

# Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Racetrack

**Aron Wellman**

**Wayne Catalano**

**Jose Ortiz**

Press Conference



So we're coming in here with all kinds of confidence. The way he's managed and developed this horse is clearly brilliant, so we had so much confidence going in. Like you said, he never even won a stakes race so to do what he did today is just magical.

**Q. The man to your left, Wayne Catalano, as Aron said, you've had Breeders' Cup winners, a lot of winners as a trainer, a jockey as well, but this horse, what a performance today to win his first stakes for the Breeders' Cup.**

WAYNE CATALANO: The horse is an unbelievable horse. He runs incredibly, as everybody knows. He trains like lights out. And all the way up to this race I told Aron he's training like you want a horse to train. That's all you can ask. When they come in and train like that, I'm like, we're on.

**Q. You've always been known as somebody who will take a shot in a big race knowing what had you in the stable?**

WAYNE CATALANO: We've been fortunate enough to have some good horses, some good clients, and some good people working for me, and all that. A good ride honestly by Jose today up to the last ride.

**Q. Jose, were you concerned at all? Everybody had been talking about Jackie's Warrior and the speed and being able to chase him down going six furlongs?**

JOSE ORTIZ: Yeah, I mean, I was concerned, I know the track always plays fast here and the speed holds pretty good. Jackie's Warrior is a great horse, so you're always concerned when you run against him.

But I knew that we were coming into the race with a horse that couldn't have been doing any better. I saw him in the morning on Thursday, and, man, he was doing really good. Wayne is a great trainer. He has trained a lot of good horses, and yeah.

**Q. Aron and Wayne, I know when he started his career**

**Q. Congratulations. Breeders' Cup Sprint winner Aloha West. And, Aron, I'll start with you first. Eclipse thoroughbred, obviously a very special moment this year, 10th year anniversary since starting this partnership.**

ARON WELLMAN: Absolutely. It's surreal to be here. This is my home track. I live five minutes down the road from Del Mar racetrack, so to do it here with my family, this guy right here, he's a treasure to the racing industry and a Hall of Famer in my book. And Jose and I have had some incredible moments together. We won a classic four years ago and now to win a Breeders' Cup with him, it's just I'm surrounded by class.

And the horse of course deserves the most credit of all. He's an incredible specimen that there's no telling how good he can be.

**Q. Obviously a big step up today for the horse who wins a Breeders' Cup. What did you think about him heading into this race and what has Wayne been telling you?**

ARON WELLMAN: Wayne has just done an incredible job developing this colt. He only ran for the first time I think in February this year as a four-year-old, and 10 months later he's a Breeders' Cup Sprint champion. That takes master horsemanship to be able to accomplish something that monumental.

But he told me two weeks ago when this horse worked at Keeneland after he was the second in the Phoenix and this man has had his hands on some pretty serious horse flesh in his day, 3,000 wins as a jockey, almost 2,000 as a trainer, this is his fourth Breeders' Cup win, and he told me this might be the best horse I've ever had my hands on.

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**with another one of Wayne's clients, can you talk about how you guys came to buy him and what you liked about him, obviously an unraced four-year-old, he had made a couple starts when you guys bought him.**

ARON WELLMAN: Yeah, so I seen a horse break his maiden first time out at Oaklawn and I thought it was impressive the way he did it. It was a little premature to get the horse bought from the Wests at that time, then he came back in May and got buried, had no chance, got slammed at the start, checked three, four times down on the rail, to nobody's fault, but he was totally unsaddled that day. I was talking to Wayne shortly thereafter about a horse I was sending him and I said, What about that horse Aloha West, that horse that ran sneaky good, I think he was faster than any other at Oaklawn. And he said, That horse can run. And I bought some horses off the Wests in the past that have similar profiles because their program is predominantly geared towards the Classic and this is a horse that had missed his two- and three-year-old season, so for them, with the kind of volume that they got, he's the kind of horse that they need to turn over to make sense of their operation. So Wayne took the lead, got in with the West management, we cut a deal and the rest is history.

**Q. Jose, could you take us through the ride and did you think you had it at the end?**

JOSE ORTIZ: Well, I was thinking on the half going into the three-eighths and I was very happy when we hit the quarter pole but I wasn't sure if I was going to be good enough to catch him, because they have a very good horses in front of me. And I look at the 9 horse and he was the best horse early, so I decide to swing wide. And my horse, he gave me a great kick. And when we hit the wire, honestly, I don't ride here on a daily basis, so I just ride hard, three or four jumps to the wire and honestly I didn't -- I thought I had it, I wasn't sure.

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