Heza Pickle (\$16.40) was victorious in the \$60,000 Gentlemen Starter under jockey Corey Lanerie. The property of Terrell Jarrett, Jr. and Lara Racing Stables, LLC (Jorge Lara) used a strong late kick to gain his fifth career win from 20 overall starts. The Jorge Lara trainee was claimed for \$7,500 at Delta Downs earlier this season.

Bred in Louisiana by Gerald L. Averett, Jr., Heza Pickle is a 5-year-old gelding by Yellow Meadow, out of the Planet Earth mare I Love Pickles.



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The \$50,000 Bon Temps Starter was won by Larry J. Romero's Myfriendsawinner (\$7) under jockey Vicente Del Cid. The Jonas B. Gibson trainee won the five-furlong sprint by three lengths over Commercial Flash. It was her eighth win from 17 career starts.

Bred in Louisiana by Penny Scarberry, Myfriendsawinner is a 6-year-old mare by Silent Pleasure, out of the Musket Man mare My Girl Max.

The closest finish of the night came in the nightcap, the \$50,000 Ragin Cajun Starter when Sharp Charlie (\$7.20) nosed out Double Barrel Man in a dramatic finish of the five-furlong sprint. Sharp Charlie was ridden by Joel Dominguez, who got a leg up from trainer Jorge Lara. The winner is owned by Terrell Jarrett, Jr. and Lara Racing Stable.

Sharp Charlie is a 6-year-old gelding by My Pal Charlie, out of the Rodeo mare Chic Jolie. He was bred in Louisiana by Michelle Rodriguez.

Delta Downs has three weeks left in its 2023-24 season, which wraps up on February 24. First post time each night for the remainder of the season is at 5:15 pm.

For more information about racing at Delta Downs visit the track's website at [www.deltadownsracing.com](http://www.deltadownsracing.com). Fans can also get information about through Facebook by visiting the page 'Delta Downs Racing'. The track's Twitter handle is @deltaracing.

[Delta Downs Racetrack Casino Hotel](#), a property of [Boyd Gaming Corporation](#), is the premier racing and gaming entertainment venue in Vinton, LA. Named "America's Best Horse Racing Track" by readers of USA TODAY 10Best for 2023, Delta Downs features a six-furlong oval track, 15,000 square feet of casino space and more than 1,500 of the most popular slot machines. Amenities include two restaurants, chart-topping entertainment at the Delta Event Center and the FanDuel Sportsbook.



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