



TODD PLETCHER

Born: June 26, 1967 in Dallas, Texas

Resident: Garden City, N.Y.

Family: Wife Tracy, sons Payton and Kyle and daughter Hannah.

Triple Crown victories: Belmont Stakes – Rags to Riches (2007).

Breeders' Cup victories: Distaff – Ashado (2004); Sprint – Speightstown (2004); Turf – English Channel (2007).

Even though he missed out on the trainers' Eclipse Award for the second straight year after winning four in a row, Pletcher had another outstanding year in 2009 as he posted purse earnings of

\$15,454,429 for second-place among American trainers. From 2004 through 2007, the former chief aide to Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas was the leader for purse earnings while winning the Eclipse Award for those years.



For 2009, Pletcher sent out these graded-stakes winners: Advice, Ailalae, Cowboy Cal, Devil May Care, Game Face, Interactif, Malibu Prayer, Munnings, Quality Road, Rule, Super Saver and Take the Points. The multiple Eclipse Award winner has started fast in 2010, especially with a cast of 3-year-olds being prepped for the Kentucky Derby, including the highly regarded Eskendereya, Connemara, Discreetly Mine, Rule and Super Saver.

While 2008 might not be considered a banner year for Pletcher, he still saddled major winners Wait a While, Red Giant, Fairbanks, Monba, Circular Quay, Game Face, Behindatthebar, Harlem Rocker and Cowboy Cal. He also scored his 2,000th career victory early that year when On the Virg crossed the finish line first at Santa Anita on Jan. 13.

Though entering 27 horses beginning in 2000, Pletcher remains winless in the Kentucky Derby. For that matter, he was winless in all three Triple Crown races until the filly Rags to Riches defeated Curlin in the 2007 Belmont Stakes.

Among his major horses in 2006, multiple stakes winners English Channel and Fleet Indian, Eclipse Award winner as top older female, held premier spots in the Pletcher operation, which also included Wait a While, the Eclipse-winning 3-year-old filly who won graded stakes on both turf and dirt, and Bluegrass Cat, who finished second to Barbaro in the Kentucky Derby.

On the year, Pletcher posted 294 victories from 1,170 starts. In earnings, Southern California's Doug O'Neill was a distant second with \$11,647,756.

After posting a breakout year in 2004, in which he won his first Eclipse Award and two Breeders' Cup championship day races, the trainer added an exclamation point in 2005 by crushing the record for North American earnings and capturing his second straight Eclipse Award.

His record earnings totaled \$20,867,842, well ahead of Robert Frankel's previous record of \$19,147,129. He was unable to duplicate Breeders' Cup victories posted in 2004 by Ashado and Speightstown in the Distaff and Sprint, respectively, and led to Eclipse Awards as top 3-year-old filly and top sprinter, but 2005 triple Grade I winner Ashado tucked away another Eclipse as older filly or mare.

Along with Ashado's wins, Pletcher counted Grade I victories from Adieu, Bandini, Flower Alley, Forest Danger, Honey Rider, Host and Purge. A highlight for the trainer came on October 8 when both Ashado and Host won Grade Is at Belmont Park and Keeneland, respectively. In all, his trainees won 76 stakes at 18 different racetracks over the year. Thirty-eight of the stakes were of the graded variety, including 10 with Grade I designation.

Pletcher is another one of the fine young trainers that came out of the D. Wayne Lukas stable. For several years, Pletcher was in charge of the Lukas string that raced in New York and Florida. In all, he was a Lukas assistant for 6 1/2 years, beginning in 1989 after graduation from the University of Arizona with a degree in animal science. Prior to his own experiences on the Triple Crown trail, Pletcher's most memorable moment came when Thunder Gulch, under his care as a member of Team Lukas, won the Florida Derby in 1995. The colt later went on to win the Kentucky Derby and the Belmont Stakes.

Pletcher began training on his own in late 1995 and made an immediate impact by winning eight stakes events the next year. His first winner after setting up shop for himself was Majestic Number, who won a race at Gulfstream Park in February 1996.

Prior to his stint with Team Lukas, Pletcher had a taste of the Thoroughbred life while growing up. His father, Jake, was a trainer.

In 1998, Pletcher saddled Jersey Girl to seven straight victories before she went on the shelf with an injury. Six of those wins were in stakes, including the Acorn, Mother Goose and Test, all Grade I events. Other outstanding runners trained: Early Warning, Electric Shock, Mellow Roll and Texas Glitter.

Left Bank was named Eclipse Award winner as 2002's top older male, the first of eight champions trained by Pletcher. The others: Ashado, 3-year-old filly in 2004 and older female in 2005; Speightstown, 2004 sprinter; Fleet Indian, older female in 2006; Wait a While, 3-year-old filly in 2006; Rags to Riches, 3-year-old filly in 2007; English Channel, turf male in 2007, and Lawyer Ron, older male in 2007.