

# 149th Preakness Stakes Media Conference

Saturday, May 18, 2024  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA  
Pimlico Race Course

**D. Wayne Lukas**  
**Jaime Torres**  
**Michael Behrens**  
Media Conference

SAMANTHA PERRY: We're going to go ahead and get started. If everybody can just get settled for just a moment.

We'll go ahead and get started. First, please direct the questions to me and who you want it directed to. I'll open the floor.

## Q. (No microphone.)

D. WAYNE LUKAS: People ask that all the time, and the last one is always the sweetest. The last girl you dance with is the one you take home.

The thing about it is every time we've been lucky to win one of these that it's been with a different client, and so that is what makes it special. That's what makes this one special. 2,000 people plus. The one before that was a different client, different client.

That's what I get paid for, to let them live the dream.

SAMANTHA PERRY: This is for Wayne Lukas. I'm just going to repeat so everyone can hear.

## Q. Have you ever had a Winners Circle with that many clients?

D. WAYNE LUKAS: Boy, I'll tell you what. I didn't think we'd get up there. They really turned them loose. I've been in some cattle drives that were more organized than that. It was really chaotic.

Looking around and everybody hugging. One of the things that was very significant to me today -- and maybe it's because I'm getting a little bit older -- but as I came out of the grandstand and out across the racetrack, every one of the guys that were in that race stopped and hugged me and give me a handshake.



That meant more to me than any single thing. Baffert, Kenny McPeck, right down the line.

(Phone ringing).

This is probably Bill Gates, so I maybe should take it. (Laughter).

How about this? Do you think I'm not 88 years old?

SAMANTHA PERRY: He's got a flip phone.

Okay, for jockey Jaime Torres.

**Q. Jaime, from Puerto Rico, congratulations to the entire team; amazing victory. Your parents are here. I saw you hugging them. What does this mean to you and to your family?**

JAIME TORRES: For us it means a lot. We have no words to describe it. We are just blessed by God. Blessed by God, and we are help -- like we are help for a lot of people. And thank you, Wayne.

SAMANTHA PERRY: This is for Mike Behrens.

## Q. What does this mean for your business?

MICHAEL BEHRENS: This means everything for our business. What we tried to do four years ago is to allow anybody the biggest thrill of winning the biggest races, and just we had 2,570 people experience one of the greatest thrills in racing. You saw the energy out there. There was so much excitement, there were tears. My voice is almost gone. I think half the 2,500 peoples' voice is gone.

To have done this with such and incredible team, it's unbelievable, and I think that horse racing is such an amazing sport. Ownership is such a great thrill. For this to unlock that and let people know anybody can participate and have this kind of moment, I think it's going to be big for the business, it's big for racing, and I'm super excited to be a part of it.



**Q. How many of those people were here today?**

MICHAEL BEHRENS: I don't know how many showed up, but we had 512 people enter to win the owner's privileges. The way the MyRacehorse system works is that whatever we get by the track, and was unbelievably generous in hooking us up with some great perks. We lotteried them off on the app for a lucky owner, and we had 512 people that entered that plus their guests, so could've been anywhere from 500 and 1,000 people that were out here today.

SAMANTHA PERRY: I actually have some stats on MyRacehorse shares. So \$127 a share was for Seize the Grey here; 5,000 shares were offered, and that sold out in a matter of weeks. There are 2,570 owners of Seize the Grey, who are now Preakness-winning owners, between 42 states and 48 owners from the state of Maryland.

That's a lot of people to please, Wayne.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: That's the beautiful part of it. That's what we get paid to do. It is really, really special. It's also special that I was able to tap into this young man here. He's responded absolutely beautiful.

He rode a few horses for me at Churchill and rode a few just general horses, nothing real special. I thought he had a lot of talent and I loved working with him, but I really feel good about taking him to this level.

A couple of weeks -- I'm going to tell on you. A couple of weeks ago he rode one Not So Pretty, and I followed him all the way through the tunnel, all the way up the steps to the jocks' room, and I chewed him out.

I said, you'll be back in Puerto Rico picking oranges if you're going to ride like that. (Laughter.)

I know that when he turned for home, that was echoing in his ears (laughter), that he'd better get down and scrubbing because I think it really hit home. (Laughter.)

SAMANTHA PERRY: We've got a question from upstairs. Two questions for Wayne.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: Must be doing a book.

**Q. You're known as the Coach. The question is for Wayne here. What kind of coaching tactics -- when you say you coached Jaime Torres into this race and this win, what was the advice you gave him?**

D. WAYNE LUKAS: The question is what do I do as I'm coaching him?

SAMANTHA PERRY: Yeah.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: Well, I don't get into the mechanics of riding so much, but I get into I want them to dedicate themselves beyond -- I want him to be better than he thinks he can be. I always push that to him. I'm going to push you. I want you to do more than you actually think you can do and I want you to be better than you think you can be. I want you to really, really dedicate yourself.

If you don't do that, get a job bagging groceries at the grocery store, because this is a tough, tough business and very competitive. I have to represent a number of owners, so when I put him on, I'm making a commitment that he's okay.

