

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Keeneland Racecourse

William Buick

Charlie Appleby

Press Conference



Mile

THE MODERATOR: Modern Games, now back-to-back wins in the Breeders' Cup after last year winning the Breeders' Cup Juvenile, now taking the Breeders' Cup Mile. We have jockey William Buick and trainer Charlie Appleby. Rough start, looked like you got squeezed immediately after the beginning of the race.

WILLIAM BUICK: He just jumped a little bit slow, and obviously the horses from outside came in and I found myself in a pretty bad spot. But he managed to regather his stride and turn it into the first turn halfway around there. I thought we were following the right horses and we were not too far, too bad.

Look, once I got him to the outside and I got him running, he picked up so well. And I always knew he was going to keep going all the way to the line.

THE MODERATOR: Seemed like coming just off the turn you sort of had a strategic opportunity right there where you really had to ask him to go to be able to get clear.

WILLIAM BUICK: Yeah, exactly. From where I was, and on the horse I was, the opportunities that sort of presented themselves for me at the time, I didn't need to do anything too brave or drastic. It was all about trying to get him into clear sailing and just giving him every chance, really.

THE MODERATOR: He seems so handy to ride.

WILLIAM BUICK: He's a great horse. He was a great 2-year-old. Obviously won the Juvenile Turf in Del Mar. And he's a French 2000 Guineas winner. I think he's only been out of the (indiscernible) once ever in his life. He's ran over various distances. Today, I think he will finally get the recognition he probably deserves.

THE MODERATOR: Charlie, just following up on what William was saying, this horse, he just seems so handy. No matter where he gets put in the race he just always seems to be able to be asked and goes.

CHARLIE APPLEBY: He has so many attributes to himself -- his size, he's neat, he's nimble. That's why I think he's always thrived on these tracks here. Wherever he is, he's small enough to get through the gaps and he's neat enough to get around those turns.

You're always sort of, dare I say it, confident wherever he is in the field. When they come off the turn he put himself into a position where he'll be able to attack.

THE MODERATOR: What about his season this year? So some ups and downs, as William said, he's never run a bad race but maybe expectations so high.

CHARLIE APPLEBY: This horse started the season off there. We were very fortunate to have the three horses that we had in the spring there. And taking nothing away from this fellow. We had Native Trail and Coroebus there. Those were sort of the obviously picks going towards Newmarket Guineas. Therefore, we waited for the horse; we didn't want to run three in there.

He went to the French Guineas and was very impressive there. He then backed up -- we stepped him up and tripped him in the mile and a quarter in the French Derby. Because he runs so honestly, he ran a hell of a race there, finished in third and didn't really stay.

That was probably my mistake really. I dropped him back to the 7 there. I hold my hands up. We shouldn't have done that.

Then our plan was to go to Canada, but again he sort of got a nickname, The Substitute, because obviously Coroebus didn't turn up in the Sussex there. So he dropped into that field again and run a credible race, finishing second to Baaeed. We then go to Canada and he was, as we saw, devastating there.

And then we give him another roll of the dice there on

Champions Day, and frankly he's the horse that's probably going to hopefully help me to crown our second ownership.

As we all know, back in UK it's all on prize money. And he finished second and from start to finish hated the ground, he's the horse he is. A true warrior.

THE MODERATOR: Only a 3-year-old. So next year what are the plans for him at this point in time?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: I think obviously we look at some of the mile events in the spring there back in the UK. The Queen Anne would be the sort of obvious target to work back from Royal Ascot. And I'd like to think he'll be back over here.

And he's getting fanfare around the world. But it's great to see him get the applaud today on what unfortunately he didn't receive 12 months ago, not to his fault, no fault of his own. I'd like to bring him back out here again and let the American crowd enjoy him.

Q. He was obviously a brilliant 2-year-old last year. How would you compare the Modern Games of last year to the Modern Games we just saw?

CHARLIE APPLEBY: Modern Games, from about, I would, say July onwards, physically changed. Just typical with Dubawi. They go well from two to three. But most important they seem to improve from three to four.

That's the exciting part about him. But physically just got stronger in all the right places. And I say he looked the picture in the palette today. And you're always confident when you come into these races, when they look as well as he did, hopefully you're going to run in a big race.

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