

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 7, 2020

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Keeneland Race Course



Michael Lund Petersen

Bob Baffert

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are set to go with our first Breeders' Cup race of the day, the Filly & Mare Sprint. And congratulations, Michael Lund Petersen, Bob Baffert, Gamine. A track record-setting performance. Bob, I'll start with you first.

Inside of Serengeti Empress, and both wanted the lead, was that a conversation with Johnny Velazquez before the race, if this was going to happen, make an adjustment and try to get outside?

BOB BAFFERT: I think we talked about the different scenarios that would happen and it was obvious that Serengeti, she's a great filly and that she has to make the lead to do her best running. So but Johnny wanted to get our filly running and get Serengeti, having to get her running. And the way she has been working, I knew we could lay off the pace. I've been working her that way, teaching her how to just relax. And as soon as he opened up, he let Serengeti go, he got on the outside and then from there on, it was whether, if she's the great filly we're hoping she is. And first thing, she can stalk. And it was at the quarter pole when she came up to that Serengeti, Serengeti you could tell, she's, she was battling. But this filly is just incredible. I've never trained a filly of this caliber going one turn. And today that little, she had extra time to get ready for this. And after watching the Acorn, I thought she could win the Acorn. I thought she was doing well enough to win. I didn't know she was going to win by 20. The test was just a walk in the park. And the Oaks, I'm still, down the road, I think she can mature, but right now she wasn't ready for that and she was, it was too much traveling for her.

But today, one turn, she is just incredible and I'm just happy for what she's gone through. I felt so bad for the filly. But Michael Lund Petersen, he's behind me. I explained to him the nonsense of contamination stuff that

was going on and it sort of -- we didn't want to have to deal with it. It's a distraction. But today I just want to show the world it was, today was her day. When we drew the two hole, I told Mike, Mike, I don't know, I started leaking a little bit. She's got the two hole. And tell them what you told me.

MICHAEL LUND PETERSEN: Two is my lucky number. (Laughing.)

BOB BAFFERT: So after that, it was like, Okay. We're good.

THE MODERATOR: And Mr. Petersen, so emotional after this win with Gamine. And just kind of take us through what she's meant. You've had so much success with Bob, Mor Spirit, other horses as well. But this Breeders' Cup win has to stand out.

MICHAEL LUND PETERSEN: No, not only does it stand out, but it's the first time I ever brought my whole family and we won a race. So that's, I guess that's why I got so emotional. Not only winning the Breeders' Cup, but just having all of us here was a great, great experience.

THE MODERATOR: Bob had mentioned that with a difficult challenging year in so many ways and so grateful for you and your family for all your support and sticking by him, but the credentials of Bob Baffert speak for themselves.

MICHAEL LUND PETERSEN: No, but it's all about the team. It's, Bob never wins anything without mentioning his team and I'm part of his team and we're proud to be, and of course we support him.

THE MODERATOR: And I want to take some questions from the press box, so they should be sending me down some questions for you.

But, so what is next for her? She's young, lightly race. Bob?

BOB BAFFERT: I haven't really thought about a, you know, there's a race at Santa Anita, if I wanted to run her,

La Brea. But I don't know, we might give her a break. And like I said, I would like to venture out and run her beyond seven-eighths, a mile. New York races are a mile and a 16th. One turn, we know what she can do, one turn. And I really think, as she gets older, she's going to mentally be able to handle something like that. I mean, like today she was perfect. She was great. She ran straight as a string and really had it all together today. I think as she gets older she's going to be even better and we're just going to have fun with her. And so we'll, I might just give her maybe a little break. And she's had some tough races this year and we want to enjoy her next year and she's so much fun because we know when we lead her up there that she's just so brilliant.

THE MODERATOR: A question coming from the press box: After the two positives, can you be confident that a victory like this will erase any doubts about Gamine and her talents?

BOB BAFFERT: Well, I mean they were -- hopefully, I think anybody that knows racing, I mean, the headlines don't sound well, but when you get to the facts, they were contamination, one was an overage, which we're trying to be extra careful, but now the testing has become so sensitive that we even have to be more careful and be really -- I always thought I ran a tight ship, I have to run a tighter ship. We run it like a barn and we have to run it more like a hospital and that's the new norm now. So we just, I'm going to do, we're going to do a better job of making sure, double check that nobody, that their hands are clean, everything. Everything. We're in a new age now that, testing is very sensitive, and I'm all for tons of testing, but I don't want to be thrown in with the bad actors and it's an unfortunate that it happened to her and it was nice to see Renee win today, she was another victim of circumstances of contamination. So, but I'm just happy that the mare, she showed what a wonderful filly she is and there was no doubt today that, how brilliant, she just, she's just -- that was a tough field. I mean, Serengeti Empress, I mean we know, she's a great filly and there was some really nice fillies in there. And to break a track record.

THE MODERATOR: I was just going to say the track record and then watching those fractions that were going up early with Serengeti Empress, were you at all concerned, oh, my goodness, this is a little quick?

BOB BAFFERT: You know what, I was talking to Michael during the race and I was explaining to him, we're in good shape, when, once Johnny, he made Serengeti, put the metal on, we're going to make her run, he got her running, he got Serengeti running and then when he tipped out to the outside, that's when I told him, we're, oh, this is perfect, and if she's the horse we think she is, she can do it. And

not only did she do it but she showed us more. I mean, just like when she won the Acorn, I thought I was leaking a little bit, I said, I don't like the one hole and he told me, Bob, last time you told me you don't like the inside we won by 20, so I don't want to hear that nonsense.

THE MODERATOR: And also Mr. Petersen, I was listening to your post-race interview and you said normally you get very nervous, but for some reason you weren't nervous today on the biggest stage.

MICHAEL LUND PETERSEN: I was nervous, but not the way I am nervous the whole day from when I wake up. Today I just had a good feeling, I can't tell you why, but I had a good feeling, especially when he tells me that we have the same holes as we had in New York, that gives you a lot of confidence.

THE MODERATOR: Well congratulations, very special to win Breeders' Cup race. Bob, 16 Breeders' Cup wins for you, but your first in the Filly & Mare Sprint and with a filly obviously so special to you.

BOB BAFFERT: Oh, it is my first? See, I can't even remember that. How about that?

MICHAEL LUND PETERSEN: I'm happy for you. (Laughing.)

THE MODERATOR: Well, enjoy and congratulations on Gamine. Very impressive win in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare.

MICHAEL LUND PETERSEN: Thank you.

BOB BAFFERT: Thank you.

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