

# Breeders' Cup World Championships

Friday, November 1, 2024

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Fairgrounds

## Michael Banahan

## Brad H. Cox

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: A big congratulations to Immersive, winner of the NetJets Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies. She's also Breeders' Cup Challenge winner. We've got Michael Banahan, Director of Bloodstock for Darley America, representing Godolphin, and trainer Brad Cox. Michael, three great fillies, what can you say about her, this race was just dynamic.

MICHAEL BANAHAN: Not much to say. So difficult to win three Grade 1s. So difficult to win one Grade 1. But to win three of them on the track like that and in an impressive fashion as she's done, as we saw today, the further, the better. So we have an awful lot to look forward to as well.

Being by Nyquist made it that extra special for us today. It's so grateful for our founder, Godolphin's founder Sheikh Mohammed, to put us in the position so we can raise horses like that for him and Brad can train horses like that for him as well. And I know it gives him great enjoyment to win on the biggest stage, and there's no bigger stage than the Breeders' Cup.

THE MODERATOR: Brad, the fractions were extremely fast, but were you concerned at all? Looked like she was taking a while to get in gear.

BRAD H. COX: Maybe at the half-mile pole. The horse she was sitting there with -- I can't remember exactly who -- Scottish Lassie was sitting outside of her, and she started to inch forward a little bit.

Got maybe a touch concerned that she maybe is not handling the track for whatever reason. But they scooted away from her a little bit. Then obviously still looking up at the fractions, I thought this race has to fall apart. Actually, at that point, my concern was someone could be coming behind her.

Then she started picking it up. When they straightened up,

I thought she had dead aim on the leaders, and didn't appear as though anyone was closing in beside her.

But big effort. Once again, big pedigree. Big-time stamina there. She always acted as if she would handle all three turns. She showed that last time at Keeneland, and she showed it once again today. Very proud of her.

THE MODERATOR: With the way she's won her races, the ability to overcome a lot. Looking forward obviously to next year, and what is kind of the plan going forward with her and maybe her road to the Kentucky Oaks?

MICHAEL BANAHAN: Look, we would love to think that that's a possibility. We know when to turn over the calendar year, it's a new year for everyone again, and I'm sure there will be other fillies that will put their hand up and be big challengers as well.

But we can't ask her to do any more than she's already done already. As Brad said, the further the goal, the better. Looks like she has plenty of stamina. She's quick enough to lay off quick fractions as well.

So tactically she probably can get in a good spot in the race as well. But I think stamina will be her forte as well, and she grinds it out pretty good. To win from going three-quarters on the maiden win to what she did today, we couldn't be happier. Yeah, of course, we're going to be excited about next year, for sure.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about the Godolphin master plan that's led you to the point where everything -- you seem to be clicking on all cylinders, horses are running great, winning big, prominent races. How long was the time frame for this to all come together?**

MICHAEL BANAHAN: Well, as again Godolphin's founder Sheikh Mohammed has been in this game a long time and he's procured enough nice broodmares over the years.

Sometimes we've hit peaks and sometimes we've hit valleys with them. But the good pedigrees always come back to the fore again.

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This filly's grand-dam was a very good race mare, just a little bit of a disappointing broodmare, but then her daughter produces this triple Grade 1 winner, Breeders' Cup winner and champion-elect.

We've had a really nice broodmare band. That's where it starts from. We've been put in that fortunate position by the collection that Sheikh Mohammed has developed over the year to be able to put us in this position.

He's done that globally, in Europe as well, and we'll see a lot of really nice home-bred horses that will run over the weekend that Charlie Appleby trains from England as well.

We've got a few domestic horses here as well. We liked that filly today. We're just fortunate to be in that position, and it takes a lot of time and effort to develop those families, but we're seeing the fruition of it at the moment. And we're in a great lucky vein of form. We've seen that the last couple of years.

**Q. Brad, you've had a lot of really good two-year-olds over the years, but to have three grade one wins on this filly already going into the three-year-old season, where does she compare to the other two-year-old fillies you've had?**

BRAD H. COX: I think two-year-old fillies, she's the best we've had. To accomplish what she has, we've not had one win three Grade 1s at two.

Excited about what she accomplished, proud of her, and looking forward to next year, but she definitely bring it home in regards to two-year-old fillies.

**Q. Brad, when you saddled this horse at Saratoga for that maiden race this summer, did you have any idea what you might have?**

BRAD H. COX: We thought she was very good. She came in from Ocala. From the time she started breezing, she appeared to be very good. Had speed, stamina. And we moved her from Keeneland to Churchill.

She showed us enough to put her on a van. Several people have asked me, oh, you must not have liked her. You don't put a horse on a van and send them to Saratoga if you don't like them when you're a Kentucky-based operation. We liked her a good bit.

I can't explain why she was 10-to-1. I didn't bet on her. I wish I would have, but with all that being said, she stamped herself as a very good horse from the start.

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