

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Friday, November 3, 2023

Arcadia, California, USA

Santa Anita Park

Aidan O'Brien

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Aidan O'Brien with us, trainer of Unquestionable, winner of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf. We just had Ryan Moore in here talking about this horse and what a great trip he had, but also really about how this horse just seems so mature and coming along in the stable. Can you tell us a little bit about him?

AIDAN O'BRIEN: Yeah, I think last time was the first time he was up to 7 furlongs. We thought that would suit him. Ryan just felt that he got there a little bit quicker than he wanted to, but he was very happy with the run.

We're very happy with his work up to today. He's been working lovely. We thought he might be a miler as a 3-year-old, but we were hoping that he could get away with the mile around here. Ryan gave him a beautiful ride.

No, delighted really.

THE MODERATOR: You also ran second with Mountain Bear. Big effort from him as well. So a horse like Unquestionable, and we also heard from Ryan just sort of the embarrassment of riches at the 2-year-olds in your barn. Where do you go next, and how do you plan that out?

AIDAN O'BRIEN: Yeah, he looks like he could be a French Guineas type horse, so that's what we will probably train him for, something like that.

Then the spring we'll kind of clear up the picture. He's obviously a lovely horse to look to be going forward with next year. He had a few runs maybe that wasn't up to scratch, but we had good reasons for them all in our own mind, so we were happy about that.

Traveled over well. Steven has been riding him and was very happy. Yvonne looks after him. They were all very happy. We were looking forward to seeing him run.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Did you get an update on Mountain Bear that was taken off --

AIDAN O'BRIEN: I think he has an undisplaced condylar, a condylar fracture. That's a little fracture down into his cannon. It's not displaced, so that's good.

Usually what happens, those kind of things, it happens a lot. So he can get a cast on him for four weeks and should be fine. He's down in the barn and settled in now.

So they're unbelievably quick to pick him up and bring him down. He did no damage. So that's all very good news really.

Q. Then other quick thing about the scratch of River Tiber. Can you elaborate on what led to that at all? This morning, the scratch.

AIDAN O'BRIEN: We were sorry to see him. We were sorry to see him go. Listen, rules are rules, and we thought he was ready to run. Obviously the vets didn't agree, but it's their job.

Obviously whatever the authorities decide happens, and we accept that. That's the way it was. There will be plenty of other days. It was going to be the last run for the season anyway, so that was just the way it was really, yeah.

Q. Just on that, what were your expectations regarding River Tiber versus Unquestionable coming here? I think you were looking forward to running River Tiber. Is that fair?

AIDAN O'BRIEN: We just felt -- we just felt that River Tiber was in a different place than he was for his last two runs. Yeah, his work has been excellent. Everything had been very good with him.

Yeah, we felt that this horse will be second to him, and that's what we thought. You dream and think, but obviously when you go out there, it doesn't always happen.

That's what we thought would happen.

Listen, delighted this horse won the way he did.

Q. Just one final one on River Tiber. Is he showing any signs of lameless now, and have you seen him?

AIDAN O'BRIEN: The vets thought he was a little bit stiff this morning. Listen, obviously I know myself, I don't wake up the same every morning, and he was a bit stiff.

I think time has gone by, we wouldn't even bat an eye at it. I think with all the hysteria and everything that's gone on, nobody wanted to take any chance. We respected that.

It is the way it is. I would say he will probably be perfect tomorrow morning, but yeah, he was a little bit stiff this morning, and nobody wanted to take a chance, so that was fine.

Q. How do you plan for this particular race -- (off microphone)

AIDAN O'BRIEN: We go with the best horses always that we have at the time. You need a horse that handles fast ground here. They need to have speed, and they need to get a mile.

So you need a very good horse to win any of these races. We always hope that we have horses in good enough shape to be able to come and compete because this time of year it's the best race, and you get fast ground, but you just need very good horses.

Q. Mountain Bear, will you stay here in the U.S. for a while?

AIDAN O'BRIEN: Usually with a condylar, he will have a month's rest, and that will heal very quick. It's an undisplaced. If you look at the thing, it's only a little hairline down the front of his cannon. John and James and everyone -- all the vets here will have him perfect in a month.

THE MODERATOR: We thank Aidan.

AIDAN O'BRIEN: I would imagine he won't travel until they're 100% perfect.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time. Congratulations. We look forward to tomorrow as well.

AIDAN O'BRIEN: Thank you. Appreciate it.

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