

# Breeders' Cup World Championships

Friday, November 5, 2021

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Racetrack

**Irada Ortiz Jr.**

**Wesley Ward**

**Barbara Banke**

Press Conference



**it's worked so successfully, but how does that work so well for your team?**

WESLEY WARD: We start early, and this filly went down to Barbara's farm in Ocala and got broke by Ian and he did great job, and sent her to me and she was well prepared and we started her work schedule and I told Barbara, moving forward with her, I said, man, this filly is fast and looks very precocious and looks like one just like you would like, as we were heading into Ascot, and she won at Belmont on the grass, and then she went on and finished second in the Queen Mary.

So we knew we had something special then, and she went over as an accompany mate to, with Campano to France because she's real docile and got great mind to her and takes everything in stride. She can fly here and there and jumped right into her feet right on the track the next day, like that's where she trains.

And when she won in France, we brought her back and the plan was to give her good spacing, and every work at Keeneland just kept getting better and better and better and I knew coming into this that she was going to run a big one and she did.

**Q. Barbara, you've had so much success in this industry, but now with this kind of, this globetrotting, being able to have these horses running all over the world, that must even add a bit more to it?**

BARBARA BANKE: Oh, it's so fun. It's really, really fun. Next year will be even more fun because hopefully all COVID restrictions will be off and we'll be able to travel more. So it will be great.

**Q. Now joined by Irada Ortiz Jr., and wow, what a great performance by her. Unexpected really to find yourself on the lead so easily?**

IRADA ORTIZ JR.: Honestly, I thought she had really some speed, but we always thought, but I rode with half a mind that my filly was quick over there too. She got some speed so we was going to take the break, and we go out there

**Q. Twilight Gleaming, Wesley Ward, Barbara Banke, congratulations. A perfect opportunity for a selfie. What a great background. Barbara, I'll get to you first. What an incredible performance from this filly, and you and Wesley have teamed up to so much success, but this was an incredible performance.**

BARBARA BANKE: Yes, he's been training really, really and she just looked terrific and she's really smart. And you could tell she was just figuring it out. She wasn't hot or bothered or, but she was ready to rumble and she did.

**Q. All these races and all your horses are so special to you, but to win a Breeders' Cup race now as the first female Breeders' Cup chair of the board, and then that must also be extra special?**

BARBARA BANKE: Oh, it's terrific. It's terrific. Yeah, really special.

**Q. Wesley, might have to start renaming this race the Wesley Ward Juvenile Turf Sprint. What makes your training method get these horses such a success in this race?**

WESLEY WARD: Fast horses. Really, essentially, that's all it is, and we're getting stronger. Like I said earlier on social media, I said Barbara went this year and we got some really good prospects coming for next year that I'm really excited about getting over to Europe in the spring, in June, hopefully the Ascot if they prove themselves worthy, and we think they will. And when you got the athletes on your team, and then you plan and prepare, and you get there, it just makes everything so special.

**Q. You had set this template for all these horses starting at Keeneland and then going to Europe and**

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and run a race, break on top. She's pulling away a little bit. She broke away. And Wesley did a great job, honestly. She was ready to run. She was ready to win today.

**Q. Any question at all when you hit the top of the stretch you knew you had a lot of horses behind you?**

IRAD ORTIZ JR.: She was breaking a little bit so I don't want to get in the way in the turn so I don't fight too much with her, but when I ask her, I say I'm going to have to go a little early, or what I want to do, but that's racing. You got to play the way the things come up and she did great. When I asked, she responded, she held off everybody, and the last couple lengths she put it into another gear so thank you Barbara and thank you, Wesley, for letting me ride your filly.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

WESLEY WARD: We'll probably look at the Commonwealth or the King's Stand with all you get. We may have a little distance limitations with her, but we have the winter for her to grow, and we'll watch her train next year and we'll make a decision when it comes. But one of those two races is probably what we'll aim for once we get her on the team and see how she's doing and see how her comeback race is in the spring.

**Q. Avery Jane is such a classy filly and she has the reputation for being forwardly placed. Because of that how critical was it to beat her to the punch right out of the gate there?**

IRAD ORTIZ JR.: That was the key. It was the key today. I think the way my filly break over there, I mean, we win the race right there. I didn't have to do use much, I just got her on the rail and she did the rest, really, she's a nice filly.

**Q. You rode her back at Belmont, but it was six months ago already in that 7-length victory. How much has she changed or how much has she improved since then?**

IRAD ORTIZ JR.: I always like her, honestly, since day one I really love her. Like the first start at Keeneland, it was a sloppy track, on dirt, she was a step slower, but she did a great effort and she got beat by two, three lengths, and I always love her and I just told him, Wesley might be there, and he told me, he said, Don't worry, I know she likes to run on the grass. And next time she was on the grass at Belmont and she just galloped that day, honestly. And we always know she's a nice filly so she proved it today.

**Q. I want to ask Wesley, how surprised were you to**

**see her on the lead after the first 100, 200 yards like that? I'm guessing that's not the way you thought.**

WESLEY WARD: You try to analyze all these races on paper and then when the gate opens it's a different story. I thought she would be in the second tier because Averly Jane and One Timer are so fast. But she was just mentally coming into this just so fresh and you could just tell with all of her workouts moving forward she was going to be that way and when she popped out of there, I was feeling really good.

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