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Immortal Eyes Aims for Three-Peat in Dash June 27, 2012

(Charles Town, WV) – Robert Abbo's **Immortal Eyes**, who's been virtually unbeatable over the Charles Town surface, faces 8 rivals on Saturday night as he bids to become a three-time winner of the Charles Town Dash as part of the track's Fifth Annual Sprint Festival card. The \$70,000 Charles Town Dash, run over 4 ½ furlongs, also marks the start of a \$25,000 guaranteed all-stakes Pick 4 that culminates with the \$400,000 Red Legend.

Trained by Damon Dilodovico, the now seven-year-old's 7 starts over the Charles Town oval have produced a 4 ½ furlong track record, 6 victories and a runner-up effort, with all but 2 of those outings coming in stakes company. Included in his gaudy Charles Town record is a pair of scores in both the 2010 and 2011 runnings of the Charles Town Dash.

What's more is that the average margin of victory in those 6 wins is 2 ½ lengths, a wide margin for a 4 ½ furlong bullring distance that rarely produces runaway winners.

Still, his trainer has had a tough time pinpointing what it is about the track that brings out the best in Immortal Eyes.

"You know, I really don't know what it is about Charles Town," Dilodovico said. "It's the same as another horse we have, Love's Strong Hart. It could be that they just corner better, but he just always runs great over the track there."

When venturing outside of Charles Town, Immortal Eyes has been good but not the same force he's come to be in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. Just 4 for 24 outside of the confines of Charles Town's 6 furlong oval, the Florida-bred has still made a good showing in several stakes tries finishing second in a trio of 2011 races – the Maryland Sprint Handicap (G3), the \$200,000 Six Bits at Penn National and the revived DeFrancis Dash at Laurel Park.

Still, as his record indicates, he's most at home over the Charles Town strip and will be a deserving favorite in his quest for a three-peat on Sprint Festival night. The 124 pound high weight in the field, Immortal Eyes will once again have the services of jockey Travis Dunkelberger.

The connection between Dunkelberger and Immortal Eyes is one that Dilodovico credits a lot of his horse's success to.

"They just get along so well. Travis can be aggressive with him when he wants to be and patient when he wants to be. I think lot of it is the confidence he carries when he's on him. At Pimlico (on Preakness day) there were 100,000 people there and watching them before the race and Travis is sitting on him and the horse is standing still and acting as professional as can be. He's got a lot to do with the horse's success."

Dilodovico will have a second seven-year-old threat in the Dash, as **Regal Solo** tries to win his first race since the 2010 Maryland Million Classic.

The horse Immortal Eyes will most likely have to catch in order to claim his third straight Charles Town Dash trophy – Whispering Oaks Farm's **Joe Hollywood** – ships up from Steve Asmussen's Churchill barn following five starts at Fairgrounds over the winter and spring.

Most recently a hard luck second in the \$150,000 Duncan Kenner, Joe Hollywood has shown plenty of zip from the gate in his 8 starts over conventional dirt, leading at the first call in every one of them. After cutting through opening fractions of :21 3/5 and :44 1/5 in the Kenner, Joe Hollywood opened up a 2 length lead in mid-stretch, only to caught by Gantry – who went on to finish third behind Shackleford and Amazombie in the Churchill Downs Handicap (G2) – in the final strides.

Shortening up to the Dash's 4 ½ furlong distance is the recipe his trainer hopes leads to the son of Congrats notching the first stakes win of his career. Asmussen himself has been no stranger to success on this night as he's the only trainer to capture two stakes on Sprint Festival cards with different horses (Devereux in the 2008 and Juliet's Spirit in the 2009 Lady Charles Town).

Javier Castellano, who won the 2012 Charles Town Classic (G2) aboard Caixa Eletronica has the call on Joe Hollywood who breaks from the rail.

Map of the World, Mississippi Man, Aly's Reward, The Jackal and Yukon Wildcat, second behind Immortal Eyes in April's \$50,000 Webb Snyder at Charles Town, round out the field.

\$70,000 Charles Town Dash

June 30, 2012 Race 7 – Post time 8:45pm EST

3&up, 4 ½ Furlongs

PP. Horse, Jockey, Weight, Trainer

- 1. Joe Hollywood, Javier Castellano, 123, Steven M. Asmussen
- 2. Map of the World, J.D. Acosta, 123, Hugh I. McMahon
- 3. Mississippi Man, Ricardo Chiappe, 119, Mario Serey, Jr.
- 4. Aly's Reward, Marco A. Ccamaque, 118, Jose L. Lopez
- 5. The Jackal, Roy L. Wallace, 117, Rodney Soodeen
- 6. Regal Solo, Travis L. Dunkelberger, 122, Damon R. Dilodovico
- 7. Candy Games, Matt Seifers, 119, Crystal G. Pickett
- 8. Immortal Eyes, Travis L. Dunkelberger, 124, Damon R. Dilodovico
- 9. Yukon Wildcat, Carlos Marerro, 120, Ollie L. Figgins, III

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Hotel accommodations can be found on property at the Inn at Charles Town, which features 153 comfortable guest rooms, including 18 spacious suites that overlook live thoroughbred racing action. Guests can enjoy a complimentary breakfast buffet and wireless internet access. They can further unwind by taking the complimentary shuttle service to enjoy racing, table and slot action and a diverse selection of dining options at Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races. The Inn at Charles Town offers a variety of venues to host business or social functions.

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