Now, I didn't ask Mike. I didn't ask the 2,700 people whether we should ride him, but he rode him so well -- he rode him once before and won on him, and then again in the Pat Day Mile was the second win on him, and this was now the third. He obviously fits the horse.

SAMANTHA PERRY: When you talk about the strategy, Wayne, to go to the lead? Or was that the strategy?

D. WAYNE LUKAS: We didn't have any strategy per se. I think you can over-coach a little bit on these riders. I didn't want to -- especially Jaime. If I had told him I wanted you to lay third or fourth or back mid-pack or something, as bad as I chewed his ass the first time, I think he'd have probably tried to do that. And here all of a sudden he breaks, and he's on the lead cruising.

But when he got on that lead cruising, what happens as a trainer, you study these horses in the morning and you get a feel for their motion and how they're getting over the ground. When you watch those races, it gets analytical for you. You start thinking, is he handling it pretty well? Is he getting over the ground like he normally does, or is he struggling?

When he hit the 1/2 mile pole, I turned to my wife Laura, and I said, watch out, we're home free. I didn't think he'd -- after having that Pat Day Mile under his belt I didn't think he'd back up one iota.

**Q. Wayne, I don't need to tell you, probably not a ton more opportunities to race on this track. Throughout the years, you've personally supervised the workouts, come here early and watch all the workouts in the morning. Is there something about that process that you see after coming here so many years?**

D. WAYNE LUKAS: You talking about me personally?



**Q. Yes.**

D. WAYNE LUKAS: That's what gets me up in the morning. I just told the ESPN reporter we've got outstanding 2-year-olds. We are loaded next year, and I'm already looking forward to them.

I can't wait to get home and start breezing them. Watch out for Saratoga; we're going to be awful tough.

That's what it's all about, getting up and -- if you have a passion you eliminate all the excuses. That's how it works. You get up early. You go without a meal. You drive. You go without sleep. As long as you got the passion.

Don't let that sofa pull you down. It's a little easy when that alarm goes off to say, oh, my God, I don't know if I really want to do this today. Erase that.

The most important decision you'll ever make in your life is your attitude decision. Make it early and make the right one. This is a pep talk. I didn't mean we were going in the locker room.

**Q. This is for Jaime Torres. This is your first Grade I win with the same horse that gave you first Grade I Stakes win. How does it feel for you? Talk a little bit about what the coach mentioned. Did your horse work out just so he wanted to take the lead?**

JAIME TORRES: Can you guys imagine when you are watching a movie and you have this horse, like it's the main character in the movie and you see the last race and he wins and you feel that emotion, but just think like it's real. I cannot explain it.

This horse means a lot for me. Thank you guys for giving me the opportunity. It means a lot.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: I had phone calls from about six agents that after he won the Pat Day Mile, it's a tough business because they said, well, you know, you're not going to -- you're going to change riders for the big one, aren't you? I said, not a chance. He's staying right there.

**Q. Just going to ask as you're watching them go down the back stretch when they're chasing rather than pressing him?**

D. WAYNE LUKAS: I thought his action was perfect. I was concerned this morning about the weather like so many.

Actually, Mystik Dan ran such a sensational race in the

mud at Arkansas that I told Baffert, I said, we're going to have hell beating him today. With this track, it fits him to a T, and we're going to have trouble with him because of that.

I thought the gods of racing were helping him. But when we were cruising down the back side I felt his motion and everything, and I knew he was dead fit after coming off of the Pat Day Mile. I love that prep. I actually gave Just Steel a mile work before the Kentucky Derby also.

Once you feel like they're getting over the ground I didn't think there was any chance he was going to -- I knew they were going to run at us, but I thought we had a great chance to dictate the race from the 1/2 mile home.

**Q. Thoughts on the Belmont?**

D. WAYNE LUKAS: When you win, you right away turn the page and say, where's the next one? But I want to look at him a little bit. I have had such good luck with Arrogate. I had Secret Oath in the Oaks two years ago now, and I'm beginning to feel like Seize the Grey can run 1 1/2 mile, and this year it's 1 1/4 mile. I think, if they're going to beat him, they maybe should extend it back out a bit.

If we go, we'll be tough. He'll get 1 1/4 mile. He would have gotten 1 1/4 mile today.

You never know how many are going to go on, fresh ones. Chad Brown is sitting there probably, Todd Pletcher, it's going to be a whole different field. We'll analyze everything. If I can get Mike's permission to have all the votes.

SAMANTHA PERRY: Jaime, whenever you first started, did you ever imagine just coming from Puerto Rico and going to the jockey school that this is where you would be now, winning The Preakness so young in your riding career?

JAIME TORRES: I would say like when I was in college my parents, they raised me very good and they wanted me to like graduate from the college, and you know if something happened, have something where I can hold on myself. When I quit, I really think like, if I'm going to quit, I've got to make it.

