

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Keeneland Racecourse

John Sadler

Terry Finley

Kosta Hronis

Jane Lyon

Press Conference



Classic

THE MODERATOR: Flightline, undefeated, untested winner of the Longines Breeders' Cup. Terry Finley, representing West Point Thoroughbreds one of the ownerships involved in this great partnership. Terry, just what are the words to describe Flightline?

TERRY FINLEY: I thought he got tested today. Like, I know you're supposed to say, your opponents and give kudos to your opponents. But Flightline ran better than I thought he was going to run overall. They laid it down.

I talked to Irad after the race and all he said was, man, we were going very fast down the backside. So just delighted, especially for the horse.

It was the coolest thing all week to be in town and to be around -- like the breakfast and everything. People, they just had a sparkle in their eye when they talked about Flightline.

I've said it, we're all fans at heart. And obviously privileged to be part of this horse. But the fan in all of us, we're like, boy, this is really good for the business.

THE MODERATOR: And just watching, obviously, the race itself, as you mentioned, they were throwing it down, very fast fractions. Any concerns looking up there? You know this horse is a superstar, but that was impressive.

TERRY FINLEY: Absolutely. To run away from those horses -- they were eight in front down the backside. I didn't even see, what, they went three-quarters in, what, seven and change? I'm glad I didn't see that. I'm glad I

didn't see that because, I mean, going a mile -- who does that?

So to run away from those horses like he did and to see those horses really, everyone a Grade I winner, either this was going to be really good or we're going to have some problems. I think it was one or the other as they went into the far turn.

But I saw him. He gave him a break and he just gave him a shot to kind of throttle down a little bit. And obviously Flavien has a lot of confidence in this horse. Always has. I think that confidence is warranted. Just delighted. And I said something to Flavien after the race, and he was just beaming.

THE MODERATOR: We bring in the rest of the connections to Flightline. John Sadler, go ahead and take a seat. Terry was just talking, this horse, watching that race and watching the performance he put on today -- undefeated, untested. But this was certainly a statement.

JOHN SADLER: He's been brilliant. Brilliant is his normal. He didn't disappoint. He never has. We're just really thrilled.

THE MODERATOR: Jane Lyon, you bred this horse in your Summer Wind Farm, and I know how much these horses are like children to you. So emotions?

JANE LYON: Really great. All's great.

Q. John, when you saw the fractions, the three-quarters, I think it was 1:07 and 4, could you just say what your emotion was?

JOHN SADLER: Is that what it was?

Q. I thought it said 9 and 4 but someone said --

JOHN SADLER: I think I missed that split. I'm kind of glad I did. You know? You know me, you've been covering this going into this, David. I tried to not get out ahead of the story. We just wanted to march into this race.

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And he's just a remarkable, remarkable horse. In the words of Bud Delp, he's one of the best horses to ever look through a bridle. He's just that good.

Q. Did you enjoy the stretch drive, when he got past Life Is Good, it's all clear sailing, could you exhale?

JOHN SADLER: A little bit. I haven't been sleeping. I haven't been sleeping for two weeks. I'm a little tired. But he's just a great horse.

Q. Your level of confidence has been so high. Not just, it seems, because of the merits of the horse, but because of whatever situation the horse can be in. Can you discuss now that confidence and why you felt like it wasn't a case of saying, you know, things in horse racing can happen? Can you just talk about how this might have been a little different than that?

JOHN SADLER: Well, I mean, this is just -- I mean, how do you describe greatness? This is a rare horse. It happens every 20 or 30 years. One of the best American racehorses we've seen in a long, long time. And I'm talking back to Secretariat, Seattle Slew. You go through the list.

What I've tried to be is a good steward to him, be fair with him. And if you're good with your horses, they're good with you.

THE MODERATOR: Kosta Hronis joining us as well. We were talking earlier, obviously this horse just so impressive. With all the partners and this incredible team that you've had behind him, just take us through a little bit the team behind Flightline.

KOSTA HRONIS: Well, the team behind Flightline, I've said this before and I'm going to say it again in front of the world, as blessed as the partnership is to be all together as the partners, to have a horse like Flightline in our lifetime is just unbelievable and great.

But, more importantly, Flightline is so blessed to have John Sadler and his team because the patience he had with Flightline and what he did to teach him, he was a fast horse all the time. He was quick and fast. And he wanted to run full blast all the time.

John, Juan Leyva, his assistant, and team, they turned this horse into a racehorse. And he's the champion today who he is because of John Sadler.

(Applause.)

THE MODERATOR: The question that everybody, of course, is asking, and a decision to be made, is it possible,

will we see him next year?

KOSTA HRONIS: We're in a partnership. This isn't Hronis Racing. We're in a partnership. We're very respectful people and we respect the partnership.

We'll all get together and discuss it at a later time and decide. We'll always do what's best by the horse. I can promise you that. We'll get together and we'll just, even-even, and just decide together how we want to do this.

THE MODERATOR: And so from here today, where does he go right now, after he leaves?

JOHN SADLER: Back down to Rice Road, have a good dinner down there. I'll be there in the morning to check him out. And then we'll let him tell us what the best thing is.

Q. Could you put into words the emotions that we just saw you feeling, like what is behind that kind of reaction?

JOHN SADLER: For me, it's a culmination of your life's work. When you've worked with horses your whole life, just most trainers don't get a horse like this. I'm just feeling very blessed.

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