

Curalina Wins First Stakes in Acorn

By **Eric Mitchell**, | June 6, 2015 3:35 PM | 22 Comments | Racing, Northeast Region



Photo: Coglianese Photos/Chelsea Durand

Curalina gets up late to win the Acorn Stakes.

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Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners' **Curalina**, making her first start in stakes company, prevailed in a very deep field for the \$750,000 **Acorn Stakes (gr. I)** at **Belmont Park** June 6 ([VIDEO](#)).

The 3-year-old daughter of **Curlin**, with John Velazquez in the irons, won by a neck over longshot **By the Moon**, who is owned by Jay Em Ess Stable. **Wonder Gal** finished 4 1/2 lengths back in third. The final time in the mile race was 1:35.13 over a dirt course rated fast. The winner is trained by Todd Pletcher and was ridden by John Velazquez.

Curalina paid \$16.40, \$8.90, and \$6.20. By the Moon returned \$26.40 and \$13.40. Wonder Gal delivered \$9.70 to show.

"She's a filly we'd had high hopes for for a long time," Pletcher said. "We felt she was one of our best 2-year-old fillies last year, unfortunately she had some baby stuff that she needed some time off for."

The filly faced some challenges right at the start of the Acorn, having gotten squeezed from both sides right after the break. She got clear and stalked the pace set early by Promise Me of Silver, who took the field through an opening quarter in :22.89 and a half in :45.42. Miss Ella tracked a length behind in second until the turn when she took the lead briefly.

As the field moved through the turn, By the Moon began to rally and had a clear and widening lead at the top of the stretch. About an eighth of a mile from the wire By the Moon was sailing in front with Curalina and Wonder Gal hooked up two lengths back. As Curalina and Wonder Gal battled, they ate away at By the Moon's lead. Curalina broke free and chased down the leader for the win.

"We ended up far back," said Velazquez. "I put her in the clear, and she got a little bit rank on the backstretch. I let her do a little bit and tried to settle her on the turn, which she did, and she finished up well."

Michelle Nevin, trainer of Samantha Siegel's homebred By the Moon, said she was very happy with her filly's performance.

"She ran a huge race," Nevin said. "It's unfortunate we could not hang on for the win, but I have nothing to complain about."

The final order of finish was **Danzatrice**, **Oceanwave**, **Bar of Gold**, Miss Ella, **Calamity Kate**, **Condo Commando**, Promise Me Silver, **Light the City**, and **Shook Up**.

Shook Up, who finished second in the Longines Kentucky Oaks (gr. I), was vanned off after the race. She had an inflatable cast put on her right front leg.



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