

Pegasus World Cup Invitational

Saturday, January 28, 2023
Hallandale Beach, Florida, USA
Gulfstream Park

Bill Mott

Bruce Lunsford

Junior Alvarado

Mike Maker

Carl Fiebig

Media Conference

BRIAN NADEAU: Bill, I'll start with you.

This horse has brought you a lot of different places, won some important races. Talk a little bit about coming into this race today and what you saw out there. He was dominant out there.

BILL MOTT: Originally, we were thinking of going to the Cigar Mile with him, and October, end of October, he had a foot abscess. So we had to scrap all our plans. I told Bruce, I said, well, we're going to miss that. Let's go to Florida.

We had the option of the Harlan's Holiday and then the Pegasus. We didn't really feel we had him quite right for the Harlan's Holiday a month ago. We just waited, and Bruce was fine with running straight away in the Pegasus.

The horse was obviously fine with it. He allowed us to get some good training in him. We had a good series of works in him, and he was feeling good.

We went to Junior for the race. His previous jockey selected another horse, and we went to Junior, and he's done awfully well for us this year. Not only the Pegasus, he won a Breeders' Cup for us, and many other big races.

I really got to give him a lot of credit. He rode the horse perfectly. We talked about it beforehand, how the race might shape up, and he rode him just the way we scripted it. It turned out great.

BRIAN NADEAU: Let's go to jockey Junior Alvarado. First and foremost, Junior, congratulations. You've had a lot of



success over the years with Bill. Talk about your trip today. I couldn't imagine you scripted it any better.

JUNIOR ALVARADO: Definitely. We started the race a little bit -- started the race myself too looking at horses with speed in the race. To me, that's what I wanted to do in the race, but sometimes when you leave the gates, plans change.

I mean, today I think everything was meant to be. It worked out great. We get out or the run, and the horse put me in a great spot all the way around. When I asked it to run, he was there for me. Gave me a helluva run from the quarter pole to the wire.

BRIAN NADEAU: Owner Bruce Lunsford is here with us. Bruce, he was on the Triple Crown trail and did some good things. Now as a 6-year-old, winning the Pegasus World Cup. Talk a little bit about where he was and where he came from and to today.

BRUCE LUNSFORD: The one thing, Bill and I go way back. You may not know that, but we go way back. I have great confidence in him. When he felt we could run, continue to run, and then when we had these little stumbles getting here, I was completely comfortable. We were okay. Nothing to lose. Let's go for it.

Junior took the ride this time. He's never ridden the horse before. He gave him a ride exactly like Bill hoped he would, and I knew when they turned for home, I saw him on the out and said, this race is over. I was just trying to hold myself together until we got to the finish line.

I'll tell you, it's great to have people in anything you do in life that are as good as Bill and Junior was today. I love that. That's more important to me than anything else I do, except when my kids score a winning goal or do something big time or I get another grandchild. That's pretty high caliber at that point, I'd say.

BRIAN NADEAU: Let's switch gears. We'll go over to Mike Maker, and we've got Carl Fiebig as well.

Mike, we talked earlier in the week, trainer Mike Maker,



and I asked you how are you going to win this race, and you said wire to wire. It didn't quite go down that way, but in the end you got there.

MIKE MAKER: I thought you were talking about King Cause. He couldn't quite make the leap.

BRIAN NADEAU: Talk a little bit about the trip at least and how he delivered and ran down a really good horse in Ivar.

MIKE MAKER: The plan was to go to the lead, but looked like a couple of other riders had the same plan. Irad used his own judgment, went to plan B, and it worked out.

BRIAN NADEAU: Carl Fiebig is here in part for the Three Diamonds Farm. Carl, talk a little bit about this course, the progression to get to this point today, and winning a race like this.

CARL FIEBIG: I think you give the credit to Mike and his team. Jordan and Kirk have had a lot of success out of the Fasig July sale, and Atone is another one of those. We go to July with the hopes of finding the next cross-border Atone every year and let Mike develop them.

It's been a great run. I wish Jordan and Kirk could be here today. They're traveling on business, but what a day and thankful to Mike and the entire team for such a great accomplishment.

