

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Racetrack

M.v. O'Brien

Derrick Smith

Wesley Ward

Press Conference



Q. Congratulations Golden Pal in the Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint and representing ownership here is Michael Tabor, Derrick Smith and Mrs. Magnier. This horse just shot out of the gate. We know he's quick but that was something special.

M.v. O'BRIEN: I was actually watching the race with a good friend of mine, Henry, and I said, Henry, watch this fellow go out of the gate, and he says, What you mean? The language that came out of him after the horse went a couple of strides I won't be repeating in here. It was incredible.

Q. This horse is your last year's winner of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint and then back again, but well traveled in between, but his last race at Keeneland really just showed that he was back to form.

M.v. O'BRIEN: Yeah, he was pretty impressive out there and he was very impressive before that, and then it didn't work out, but you had the horses over there and it happens, sometimes it doesn't. But Wesley told me two days ago that he really believed that this is the fastest horse he's had and that he was part of (no microphone) which is remarkable.

Q. Just a three-year-old and by your sire Uncle Mo, so off of this impressive performance are we planning on seeing him next year?

M.v. O'BRIEN: I was just talking to Wesley about that and he's very keen for us to keep him in training and he wants to bring him for the race in Ascot and Wales and everything, so I'll talk to dad, Michael Tabor, Derrick Smith (no microphone) and we'll have a discussion about that.

DERRICK SMITH: He's so sound right now and like he said, he's lightly raced, and his stallion value, if he can do this over on the other side over there in Ascot it just makes him worth so much more, if he can show what he does here over there. Being a turf sprinter sire -- he's not just a turf sprinter, I kept him on there because he was a little fragile early on, but his workouts on the dirt have been eye-openers, so that's something, if we do decide to move forward that's something that would also be in consideration. This way breeding-wise he'll be open to either surface.

Q. Looking back to this race in 2017 at Del Mar, Golden Pal's time is about 1.5 seconds quicker. So where do you think this race ranks in the annals of this race history?

M.v. O'BRIEN: It's only a relatively new race and I'm sure it's going to grow and grow and grow. And I was actually astonished when I saw what time he did. I've never seen a horse do 54 seconds before. Listening to it, fantastic race. The Breeders' Cup do a fantastic job getting the best horses here and you're looking, if he's correct and he goes on to bigger and better things it's only going to highlight this race as well.

So I don't think Wesley's going to -- I don't think he'll have a difficult job convincing people about him.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about the purchase, when y'all bought him, who first wanted to make the deal, and how it came together?

M.v. O'BRIEN: He's always had a very, very high opinion about this horse and we got together and got the deal done.

Q. Wesley, could you talk about how great that start was and compare it to how good a starter the Golden Pal has been in the past or is this the best start that you've seen from this horse?

WESLEY WARD: Yeah, he's very quick and very agile as you've seen today and my only concern with the race today

was the first jump. I knew if he broke with them that his quickness and his agility would just bounce him out like he did. And not only did he break with them, he broke in front of them. And then I think he was a little bit surprised the first few strides how he just kind of opened up like he did on such fast horses. So I was very happy with the first few strides.

Q. He's undefeated on this horse and any thoughts if it does go back over to Europe, would he potentially go over and ride him over there, he seems to suit him so well.

WESLEY WARD: Yeah, Johnny rode a great race on him last year, but we had a discussion as to one guy's won one, the other guy's won three going into it, so we went with what he felt like was the rider that we thought knew the horse so well, so I would imagine that he would stay with him.

Q. You mentioned about going back over next year for the races?

WESLEY WARD: I can't tell you, he ran such a great race at two at Ascot. And he's the type of horse that really -- he's had all of his workouts -- we've had a lot of rain at Keeneland and all of his workouts have been on deep surfaces, and he's just kind of guided through it. So the track condition over there, no matter what it is, he can handle. That's always a big question for American horses. So he can handle a soft or heavy ground or firm ground, and it just really, it would be a shame to retire such a horse that's kind of just starting to peak now. And I don't know, you never got to see him as we were saddling, he was so cool, calm and composed walking around there, like he knew he was going to win. And so did I. I was worried about the first jump. But he did everything. And I love this horse so much and since Ben brought me over to see him in September as a yearling and we tried to put a deal together, but unfortunately with the issues we had back then, before he even had a saddle on his back, and then after he won last year and he overcame everything on his own. The breeder put a deal together with MV and on so down the line. So it was a lot of money and really it was a lot more money than he's worth until today. So I'm really glad because I was kind of making, I was just praying that everything went through today. Like I said on TV, I had a long time friend in Bruce Headley and he had a heart of gold and I was a young kid and he came to me and he said, Wesley, he said, If you hang in there long enough, he said, your time will come and you'll get a good one and by God he was right.

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