

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Friday, November 5, 2021

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Racetrack

Charlie Appleby

William Buick

Jimmy Bell

Press Conference



Q. We'll get started. Congratulations Modern Games for Godolphin. Very impressive win in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf. Charlie Appleby, I'll start with you first. Congratulations. Your third win in this race. And we'll talk about Modern Games first because impressive performance considering everything that happened at the beginning of the race.

CHARLIE APPLEBY: That's right. A testament to the horse and William. On a big stage like that and things, a quite dramatic incident happening there in the gate. But for him to compose himself and get himself back in there, back in the mindset, and for William to also, like I say, taking on board at one minute you're not sure whether you are or are not in the race that day.

But the horse came into the race with a lovely profile. He was a progressive two-year-old, and he's really pleased us since he's been here. And so we were confident coming into the race that we were going to be a big player anyway.

Q. Everybody talked about how well he had been training here leading up to this and then the race once the gates did open certainly played out very well for him the way the race set up?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: Yeah, obviously, he got up on the front, William got him out and got him into a nice position there, and after seeing William, he had plenty of room there, but when he started to make his maneuver, and so we know it's a great track to slingshot on and that's what he's good at. So he got the job done and in a great fashion.

Q. William, great ride, wonderful horse. I heard you say afterwards, What a professional. For any horse the circumstances would have different, but for a

two-year-old to handle it as well as he did?

WILLIAM BUICK: Yeah, absolutely, and you know, it's very unusual circumstances and it's a lot for any horse to take on board, let alone a two-year-old that's traveled all the way over here and he's had to take a lot on board this last week.

And he does everything in his stride and not at any stage was I worried that he was not focused. He remained calm. He remained focused. He didn't change complexion at all. And that makes it much easier.

In regards to the race, it was, we jumped a tad slow from the gate, but having the 1 hole you can get a bit more space on the inside and a bit more time. So we managed to get into a nice position. The pace was even, and look, the race to be honest was very straightforward. This place, the turf track at Del Mar, a lot of luck is involved in the way the race unfolds, but with a horse like him, you're able to put the luck in your own hands a little bit.

Q. Jimmy, I know how important these races are, but for Godolphin, Sheikh Mohammed, and this one, another spectacular homebred Modern Games, just kind of tell us how important this is for the team and the entire Godolphin organization?

JIMMY BELL: Very much so. I think one of the things Sheikh Mohammed enjoys the most is international competition and certainly with the Dubai World Cup he always loves to see so many participants from so many different places come to run. And the same here with the Breeders' Cup, a world championship whereby this is so exciting to bring European horses over here. It just adds such an element to it. And to be a homebred, to be a part of this thing, I know how proud he is of Charlie and how well he brought these horses over here and knows who to bring and so adept at doing that.

And of course you have the best in the business in Mr. Buick down there and he showed that today that it took a lot for both the horse and the jockey to refocus himself as well and to make that kind of showing.

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But it's truly a very large, but a very, very great team and a lot of folks to help make this happen, so I know Sheikh Mohammed is particularly proud of the entire team and the horse as well and the breeding, so, yes.

Q. William, can you take us through from when your stablemate went down.

WILLIAM BUICK: Unfortunately, Albahr, he ended up rearing over the gate and he ended up, unfortunately, underneath the gate. But he then ended up, I think he went to the right rather than to the left where I was. But obviously when these things happen you know that it's going to take awhile. Usually horses get backed out the back of the gate and then everyone gets reorganized and go again. But there was a stall handler there that, he obviously meant well and tried to do the right thing, but he opened the front gate without anyone being ready for it. And obviously my horse does what he's taught to do and he jumps out. Fortunately, he got my message to be pulled up and we went around the back and to be honest I wasn't aware of the situation of him potentially being scratched or whatever happened, I'm not really quite sure. But the guy that opened my gate, he picked me up at the front of the gate, put me back round. And the vet team wanted to know what happened and I told them what happened and then the guy that opened my gate, thankfully, he exactly told them what he did and what happened there. So, you know, they had all the information that was correct and I just don't know whether, maybe there was a bit of confusion, a bit of panic back there. But certainly as in regards to my horse and safety and behavior, there was, he was perfectly behaved and he was not harmed in any way at what happened at all.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BUICK: No, no, no, he was never touched. He was never touched. He was checked. But he was never, he was never touched, so there was no need to check him. There was really no need for what happened to happen. It was unfortunate, I think we all understand that, but thankfully everyone came around to do the right thing and let the horse run, because that was the only fair outcome.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BUICK: I didn't, I didn't know, I was told. Afterwards. I was told afterwards. I don't know what grounds he got scratched on.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BUICK: I didn't know he was scratched. But I

was hearing something that he had to be reinstated. So, but I mean, to be honest, I knew he was going to run, so I didn't really want to focus too much on the whys or wherefores, I just, you need to be on your game around here and so does the horse. So we didn't -- I didn't want to matter myself with stuff I couldn't control.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BUICK: Yeah, it's unfortunate, it's unfortunate. It's a great event. The Breeders' Cup is, it's a world championship, and it's a little bit disappointing, because it takes some of the shine away from the horse, because he was a great winner of the race. He was very impressive, he showed a lot of good qualities and he's a good Juvenile Turf winner, so, but, look, that's no one's fault, it was just what happened.

Q. Charlie, where do we see him next?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: You know, I don't really want to start in on that. But even going into this race we felt that potentially he could be possibly joining the Guineas Stakes for next year and obviously on the back of what he's achieved today then he's got every right to be in that picture. So he'll be shipped back to the U.K. and we'll winter away and sort it work back from the Guineas. But we're very fortunate as we stand at the moment we got a nice team of two-year-olds to winter and so the Guineas is going to be an exciting race and to look forward to this spring.

Q. How is Albahr? What's the outlook?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: He went straight back, I saw him go out there under the pony rider. He jogged back to the barn and the team are looking after him. He's got some minor cuts, but no more than that. My vet's there now and just giving him a thorough examination. But, yeah, it looked uglier than, hopefully -- we were expecting the worst and luckily horse and rider walk away from it.

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