BRIAN NADEAU: We'll open it up to anybody with any questions out there. Go ahead.

Q. (No microphone)?

BRIAN NADEAU: So the question was to Junior Alvarado, your position getting into the first turn.

JUNIOR ALVARADO: Well, he has speed, and I just had to use it enough to make sure I ended up where I wanted to be. I didn't want to just leave the gate and take whatever was left there.

So I was going with a mission to make sure I had a stuck in position. That's what we kind of plan. When I asked my horse at the beginning of the race, he was there for me, and he allowed me to put myself in a good spot throughout the race.

Q. (No microphone)?

BILL MOTT: I think it was the job that Junior did reserving him early. I mean, you know, we were up close, but he was comfortable all the time. I mean, he has tactical speed, but I don't believe he's a horse that needs to be

ridden to the front end.

I think Junior allowed him to settle right in behind the pace today. The horse was comfortable. Junior was comfortable. We just had to hope that, when it was time to go, that the horse would respond.

The horse liked what he did with him. He liked the fact that, you know, he was allowed to settle and breathe and do all those things that you need to do to reserve that energy because it's all about saving energy, you know what I mean? You can't expel everything early in the race.

He did a great job today. He had something left when he turned for home.

Q. (No microphone)?

BRIAN NADEAU: Bruce Lunsford and Bill Mott, trainer, what's next?

BRUCE LUNSFORD: I'm not a very demanding owner. I know when to say no more than I know when to say yes. I just let Bill decide that, we've always followed pretty well. We've done great.

BILL MOTT: I think obviously we know this horse runs fresh, and I think the big thing is we'll talk this week, make sure the horse comes back good, and I guess we've got to make that decision, do we proceed forward the rest of the year? Is he in good shape?

Then I think we work backwards from some of the bigger races and some of the spots that we'd like to run in during the course of the year. But I don't believe we're in a hurry to run him back. We obviously knows he runs fresh, and he doesn't have to run every 30 days.

So we'll give him time to recover, and that will give us a chance to plot out our next race.

BRIAN NADEAU: Carl Fiebig, you talked about the program with the Wycoffs and looking for horses. Can you talk a little bit more about what kind of horse you're looking for. Mike has had so much success winning long distance races like this.

CARL FIEBIG: Yeah, I think no one's better in the game improving a horse going long on the grass. I think Mike has really solidified that niche in the game. When you go into a sale and Mike's by your side, you're looking at a profile that fits predominantly for that.

I think Kirk and Jordan have done a great job of trying to define that middle market. At a sale, I know we talk about

the upper ten trades at a sale, but they've continued to find value a little bit further down. But obviously Mike's team continues to develop these horses year after year, and I think that's the profile that has been successful for us.

BRIAN NADEAU: Mike Maker, I'll ask you the question, Bill just got it, do you have a spot in mind going forward? Have you thought that far ahead?

MIKE MAKER: Nope, just enjoy today. Talk it over with the connection, but first one that comes to mind is Turf Classic on Derby day.

BRIAN NADEAU: Churchill Downs on Kentucky Derby day. Any other questions?

Q. (No microphone)?

BRUCE LUNSFORD: I like them both a lot. I don't have to dislike anybody. I thought that this particular case, we probably got lucky that we did good because we got a change that was kind of pushed upon us, but Junior just took the reins and just went right on.

He's close to Bill, and I'm close to Bill. We talked about five minutes. It was a pretty easy decision.

And I think he's also, in case you don't know that, he's riding his 2-year-old brother, who's now 3, and is pretty nice, not a bad horse. We might have a little more fun.

Q. (No microphone)?

BRIAN NADEAU: Question was asked to trainer Bill Mott about the Middle East or the Dubai Cup or the Saudi Cup.

BILL MOTT: I believe those races are going to come up a little quick for us. I don't believe right now -- we didn't nominate for either race, and at this moment we plan to keep him on a domestic path, and we probably won't be going to either Saudi or Dubai.

Just the timing of it and the fact that we ran such a big race today, I don't think that we'd be looking at either of those races.

BRIAN NADEAU: I want to congratulate everyone. Thank you for taking the time for stopping by. Congratulations. I really appreciate it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports