

Breeders' Cup World Championships

Saturday, November 1, 2025

Del Mar, California, USA

Del Mar Fairgrounds

Distaff

Garrett O'Rourke

Bill Mott

Junior Alvarado

Press Conference



run a horse in the Spinster. Unfortunately, we didn't win that, but it was a good prep for this race. I think it got her two turns.

We looked at the fields, and we just decided this was the route we were going to go, and I think we made that decision without too much discussion really. I think Garrett was on the same page, and it just worked out.

Did we plan on being on the lead today? We thought that looking at the paper that there was probably two or three other horses that could and would be and probably should be maybe on the lead with a good break.

Our filly broke really well, and I think Junior did a -- look, when the gate opens, they've got to make the decisions, and he made the decision not to wrangle her back or get in a wrestling match with her, and it turned out to be the right decision. She just kept rolling.

THE MODERATOR: Junior, that seems like a good way to get on to you. Take us through the race. First off, just the first 50, 100 yards, what made you decide let's go here?

JUNIOR ALVARADO: She broke very sharp today, and like going by the wire, and I say to myself, we're in a good position. We're moving along pretty quick, but at that point, I said I can't drag her back and put her behind all the other horses that seem so slow at this point. Let me not just get in her way. She's a filly, so she can get a little upset if you try to make her do something.

I felt, even though we were moving quick, she was doing it nicely and easy for her at the same time. When we were halfway through the first turn, she completely relaxed. She turned down, and she was just traveling beautiful the whole way. Once we pass the half mile pole, I kind of didn't want to get excited, but I could feel that I still had a lot of filly underneath me.

Right when we turned for home, she explode again, and it just was a magnificent performance for her.

THE MODERATOR: Garrett, one for you. How satisfying

Distaff

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the post-race media room. Garrett O'Rourke representing Juddmonte Farms, Junior Alvarado, and Bill Mott.

Bill, I'm going to start with you. Has this week been a microcosm of what it's like to be a horse trainer?

BILL MOTT: That's a big word. I'll tell you, it's been a mixed bag of emotions. We were really disappointed, but it didn't take long really to accept what happened to Sovereignty. I think everybody that's connected has been through it, and I've been through it. We knew when that happened that he wouldn't be able to compete, not at the level that he would need to.

It seems as though he's recovering well, but he's really not the story here. He's not the story for this race. This one is all about Scylla and about Junior and the Juddmonte connections.

Today we were a great team. Scylla did it for us. She's from a family that I've been lucky enough to have other siblings with, with us, and she's out of a mare that was a champion for us. It's really great to be a part of that and to be able to carry on the tradition.

THE MODERATOR: One more about her. She's the kind of mare that could run 7/8 or 1 1/8 mile. What made you decide the Distaff was the right race for her?

BILL MOTT: A couple different things. We thought the sprint was coming up a real deep field, and we thought we wanted to run in the Spinster. Juddmonte always likes to

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is this for you? Close Hatches was a champion mare, daughter of her. She wins the race that Close Hatches was second in one time to Beholder. Having a homebred win race like this, how satisfying is that for Juddmonte?

GARRETT O'ROURKE: Obviously that's what we do and what we aim for. And it is tremendously satisfying, I think even more so with this filly because I don't know how many times Bill and I have discussed it, we've had a lot of Grade 1 winners over the years that I felt weren't nearly as good a racehorse as Scylla was, and she showed up and ran fantastic races behind some very exceptional horses.

It was disappointing that we hadn't gotten it done, but if you're going to do it, what a day to do it.

Q. Hi, Junior. Once she got on the lead, can you describe what she felt like? It sure did look like she was very comfortable.

JUNIOR ALVARADO: Like I said before, I think, when we passed -- we were going through half of the first turn, she just come back to me, and she completely relaxed, which was I think the key of that race, when she came back to me.

She was just traveling beautiful the whole way. I haven't even looked at the pace, but if you asked me, I would have guessed probably 22 in the first part and maybe 47, just the way she felt like she slowed down the second part. Once again, when I hit past the 1/2 mile pole, I was pretty excited with what I have underneath me. Like I said, she was very good today.

Q. Garrett, obviously Juddmonte's developed a lot of tremendous families. What can you say about this family and specifically its success on dirt?

GARRETT O'ROURKE: We've tried to make a -- consciously tried to make a little bit of a switch for the American operation to go more to dirt horses so that we could target days like this. God, I can remember the day she was born. When you're working days and nights and going out for foalings and you get disappointments, and horses, some of them don't make it at all.

I think what warms every day for us is when you get something that you planned, you put all the time and effort into. When she was born, I can remember horses like Empire Maker, where you just look at her and you go, God, that's exactly as we scripted it. That's exactly what we want.

Then a lot of them get injured and they don't make it for different reasons. Close Hatches has never had a bad

day. She always looked magnificent. She always had a lovely temperament, and she became a champion. Now Tacitus, Batten Down, Scylla -- is this wood? There's more to come. She has some more to come that are just lovely. She's just a gift that keeps on giving.

Now more fillies that can make maybe 20 years time, people will say about the great Close Hatches' family. That's what I would hope because she's definitely going in that direction.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, congratulations, a nice way for Junior and Bill to end the week.

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