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**ROMAN, VICTORIES BY SKYE DIAMONDS, WEST COAST HIGHLIGHT SUMMER MEET**

CYPRESS, Calif. –Impressive graded stakes victories by Skye Diamonds and West Coast, the continued emergence of apprentice jockey Evin Roman and a spectacular debut by the well-regarded 2-year-old Zulfikhar highlighted Los Alamitos' Summer Thoroughbred Festival.

The eight-day season concluded Sunday, wrapping the first of three daytime meets in 2017 at Los Alamitos.

A \$40,000 claim by trainer Bill Spawr nearly one year ago for a partnership that includes Tom Acker, Allen Racing LLC and Bloom Racing Stables LLC, Skye Diamonds became a Grade II winner in the \$200,690 Great Lady M. Stakes July 8, defeating a field that included 2016 Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint and Eclipse Award winner Finest City and Grade I winner Constellation.

One week later, West Coast powered away late to capture the Grade III, \$200,690 Los Alamitos Derby, giving Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert his second win in the race in four years.

Baffert, who won the 2015 renewal with Gimme Da Lute, indicated West Coast, a son of Flatter owned by Gary and Mary West, could make his next start in the Grade I, \$1.25 million Travers Stakes Aug. 26 at Saratoga.

The Los Alamitos Derby victory was the fourth win in six starts for the improving 3-year-old, who has already shown he can perform on the road. The \$425,000 yearling purchase missed by a head in the Grade III Lexington April 15 at Keeneland before an easy win in the Easy Goer on the Belmont Stakes undercard June 10 at Belmont Park.

Fresh off tying Flavien Prat for the riding title at Santa Anita's Spring meet, Roman easily captured the crown at Los Alamitos. The 19-year-old native of Puerto Rico finished with a record 13 wins, eight more than runner-up Mario Gutierrez.

The victory total surpassed the previous best for wins during an eight-day season since thoroughbred racing returned to Los Alamitos in July, 2014. Drayden Van Dyke won 12 races at the 2014 Summer Thoroughbred Festival.

Doug O'Neill topped the trainer standings with six wins, two more than Baffert, while J. Paul Reddam's Reddam Racing LLC was the top owner with a half-dozen victories.

The title was the sixth O'Neill has either shared or captured outright at Los Alamitos.

Purchased for \$750,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Gulfstream sale in March, Zulfikhar, a son of Bodemeister, won by 3 ¾ lengths in his July 7 debut, completing five furlongs in 56.73 seconds.

Trained by Baffert for Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa al Maktoum. Zulfikhar could surface in the Grade II, \$200,000 Best Pal Stakes Aug. 12 at Del Mar.

The total handle for the meet was approximately \$40.3 million. There was no July meet in 2016 for comparison as Los Alamitos conducted a Spring meet (April 14-May 1) last year.

More complete business figures will be available later in the week.

"We're happy with the continued safety of our main track and there were some outstanding performances by some quality horses," said Orlando Gutierrez, Los Alamitos' director of publicity and marketing. "Skye Diamonds and West Coast were impressive and Evin Roman adapted extremely well in his first experience at Los Alamitos."

Thoroughbred racing will return to Los Alamitos in September. The 12-day season will begin Thursday, Sept. 7 and continue through Sunday, Sept. 24. Racing will be conducted on a Thursday-Sunday basis.