I haven't rested since then. I've been working very hard, very hard. Not thinking like it was going to happen, but working for it. You can't think, oh, that is going to happen. You've just got to work. Work and work, and it will come.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: Jaime, do you know that I lived, and one of my greatest friends is the greatest Puerto Rican



rider ever? Angel Cordero. Angel and I lived together out at Santa Anita. If you can just follow in his footsteps and his desire and so forth, you're going to be just fine.

JAIME TORRES: If there's someone that is very dedicate to racing, it's Angel Cordero. He sits at home watching every single race with me sitting beside, and he says, hey, you've got to do this, you've got to do that. There's a lot of people. Garcia, he knows.

**Q. You said you had a great crop of 2-year-olds. I know you're not looking past Belmont, but what would it mean to win next year's Preakness given it may be the last Preakness?**

D. WAYNE LUKAS: Well, the good news is it's not going to be the last one. I talked to the Governor briefly on the stand up there, and I don't know the details, but this has been a special place for not only me, but a lot of trainers and people.

We enjoy coming here. The hospitality is second to none. They know they've got a facility that's probably not as perfect, but they really go all out to make sure everybody is taken care of and it's a great spot.

There's something about The Preakness, that it comes -- the intensity and the attention and everything between the trainers and everything drops down a little bit. By putting us all in the same barn, sharing the same locker room and everything, the camaraderie comes together a lot more with the other trainers and everything.

So this place becomes special. And I can speak, I think, for Bob Baffert -- I'm only one behind him; I warned him already. This place has been a lot of fun for all of us. It really has.

SAMANTHA PERRY: Wayne, it's been 11 years since your last Oxbow winner. Was there any point between the 11 years and now that you thought this wouldn't happen again for you, The Preakness win?

D. WAYNE LUKAS: Again, I say this: You're only as good as your clientele. If the clientele will back you, give you a chance to get in that yearling market, and that's where we've always built our stable in the yearling market, and give us a chance to purchase the horses we like, there's no reason why we shouldn't be here.

Now, what happened to me in that 11-year span, I lost Bill Young of Overbrook, I lost Gene Klein of the San Diego Chargers, I lost Bob Lewis, and you can't replace those kind of people.

Now, along came a few of my Texas buddies and cattlemen in John Bellinger and Brian Coelho, and they've stepped up. They were here today. They own Just Steel. They were 100 percent behind this win today, I could tell, but they're going to be back. They'll be all right.

MICHAEL BEHRENS: We'll be back too. We'll definitely be back too.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: He's got one already they sent me the other day, right? Has it arrived yet?

MICHAEL BEHRENS: Not yet. We'll get it to you soon.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: Don't keep it too long. You guys can screw up an iron bull. (Laughter).

**Q. Michael, 2020 it was so close. How it feels for you this victory, and what's next for MyRacehorse?**

MICHAEL BEHRENS: You're right. So we were here in 2020. I remember sitting up in the grandstand, and when Authentic came on the outside of Swiss Skydiver, and I thought for sure we were going by. It just felt we were going by.

Kenny and Robby had their horse ready to go, and we couldn't pass them and it hurt. So it kind of felt good to come back four years later, and we beat Kenny. Robby was on the morning. A little sweet revenge.

It was great to come off The Derby win and come into The Preakness and be so close. When this all came about and I talked to Mr. Lukas, and he said this horse is ready, we need to go. Just to be able to kind of turn the tables and maybe get that win, when Jaime was bringing him home the way he was bringing him home, I couldn't believe it. He just kept going and going. They weren't catching him.

I had a little bit of that fear in the stretch run that I couldn't quite pull it off, but Jaime did a great job. Mr. Lukas had him ready to go and we got the win.

D. WAYNE LUKAS: We'd have been running The Derby if we'd have had the points, I could say that. It would give that many people a chance to have a Derby entry. But if we'd have entered, we can't double enter in Kentucky. So if we'd have entered The Derby and ended up 21st, which we would have, we wouldn't have been able to run in the Pat Day Mile.

So Mike and I had to make a decision to skip The Derby, go to the Pat Day Mile, or we wouldn't have run anywhere. We'd have had to sit the whole Saturday out. I firmly believe that the Pat Day Mile put us in position to win this

today.

SAMANTHA PERRY: Can you just take us through the trip from the break. The horse broke well. Were you intent on getting the lead, or what was the game plan there for you?

JAIME TORRES: I was going to do whatever Imagination was go to do. I knew he was going to go to the lead. I think we looked at each other, and he said, well, you go, and I went. So I took the lead.

I mean, he's such an amazing horse. He just relaxed for me, and he felt the other horses coming close and he was just looking at them. As soon as I asked, I had a lot of horse. That was like from the 1/4 to the wire, he gave me everything.

**Q. Thank you very much for the jockey that just have two years riding that started -- that been a baby boy, like a small boy with a small horse from Puerto Rico. This means the world. I just want to say thank you very much, Michael, to Coach Wayne Lukas for coaching him, we're blessed for this opportunity.**

D. WAYNE LUKAS: That's what it's all about.

MICHAEL BEHRENS: Your son is a talented jockey. He's a great young man. We're happy to have him. Thank you.

JAIME TORRES: Can I say something? I want to say happy birthday to my agent.

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