

# Hit the track with Klein, and bet on a good laugh

By Jennie Rees  
jrees@courier-journal  
The Courier-Journal

Sneak a Drink, a 20-1 shot, might not win today's seventh race at Churchill Downs for 2-year-old maiden fillies. But it's a sure bet that the 10-person syndicate that owns the striking chestnut will have a lot of laughs.

The No Joke Stables is headed by Tommy Cosdon and comedian Mark Klein of Louisville.

"(Sneak a Drink) exploits my weakness for tall pretty redheads," Klein said.

While Klein has been part of syndicates before, it was always someone else's deal. Cosdon picked out Sneak a Drink, a \$3,500 purchase, with Klein putting many of the partners together, including some of his former rugby buddies.

"She's about the prettiest horse I've ever seen," Klein said. "If she wins, it will be the greatest thing in my life, including my wedding and the birth of my son."

Memo to Jacqueline (a red-head) and 11-year-old Max Klein: That's a joke.

"It will be the happiest day of my sporting life," the comedian amended. "... I'm not trying to change my life owning a racehorse. I just love the sport. It's the one major-league sport where the guy in the grandstand can own one of the players."

Klein will speak at the Turf Publicists of America's work-



Comedian and part-time horseman Mark Klein said his chestnut filly "exploits my weakness for tall pretty redheads."

shop at the University of Arizona's annual racing symposium next month. The subject: "How to make racing fun." He is very serious on that subject.

Klein said he includes racing as part of his show on the 10 cruise ships he works a year.

"The first thing they ask me after every show is, 'Do you really own a racehorse?'" he said. "It's fascinating to people. And our industry needs to do a better job translating that fascination into attendance and ownership."

Klein said he will offer "about five" ways for tracks "to reach out beyond their parking lots" to bring people to the track. One: Having basic handicapping seminars on cruise ships.

"These cruise ships are packed with thousands of people ... with disposable income and time on their hands," he said. "Is there any more clearly defined racing audience in the world than that?"

Also: "You want something way out of the box? Churchill Downs claims an inexpensive horse for every elementary school in Jefferson County, so the school is a partner in the

horse, so the children can come watch it run on Saturdays.

"How much fun would that be? Bloom Elementary goes to watch their horse run at Churchill Downs."

## Nafzger honored

Carl Nafzger, who trained Street Sense to victories in last year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile and this year's Kentucky Derby, is being honored by the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners with its Warner L. Jones Horseman of the Year Award that recognizes outstanding contributions to racing.

## Churchill news

► Churchill Downs will launch its new "over/under" bet tomorrow. The over/under is based on the total of the program numbers of the first three finishers in a race. Players can bet that the total is "under" a designated number, "over" the number or right on the number.

► Tres Dream edged Somethingaboutbetty by a neck in yesterday's \$53,080 feature race for fillies and mares.

Tres Dream ran six furlongs in 1:10.44 and paid \$6.20 to win.

► William Condren, co-owner of Kentucky Derby winners Strike the Gold (1991) and Go for Gin (1994), died Monday in Boston. He was 74.

Condren was a co-founder and director of the National Thoroughbred Association.

Jennie Rees can be reached at (502) 582-4042.