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04/09/2011 6:20PM

Carter: Morning Line surges past Apriority in deep stretch

By Dave Litfin

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David Alcosser

Morning Line, under John Velazquez, successfully cuts back in distance from 1 1/8 miles to seven furlongs to win the Carter Handicap.

on a fast main track, and posted his first victory since last year's Pennsylvania Derby.

Apriority held off Yawanna Twist for second by 1 1/4 lengths. It was another neck back to third choice Kensei in fourth. Laysh Laysh Laysh, Sunrise Smarty, Fastus Cactus, and More Than a Reason completed the order of finish.

A 4-year-old colt by Tiznow, Morning Line earned \$150,000 for Thoroughbred Legends Racing Stable, and improved to 4-4-1 from 10 career starts for trainer Nick Zito.

"It's great for the Legends, but more importantly it's great for Morning Line," said Zito, who was in Florida. "If ever a horse deserves to win a Grade 1 race, it's him. He beat a great horse in Apriority. He ran his guts out - he always runs his guts out. Johnny rode a superior race. He had a lot of confidence in him, as you can see. Obviously, the Met Mile will be next," referring to the May 30 stakes at Belmont Park.

Calibrachoa, the 3-1 second choice on the morning line, was scratched earlier in the day due to a sore foot.

- additional reporting by Mike Welsch

OZONE PARK, N.Y. - The third time in a Grade 1 stakes was the charm for Morning Line, who outfinished 7-5 favorite Apriority to win the 111th running of the \$250,000 Carter Handicap on Saturday at Aqueduct by 1 1/2 lengths under John Velazquez.

Morning Line led both the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile and the Donn Handicap in the stretch only to come up second best. Making his first start in slightly more than two months since the Donn, he secured a stalking position outside Apriority down the backstretch as they stalked 19-1 Sunrise Smarty in tandem through early fractions of 22.52 and 44.42 seconds.

Apriority wrested command from Sunrise Smarty nearing the completion of six furlongs in 1:08.42, but Morning Line overpowered him a sixteenth out and edged clear.

Morning Line (\$6.20), the second choice in a field that scratched down to eight, ran the seven furlongs in 1:21.46

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