

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 4, 2023

Arcadia, California, USA

Santa Anita Park

Irada Ortiz

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We've got Irada Ortiz here. Thank you so much for taking the time to come. Been busy all day. Three wins today on this Breeders' Cup World Championship. We'll start with Goodnight Olive, one of the back-to-back winners of the Breeders' Cup. Once again, she drew the 1 post. Was that a concern at all for you as far as the trip she might get today?

IRADA ORTIZ: It was always right there, a little consideration, but I was so confident on the filly because I know she always broke good. You can see all her gates that she jump in front of, either first or second out of there. She broke so clear today, and I loved that.

After that, the other two horses go, and I stuck right behind them and was available to hit the clear by passing the half mile, and she do the rest.

THE MODERATOR: Pretty confident after when you were kind of going down the back side and heading into the turn that you were in a good spot?

IRADA ORTIZ: Yes, especially when I was able to smooth without fighting too much with her and without asking, without taking a hold. And she was moving so smooth going to the quarter pole. She gave me that confidence when I asked, and she was there for me.

THE MODERATOR: We'll talk about Elite Power next, winner of the Breeders' Cup Sprint. Again, a back-to-back winner in the Breeders' Cup Sprint. A horse that, when we spoke with Bill Mott, he said that he was closer today, but that was your idea was to warm him up and you really wanted to have him sharper.

IRADA ORTIZ: Bill had the horse ready, was 100 percent. After that, the horse deserves a lot of credit, such a champion. I did warm him up pretty good today because I see the last couple days he's been hard to close from off the pace and come from way back. I think the only horse that did it was Cody's Wish.



So I don't want to take any chances. I know I have a good horse. I know, if I'm able, I told Bill in the paddock I would love to be close without using too much horse. So when I warm him up, I wait for the pony pretty good. He said, go ahead and do whatever you think is best for the horse.

The horse jump good, get me close, and he do the rest to be honest. He was traveling so good going to the quarter pole. He give me a great feeling. That one gave me a great feeling on the quarter pole. I know he going to start running whenever I ask him.

THE MODERATOR: Fantastic victory, again, for him. Now the big one, the Breeders' Cup Classic and White Abarrio. You rode him in the Whitney Stakes at Saratoga for Rick Dutrow. Just kind of tell us about that race and then just the process of getting to today.

Everybody was very confident in this horse, the team, and I know you were as well.

IRADA ORTIZ: The whole team, they were so positive, and they have so much positive energy. I think they transferred that to me and to the horse because they was only worried about their horse. They don't care about any other horse in the race. They were talking how good the horse was doing, and they was right.

Everything happened right, the way we thought it was going to happen. The other two horses go, and I want to be third right behind them, and I was able to save all that ground in the first turn close to the rail, hit the back side, and then I look, and nobody was there. He really wants to be on the clear, I think, the horse.

I was able to get in that position without using horse, without fighting the position or whatever. Very smooth. After that, I just let the horse be happy, and he respond very well.

He start working on it. He caused me a little bit to make the lead, but he keep coming, he continue. He deserve a lot of credit. He keep coming. He keep trying.

THE MODERATOR: On these big Breeders' Cup Championship days, you've had a long relationship with trainer Chad Brown, who you won on Goodnight Olive, and then Bill Mott, but Rick Dutrow, kind of a new relationship for you as a jockey. But with a horseman like Rick, who is just a phenomenal horseman, kind of tell us about the different relationships there.

IRAD ORTIZ: I see a lot of trainers every day, and I have to text all of them. It's not only those three. I mean, I'm riding a lot for them, but I'm happy to ride for a lot of trainers, and that's what I love. They give me a huge support, to be honest.

Everywhere I go, they support me, and that's one thing that I have to thank everyone, from long time in my career, they've been supporting me and give me some good chances and allow me to keep learning, keep going, keep learning. Every time they give me a chance everywhere I go, I learn from that, from every horse I get on.

I mean, it's great. Rick is a great horseman. But the horse -- I think they don't give that much credit to that horse, to White Abarrio, because he's been consistent since he was 2. Even with Saffie, to be honest, the horse win the Florida Derby, and he deserve a lot of credit, the horse. I don't think they give it to him, but he deserve it.

THE MODERATOR: The owners had the same comment as well, that the horse deserves more.

Speaking of deserving a lot, Breeders' Cup World Championship, you with your fifth Bill Shoemaker Award. It's got to be very special to you. These days are so big on the world stage.

IRAD ORTIZ: It means a lot. Just we worked so hard, and we wanted to win for a long time. That trophy means a lot to me, means more than anything, because you have to try every single race. When you win that trophy, that means you try on every horse you get on. So that means a lot to me.

I have to thank my agent, Steve Rushing, for doing a great job, and all the owners and trainers for supporting me.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Irad. Very well deserved.

IRAD ORTIZ: Thank you.

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