

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Racetrack

Michael McCarthy

Bo Hirsch

Victor Espinoza

Press Conference



Cathy (inaudible), my bloodstock agent and to O'Neill, to the group. I love them. He's Ce Ce's best friend and she's done great job.

And this guy over here is like a fine wine. He just improves with age. And I love him. He's the best. And this guy over here, he's done such a wonderful job with Ce Ce getting her to just continue to improve and he knows when to lay her up for a period of time and when to come back, and he just did a remarkable job.

And if you can find a trainer out there that works harder than he does, I promise that person is on a day that's longer than 24 hours.

Q. Victor, you've been on this filly for all of her races except for two and then it seems like now that she's gone to the one turn, it's really suited her running style. But take us through the race today.

VICTOR ESPINOZA: I think she can run in any distance. She went on two great runs, one mile and 16th mile and an eighth. It's a little bit like hard for me to time it.

But now at 7/8ths she's an awesome mare and Mike McCarthy has done an incredible job to train her for the race and this event, the Breeders' Cup. And I've been around with her because I always look for the future and I look for the big race. And now as I get older, you know, I train and I'm prepared for this, the big races. And Bo, you know, thanks to them too. It's just been great all the way around and it's a really nice Breeders' Cup.

Q. Michael, in Saratoga, Gamine beat you at three lengths. When you look back at that race, what happened there? And then looking at today's race, when you got to the quarter pole and saw how close she was, did you think you were a winner?

MICHAEL MCCARTHY: I thought, at Saratoga, I thought Gamine got loose, got an easy lead and I believe that race, that day she led the opening quarter in like 23 and two and she can probably do that obviously with her eyes closed. Today a little bit of a reminder to kind of keep her at task.

Q. Congratulations to Ce Ce, winner of our first Breeders' Cup race today, the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare sprint, and Michael McCarthy, Bo Hirsch, Victor Espinoza. Congratulations. I'll start with you first, Michael. Really the race played out perfectly for her as you had almost scripted it with the early speed dual up front.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY: Yeah, it was almost too good to be true on paper. You see the fillies drawing outside, obviously you prefer that these two fillies have been drawn inside, but I thought Victor did a wonderful job of bouncing away from there and not letting those two fillies kind of dictate and get over on us.

And then turning up the back side it looks like she was always traveling well. Those two fillies ran away around the turn and Victor put her in the gate coming through the 3/8 pole. I was a little bit worried that it didn't look like she was making up a whole lot of ground on them, but the fractions were flipped.

When she got heads up for lead for coming through the quarter pole I certainly got excited and I was kind of watching Bo, kind of watching her and inside the 16 pole I think I spent more time watching Bo. So very good day.

BO HIRSCH: He gave me a kiss.

Q. To own and breed a Breeders' Cup winner so special and Ce Ce has certainly been an incredible mare for you.

BO HIRSCH: Yeah, she's been unbelievable. You look back at her pedigree it's incredible. We have been very lucky. And most of it is due to the good people have I back in Kentucky from Columbiana Farms and (inaudible) to

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And my concern was that one race that we had down here was lackluster around two turns, but she's been so good this year sprinting and everything has just kind of fallen into place here lately. I thought she was doing very good for the Chillingworth and she's kind of stepped forward and trained even better for this race than she did the last one.

When she hit the front today obviously a little bit reminiscent, it felt like the Preakness, you're certainly happy that they go ahead and show themselves and they're going to run well. Whether they're going to run 1, 2, 3, you don't know, but your job is basically done once they walk on the racetrack. When she hit the 16th pole and it looked like no one was coming to her it was a special feeling.

Q. Victor, I think this is your first Breeders' Cup win since American Pharoah. So what's it been for that long, dry stretch and how do you feel and did it feel extra good to beat bob's horse?

VICTOR ESPINOZA: You look at the horse that I beat, you know, I was here to win, no matter what horse I ride in the race, especially a Breeders' Cup day. I just -- it's so good for the horse that I ride, make sure that they're happy and travelling nicely, like today Ce Ce. But, yeah, my career's been up and down, but nevertheless, I've been down below and I never gave up. And sometimes you hit the ground, but no matter how hard we hit it, when you stand up, you stand up big. And I feel great right now and like I say, it's really special, because the last Breeders' Cup was American Pharoah and, but in between I had a little bit of rough accident and other stuff. And, hey, you know, who knows, life is interesting and fun, we don't know what's going to happen in the future, but just keep going day by day and then we see how far I can get.

Q. Victor, in terms of that, in terms of bouncing back, you noted this, when you, that you were fortunate to still be walking after the 2018 spill. So what does that say about your resilience and what does that say about your fortitude to come back and win a top Breeders' Cup race like this?

VICTOR ESPINOZA: To never give up, no matter what happens. As long as the body essentially is right, you know, it's what I've done my career and that's all I've done my entire life. I always, you know, I've been mentally prepared for when my body is not physically right, then I would sit back and start all over again. But it's almost, you know, my body helped me to go forward and I got to continue riding and ride great horses like Ce Ce, that helps an awful lot too.

Q. Does this mare from have a future as a race horse

or does she become a brood mare or what do we know?

BO HIRSCH: Well, at my stage in life I want more fun than money and as long as she wants to run, and as long as -- we know she wants to run and we're going to run for awhile. (Laughing).

MICHAEL MCCARTHY: You wait three years before you see something and then you see all these great mares sometimes, they don't get what you're hoping for and so as long as she's competitive she's going to, we're going to keep her running.

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