

# Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Racetrack

**Brad Cox**

**Jin Woo Lee**

**Joel Rosario**

Press Conference



know, I could possibly, we could possibly take him to (no audio) it was back a little quick, but you know what, let's run him on the track like Prairie Meadows where it's a speed favoring track, mile and an eighth. We had some success up there with some other horses in the past and thought it would be a good opportunity to find out where we were with him.

He ran an incredible race. Joel did a great job. He received good figures out of it, set us up well for the Whitney. (No audio) same thing. That was where we were kind of mimicking was, I don't want to say a soft race, but say a Grade 3 for a prep for a Grade 1. It was Cornhusker, Whitney, we come back Lukas Classic, Breeders' Cup Classic and it worked out.

**Q. We would like to welcome Brad Cox, Joel Rosario, and Jin Woo Lee. Congratulations to Knicks Go, winner of the Breeders' Cup Classic. Brad, incredible performance from Knicks Go. You had two horses in here with Essential Quality. Were you surprised to see nobody really pressure him early?**

BRAD COX: I don't know. I didn't really know what the tactics from the other trainers and jockeys would be. I kind of felt like if they did try to go with him they may jeopardize their own opportunity to win the race and they just hoped to run with him at a mile and a quarter, but it showed -- speed's very dangerous and he was obviously fit, ready to run, happy, doing well. And it was, maybe a little bit opening a quarter to a quarter and 23 and then nearly 46 the second quarter, but the way he was doing it, he was able to clear off a touch going up the back side. I felt very comfortable that we were in a good spot.

And also not only that, the break back to the other horses, they seemed to be somewhat well bunched so it made me think that they really weren't going that quick.

**Q. Tremendous year for him. Kind of an interesting route to get here with the Cornhusker and the Lukas Classic. Is that by design to keep his confidence up?**

BRAD COX: Well, honestly the Cornhusker was just to get his confidence back after a lot of quiet racing in Saudi and (no microphone) he was going to a mile. We had plans of going to the mile at Lone Star and once (inaudible) he opted out at Belmont, we thought maybe we take a shot at this Grade 1 at Belmont, but it didn't work out. Both races were in one turn, the Saudi race and the (inaudible) mile were on one turn.

And then after that he was running great and I thought, you

**Q. Best laid plans and worked out great today. Jin Woo Lee, congratulations. This horse has taken you on an incredible ride all around the world, but now on the biggest world stage and the world's richest race here in America, the Classic.**

JIN WOO LEE: I'm extremely pleased with the result today. It had been a rough time when he was three years old, but we overcome the hard year and then turned the corner and then he become as special horse.

And actually the winning the Breeders' Cup was the ultimate goal at the beginning of the year and we achieved that win, so he can go off feeling good and we want to say thank you to everybody.

**Q. Joel, take us through the ride on this horse. Were you surprised how quickly he left gate and that nobody really went to pressure you?**

JOEL ROSARIO: Yeah, he's very fast and then he got to the front like he always do. He broke very, very sharp, and then I just told him, like Brad told me, just let him do his thing and then he was just speeding, speeding. The faster he was going, he was feeling faster.

**Q. He looks like he's very comfortable out there when's out on front like that?**

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JOEL ROSARIO: Yeah he was very comfortable. He looked like he was really enjoying what he was doing up there. I can see the gleam in his eye. He was just so relaxed, so calm, and he just, he's an unbelievable horse.

**Q. Brad, decades from now when you try to explain to grandkids or whoever in your life what your life was like between the last Breeders' Cup and this Breeders' Cup, how will you explain that to them?**

BRAD COX: Well, I kind of relate it to maybe coaching a major league football team or major league baseball team. You're really just kind of under the gun. You always have to be ready to perform or have the horses ready to perform and you're always moving forward.

So we don't, I honestly don't, like I said, you got to celebrate for about 15 minutes, maybe 30, and then it's always back to work. So it's a demanding job, but hopefully it will leave a legacy. I got two boys that are involved and some day they may train and, I don't know, when I started, I said I want to train forever. We'll see how it goes.

But hopefully we're setting up something for one of my boys at some point to take over some day.

