

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Keeneland Racecourse

Todd Pletcher

Gregory Clarke

Press Conference



Distaff

THE MODERATOR: We have Breeders' Cup Distaff winner Malathaat. We have representing Shadwell, Gregory Clarke, and trainer Todd Pletcher. Last year's 3-year-old filly champion and just an incredible mare who always seems to bring her "A" game, but kind of flying a little under the radar to her stablemate, Nest. What made you think today could be a big day for her?

TODD PLETCHER: She's always given us confidence. She's a lovely filly from day one. And I thought she was training super coming into the race. She obviously likes Keeneland now. She's 4-for-4 here. She was giving us every indication she would show up and run her "A" race like she almost always does.

THE MODERATOR: In the running of the race. Nest was a further back than anticipated -- they were kind of running next to each other, but Johnny giving her a real ground-saving trip kind of on both turns before finally getting her clear, that big stride of hers, is that the best-case scenario for her?

TODD PLETCHER: She can be a little tricky. She needs a little while to get revved up, and you can't make the lead too soon with her. I told Johnny that's timing it a little close for my liking.

(Laughter.)

I could see she had a head of steam built up and she was motoring down the middle of the track. I was just hoping she had enough time to get there.

THE MODERATOR: You put blinkers on her a few starts back. As you mentioned, she's always run a race, never been worse than second. But what made you make that decision kind of later on now in the race career?

TODD PLETCHER: It's something that we've actually been thinking of since her 2-year-old year. She's a very curious filly. She sees everything. And she has that tendency to wait when she makes the lead.

Meanwhile, she's reeling off win after win and it's difficult to make an equipment change. But really the defining moment was in the Ogden Phipps when Johnny came back and said -- it was really hard to make out watch it, I guess he sensed it being on her back, just before the wire she saw something and tapped on the brakes. Got beat a nose and he said, we've got to do it.

So we did and the first start it didn't work out. But that was a tricky day at Saratoga. It was wicked hot. I've never seen her behave that way in the paddock. I think she was just bothered by the hot weather. She was very irritated. And she didn't run a race that day at all.

But we were confident enough that we were making the right decision that we stayed with the equipment change.

THE MODERATOR: Gregory Clarke, representing Shadwell Stable. This filly last year's champion, an incredible year she's had this year. What do we look forward to from Malathaat?

GREGORY CLARKE: Wouldn't it be lovely if she stayed in training?

THE MODERATOR: I don't think the guy next to you would argue.

GREGORY CLARKE: He'd love that. But what she's accomplished is just incredible. We're just so blessed. We've gotten this far with her.

But she's at the top of her game. We'll see what Sheikha Hissa and the family want to do. But she's a machine. She really is. We're over the moon.

THE MODERATOR: That incredible pedigree she has, of course.

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GREGORY CLARKE: Absolutely. She's going to be an incredible broodmare for the Sheikh and his family. There's no question.

Q. For both of you, as the three were coming down the stretch, did you think you had won when they crossed the wire?

TODD PLETCHER: To be honest, from where I was positioned, I thought we won. Then every time I watched the replay, it seemed like it got closer and closer.

So the cameraman was focused on her on the gallop out, and usually they're right. So I mean, I thought she had won, but I wasn't a million percent sure.

GREGORY CLARKE: I was very wary. Just like Todd said, I thought she had won, but then they kept replaying it replaying it. I was like, oh, my gosh. But it was great.

Q. Todd, is it a little bittersweet with Nest finishing fourth; you had the two from a lot of people's standpoint in this race and one of them was going to have to lose?

TODD PLETCHER: That's the situation you're in when you run more than one horse in a race. Nothing worked out well for Nest today. She didn't jump well from the start.

She was spinning her wheels around the first turn. And she was very wide all the way around. And because she wasn't really in the position we wanted her to be, Irad had to make a little bit of a move sooner than he wanted to, and very wide while doing it.

I was concerned when they hit the first turn that it wasn't going her way today.

THE MODERATOR: What did Johnny say to you after the race?

TODD PLETCHER: He was very excited, obviously. And I was kidding him, I said, don't cut those so close. I'm too old for those type of finishes these days.

But he showed why he's one of the greatest of all time. He's a big-time performer. When it's the biggest prize, he shows up with a brilliant ride.

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