



The Grade California-Breds

Nashoba's Key: All Her Own Way

by LARRY BORTSTEIN

Nashoba's Key began the year as an unraced maiden. She is now nearing the end of her first racing campaign as one of the best turf mares in the country.

Actually, the four-year-old daughter of Silver Hawk out of the four-time winner Nashoba (Ire) is quickly gaining acclaim as one of the finest members of her sex, period.

Though she has yet to make her first start on a conventional dirt surface—and may never do so—Nashoba's Key has won on both the Cushion Track and grass at Hollywood Park, Santa Anita Park's turf course and the Polytrack at the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club.

Running her career unbeaten streak to seven races, she most recently captured the \$400,000 Yellow Ribbon Stakes on the first Saturday of the Oak Tree Racing Association meet in Arcadia on Sept. 29.

Nashoba's Key spotted favored Citronnade an easy lead on a slow pace, but seized the advantage in deep stretch and took the grade I, 1 1/4-mile grass race by three-quarters of a length in a sharp 1:59.73.

"I knew Citronnade was running easy, but my filly has such a great kick," said Joe Talamo, who has ridden Nashoba's Key to four consecutive stakes triumphs.

A homebred owned by CTBA member Warren Williamson, a longtime resident of Pasadena, California, Nashoba's Key gave Talamo only one anxious moment—and that came prior to the Yellow Ribbon.

Before trainer Carla Gaines gave him a leg up in Santa Anita's walking ring, Talamo nearly was kicked by the filly.

"I guess I have to learn to stay out of her way," Talamo said with a laugh after the race.

Gaines has experienced the hot temperament of Nashoba's Key on more than one occasion.

"She's mean around the barn," the trainer said. "She'll try to bite or kick anyone who comes near her in the barn. I don't mind, because she's very professional in her races. As long as she runs like that, her personality is okay with me."

Nashoba's Key's tactics work well for her breeder and owner as well.

"If she didn't act up before her races, I'd start to worry," Williamson said of his filly, who raised her career earnings to \$863,460 with her latest victory.

"I've been in racing for 40 years and won a lot of nice races," said Williamson, 79, a former member of the board of directors at Hollywood Park and recently named Oak Tree's Vice President. "But I've never had a horse like this."

Nashoba's Key is only the second California-bred to win the Yellow Ribbon. The 1989 winner Brown Bess went on to win an Eclipse Award as North America's finest turf mare.

That's an award Nashoba's Key was pursuing when she traveled Oct. 27 to Monmouth Park for the \$2,000,000 Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf—her first start outside of her home state. A good showing there also would elevate her to millionaire status.

Nashoba's Key is the first foal out of her dam Nashoba, who is now 11 years old and in-foal to 2005 Breeders' Cup Mile champion Artie Schiller. 🐾

Grade I Yellow Ribbon Stakes Santa Anita Park—Saturday, September 29, 2007



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