

PRESQUE ISLE DOWNS

RACING NOTES

By Kevin Decker

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Candy Reward Wants Top Reward in Princess of Sylmar Stakes

The defending champion of Monday's 17th running of the \$75,000 Guaranteed Princess of Sylmar Stakes for registered Pennsylvania-bred fillies and mares three-year-olds and up at one mile and seventy yards is Candy Reward.

Of all the four-year-old fillies that raced at Presque Isle Downs in 2025, none may have had the same sustaining success as Candy Reward. She had three wins in four starts, including capturing the "Sylmar" and the HBPA Stakes in October, a race she also won in 2024.

Her victory in 2025's Princess of Sylmar came with a big exclamation mark, capturing by the Pennsylvania-bred restricted stakes by over nine lengths. The only blemish on her 2025 resume came in the Grade 2 Masters in September when she finished fourth, three lengths behind Gal In A Rush.

"She was so good last year the owners talked about retiring her, but she was going so good, we decided to race her again this year," said trainer Brandon Kulp.

So far 2026 has been a different story for the daughter of Warrior's Reward out of the Twirling Candy mare Unimaginable. She has yet to win in three races, including a pair of second place finishes in allowance races at Presque Isle Downs leading up to her next start on Monday in the Princess of Sylmar.

Going this race's distance has been a sweet spot for her, with four wins in as many tries. Her trainer thinks her chances have improved based on her last start.

"Coming off last season we had high expectations and she has been training well, but the results have not been there. After her last effort at a distance that's not her best, we think that she may be sitting on a good one leading into the race on Monday," said Kulp.

As for the 2026 edition of the Princess of Sylmar, Kulp thinks it will be a challenge.

"It's definitely a tougher group, but I think she is in a good spot had has been racing and training well leading up to it," Kulp added.

The morning line favorite is Modarosa. The five-year-old Riley Mott-trainee won the Lyphard Stakes at Penn National in late May, defeating a field of seven that included Candy Reward and Nature's Candy, who is the second choice on the morning line under the training of Hugo Padilla. Antonio Gallardo is named on Modarosa.

Nature's Candy is coming into Monday's race in top form, winning the Dr. Teresa Garofolo Memorial for Keystone State Breds at Parx in mid-July. Andy Hernandez is slated to ride the six-year-old daughter of Uncle Lino.

Three-year-old Smooch Up will step up her game to face older rivals for the first time in her career for trainer Ron Potts. She was strong in her seasonal debut in the Malvern Rose Stakes for Pennsylvania-bred three-year-olds, winning by over six lengths. Israel Rodriguez will take the place of Antonio Gallardo.

Here is the field for the 17th Running of the \$75,000 guaranteed Princess of Sylmar Stakes for Pennsylvania-bred fillies and mares three-years-old and up at one mile and seventy yards, which is race seven on the eight-race program:

Number	Horse	Jockey	Trainer	Morning Line
1	Nature's Candy	Andy Hernandez	Hugh Padilla	3-1
2	Justifiable Steel	Oscar Villareal	Aaron West	8-1
3	Smooch Up	Israel Rodriguez	Ron G Potts	9-2
4	Foxy Junior	Jomar Torres	T. Bernard Haughton	4-1
5	Night Nurse	Walber Alencar	John N. Poole	12-1
6	Candy Reward	Angel Rodriguez	Brandon Kulp	6-1
7	Modarosa	Antonio Gallardo	Riley Mott	5-2

Additionally, Presque Isle Downs' race schedule will return to the regular Monday through Wednesday live race week. Post time is 3:30PM each day.



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