



Mine That Bird flies home to Kentucky Derby upset



by John Asher



Double Eagle Ranch and Buena Suerte Equine's Mine That Bird, one of the longest shots on the board at 50-1, exploded along the rail down the stretch under Calvin Borel to win the 135th running of the \$2,177,200 Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Grade I).

Mine That Bird rallied from last in a field of 19 Thoroughbreds to win by 6 3/4 lengths before a crowd of 153,563, seventh-largest in race history.

The victory margin was the largest in the Kentucky Derby since eventual Triple Crown winner Assault won the Kentucky Derby by eight lengths in 1946. Prior to Mine That Bird's win, the 6 1/2-length win by Barbaro in 2006 had been the largest win margin since Assault's Derby romp.

Pioneer of the Nile, Musket Man and Papa Clem battled for second, with the former finishing a nose in front of Musket Man, while Papa Clem was a head farther back. Friesan Fire, the 7-2 favorite, finished 18th.

The 42-year-old Borel collected his second Kentucky Derby victory after taking its 2007 renewal aboard Street Sense. He had won Friday's \$500,000 Grade I Kentucky Oaks, the Derby's sister race, aboard heavily favored Rachel Alexandra, who won by a record 20 3/4 lengths. Borel became the seventh rider to achieve the Oaks-Derby sweep in the same year Jerry Bailey did it in 1993 aboard Dispute and Sea Hero, respectively.

"It's unbelievable," said Borel. "I took

the rail the whole way, we had a good trip, got stopped maybe one time going around the turn but after that, it was awesome. I knew he was going to win by the 3/8th pole. I knew if we could just find our way through that we were going to win from there."

Trained by Bennie "Chip" Woolley Jr., Mine That Bird became the ninth gelding to win the Kentucky Derby and first since Funny Cide in 2003, who in turn had been the first gelding to take the "Run for the Roses" since Clyde Van Dusen in 1929. Mine That Bird is a Kentucky-bred son of 2004 Belmont Stakes winner Birdstone out of the Smart Strike mare Mining My Own. The Derby winner won the Sovereign Award that honored Canada's 2-year-old champion in 2008, and became the first Canadian juvenile champion to win America's greatest race since Sunny's Halo in 1983.

The winner ran the mile and a quarter on a "sloppy" main track in 2:02.66 in turning back 18 rivals.

The victory was worth \$1,417,200 and increased Mine That Bird's career bankroll to \$1,791,581. Mine That Bird, who came into Derby 135 off a fourth-place finish in the Sunland Park Derby on March 29 at New Mexico's Sunland Park, has now won five of nine career starts.

"It's wonderful, it hasn't sunk in," said Woolley, whose stable is based at the New Mexico track. "I just can't say enough. I'm feeling like I never have before. I was thinking Calvin Borel is the best, he just

TOP RACING STORIES



Above center, presentation of the roses to Calvin Borel and Mine That Bird; At Right (top to bottom), owner Mark Allen congratulates Calvin Borel; Calvin Borel, Mark Allen and Dr. Leonard Blach; Bennie (Chip) Woolley, Jr., trainer

rode a huge race, and everybody around him did a great job and we just were lucky to get here.”

Mine That Bird paid \$103.20 to win, the second-largest payoff in Derby history, ranking only behind Donerail’s \$184.90 payoff in 1913. Mine That Bird returned \$54 to place and \$25.80 to show. Pioneerof the Nile returned \$8.40 and \$6.40 with Musket Man paying \$12 to show.

Join in the Dance, ridden by Chris DeCarlo, led the field under the wire the first time in :22.98 with Regal Ransom, Pioneerof the Nile and Papa Clem in closest pursuit. At the back of the pack was Mine That Bird, who found a spot along the rail.

The top four remained unchanged through a half-mile in :47.23 and Mine That Bird had not changed his position. Approaching the half-mile pole, Join in the Dance and Regal Ransom were joined near the front by Hold Me Back, who made a bold move on the inside under Kent Desormeaux. Mine That Bird, who was still last.

As the battle continued up front, Borel started his “Street

Sense-like move”, skimming the rail without a straw in his path. Borel moved Mine That Bird off the rail only once, to move past Atomic Rain and then cut back to the rail for an unimpeded run.

Once in the stretch, Mine That Bird squeezed by a tiring Join in the Dance and raced into Thoroughbred history.

Pioneerof the Nile saved second by a nose over Musket Man, who was a head in front of Papa Clem. Completing the field in order were Chocolate Candy, Summer Bird, Join in the Dance, Regal Ransom, West Side Bernie, General Quarters, Dunkirk, Hold Me Back, Advice, Desert Party, Mr. Hot Stuff, Atomic Rain, Nowhere to Hide, Friesan Fire and Flying Private.

The field was reduced to 19 by the withdrawal Saturday morning of morning-line favorite I Want Revenge because of heat in the left front ankle. There was inflammation above and below the sesamoids. It marked the first time since the morning line was published in the program in 1949 that the favorite was scratched the day of the race. ♦