**Q. You limit yourself to 15 to 30 minutes of celebration. Can the coach at least have the rest of the night off?**

BRAD COX: Yeah, well, I don't know. I have to go back and check. I have to check the horses and make some calls tonight. So we're kind of always, we're always doing something. But we'll enjoy this and be definitely back to work in the morning.

**Q. Joel, how surprised were you to be clear on the back stretch in this race, given that there was talk of so much speed in the race?**

JOEL ROSARIO: Yeah, like he's super fast and it was like he broke out really well, and I know he can go fast, so I felt very confident at that point. And I know when they were far away from me, I know how fast he is, so I kind of get to, you know, to ride him for the way he was.

**Q. How did you feel turning for home?**

JOEL ROSARIO: Oh, he just took off again. He just got to the stretch there and he just ran home and he just like keeps going with the speed he have and at the mile and a quarter, he was amazing.

**Q. Yourself, personally, the year you have. You're closing in on a record, really good chance to win an Eclipse award. How do you put into perspective the year you're having?**

JOEL ROSARIO: Oh, unbelievable. Thankful for all the people like Brad giving me a lot of opportunities, also a lot of other trainers and the great people that I have. They helped me. And thanks to all the people that I really, that are really supporting the sport and thankful that I'm having the year that I have.

**Q. Brad, if you look at this race tactically, it was almost a carbon copy of the 2004 Classic won by Ghostzapper. When all is said and done how would you compare Knicks Go to the Ghostzappers, the City Of Lights of the world that won?**

BRAD COX: Yeah, it's funny you ask about Ghostzapper because I was a big fan of him. Like you said, he was a very good horse, going seven-eighths. He was a speed horse. He carries speed around two turns. I think he won the class at Lone Star in a really fast time.

No, I think the speed he has, I mean, it's, he's built for American racing on the dirt. That's what he's done and I'm hopeful that he'll pass that on to his offspring. I know people kind of frown on him for him regarding to him speeding to stud, but I think he's got everything it takes to be a stallion. He's a Grade 1 winner too, he's, obviously Ben Colebrook was responsible for that, he did a great job with him. He was a Grade 1 winner at 4, 5. He's traveled around the world and he's a very tough, durable horse. He's extremely sound. And I think we're in a day and age where horses go to stud so early and he's a little bit of a throwback horse in that he's raced at 4 and 5 and raced as much as he has. So very proud of what he has accomplished this year and ending last year and hopefully he'll pass it on as a stallion.

**Q. You mentioned that you have quarter of an hour's celebration, but can you just sort of tell us about the sort of joy or satisfaction that this win has given you, sort of put into words and with your children and everything?**

BRAD COX: Yeah, no, it's a big victory. Obviously it's the richest race in America and it's a prestigious race and it means a lot to show up on this stage at the Breeders' Cup, it's the world's stage. And obviously saw that this week with so many Euros and horses from Japan and now an ownership based out of Korea with an American horse winning the Classic. So, I mean, it's definitely a world stage and it's very important to show up and do well on these international days. There was a lot of things we want

to accomplish at the Derby, the Saudi Cup, Dubai World Cup, and this was one was very, very high on our list of races we wanted to win and we capped it off, but we would like to win again as well.

**Q. Could you put into context, you had some other horses that came into this Breeders' Cup that seemed like they were doing great, I know you were thinking, I expected some big performances. In that context it had to have been kind of a disappointing Breeders' Cup for you until this race. Can you talk about that?**

BRAD COX: Yeah, for sure. We had a little bit of a rough day yesterday with two fillies in the Juvenile Turf, Juju's Map went out and ran really well. She was obviously second best. The filly that won the race is an incredible talent and running second to her. You know, it wasn't what we were looking for, we didn't come to run second, but we'll press forward. Today, She Dares the Devil, I thought we were setting a good trip on obviously 21 and change, 44 on 4, that close wasn't going to work. But she was really the only one that stayed on that was up close. So I do think she ran hard, I think she ran extremely respectable and I'm hopeful she bounces out of it and gets older and will possibly march forward the next year with her. And then these two colts today in the Classic ran huge races and overall we had a first, a second, and a third and we'll look forward to Keeneland next year.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

BRAD COX: For sure. For sure. I mean with what he was able to do, obviously the Distaff Classic horses were pressing each other pretty good up front and they went a little bit quicker, but overall it does show Knicks Go's talent, ability and class.

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