

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Racetrack

William Buick

Charlie Appleby

Jimmy Bell

Press Conference



Q. Breeders' Cup Turf and congratulations to Godolphin and Yibir and William Buick and Charlie Appleby. You've spent a lot of time sitting up here. But, William, take us through the race. You were just discussing how early on in the race Yibir was very hard to handle?

WILLIAM BUICK: It was a long race this weekend, but I didn't know how to assess it. There was a lot of pace in the race but I didn't know what my horse, how he would be able to, would react. He's a bit of a complex character and you saw him at Belmont last time where he dropped himself out and I had that scenario in my head that he might be a bit rank, and anyway, he broke well, and he pulled hard.

To be honest with you, I thought he was doing too much. But then once we turned into the back he dropped and he was in a good mile and a half steady rhythm and I was just hoping that he stayed there for the finish because he's got an amazingly strong finish, and halfway around the home turn I could see Broome had gone, but I was always confident of picking him up. He's been an amazing turn of foot and I couldn't pull him up after the line. Amazing horse, and I think he did something yesterday that not many horses can do, so all credit to him and great weekend. Well done to Charlie and everyone at Godolphin, all the team at home, everyone. It's a fantastic.

Q. A fantastic couple of days for you, fantastic year with the horses coming over, but this horse today for just a three-year-old that was a very impressive race.

WILLIAM BUICK: Yeah. Unbelievable. And it was a very good addition to the Breeders' Cup, obviously. Last year's winner, had a lot of good Americans and, no, like I said, a great performance from a young up and coming horse.

Q. Jimmy Bell, Charlie Appleby, we were talking to William, and, Charlie, he said he was very rank early, but he wanted to get him back. Is that just kind of immaturity being a three-year-old?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: It's the main thing with this horse. That's one of the reasons why he's gelded. As we saw in this past season, he's ran some quite indifferent races and running a sensible race at Newmarket and then running away with him. He said he's never been run away with since he was a kid. And he couldn't hold one side of him at Squidward, therefore, we left the hood on at York and he ran a routine race on that occasion keeping with again the same thing and he did great job at that and winning the, going on to win the race.

So, unfortunately, the Belmont Derby there Jamie Spencer rode him and Jamie has got those sort of special hands that a lot of horses would never been keen with him and I don't know how he did it on this horse, but he broke from the gates and looked like he was actually going to pull himself off at one stage, but we saw that turn of foot at Belmont and we saw it again today. William gave him a great ride. It was a hard ride for William, I could see he was really taking William on. And as William quite rightly said, to still have that finish in him, it just, it's just shows what sort of an engine he's got there.

Q. Jimmy, another of the home-bred horses for Godolphin, Sheikh Mohammed, and this one just a three-year-old, obviously being a gelding, we hope to see him around next year as well.

JIMMY BELL: I'm sure we will and, again, that's a real testament that he's taken it on his elbows like that and as Charlie alluded to earlier, just acclimating and settling and still having that turn of foot to finish up the way he did and, again, just a tribute to the job that Charlie does with his horses with the team he's got behind him and certainly what William does on the afternoon. So it's been, I'm sure, a big team effort and a lot of credit goes to Charlie and his team for being able to present him on a day like today.

Q. Brought six, started four, won three, scratched two, quite a weekend.

CHARLIE APPLEBY: Yeah, no, exactly, a fantastic weekend. I can take a couple of them home fresh. (Laughing). But, yeah, look, it's been a lot of -- I don't know quite how to describe it, really -- emotions of watching the, as I said yesterday, two of them scratched, then one went and got reinstated and got back in the race. I felt sorry for the crowd there that, unfortunately, the winning ticket didn't come up but, look, it wasn't the horse's fault. It was great to see him win the way he did.

And then going into today obviously standing there again to see potentially what was unfolding in front of us took a little bit of stepping back and having to take a breath again. But I just knew the right horse was left in the gate in Space Blues so he was always going to be the main player. And then that in the last, that was the icing on the cake, really. We felt this horse had a lot of talent, he was galloping really good with all our three-year-old middle distance horses and he's gone and finished it off today.

Q. You mentioned that he was at one point he was among the top rank of your three-year-olds and now he's done that, but going into 2022, do you work back from Keeneland, knowing that you can come over here and do this or how do you, how do you build a blueprint for next year?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: No, he's a horse that I had on my radar to take to Dubai first and obviously look at the Classic with him. And as you quite rightly say, a walk back for a Breeders' Cup next year will definitely be high on his agenda. That's why we got the three-year-olds there and so I got to try to split them all up and this horse with the experience (no microphone).

Q. Could this horse or any of the others be going to Hong Kong for the big international event coming up?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: Not this year, no. They have been in touch with me and logistics are obviously still a bit tricky, but more importantly the horses they have had a busy campaign and three-year-olds are young horses and I hope to have them around for a few years yet, so they'll all have a nice holiday now.

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