

NATIONAL MEDIA TELECONFERENCE THURSDAY APRIL 24 PREVIEWING 151ST KENTUCKY DERBY

Transcript – 1:01:09

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OPERATOR

Welcome to the National Media Teleconference Thursday, April 24, previewing 151st Kentucky Derby Call. Let me introduce our host, Mr. Jim Gluckson. Please go ahead.

JIM GLUCKSON

Thank you very much Ynnah, and good day everyone and welcome to the NTRA National Media Teleconference previewing the 151st Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve, taking place on Saturday, May 3 at Churchill Downs. The post position draw for the Derby of course is just two days away and joining us today will be trainers Bill Mott, Michael McCarthy, Mark Casse and Lonnie Briley to talk about their leading contenders for the first jewel of racing's Triple Crown. This is the first of three Triple Crown media teleconferences that the NTRA will be hosting this year. The second conference call will take place on Thursday, May 8th previewing the 150th Preakness Stakes and the preview for the 157th Belmont Stakes will be held on Thursday, May 29. I want to remind everyone that today's call is being recorded and a playback of the call and a transcript will be posted on ntra.com in the next 48 hours. Before we begin, we would like to have an opening remarks from the President and CEO of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, Mr. Tom Rooney. Tom, please go ahead.

TOM ROONEY

Thanks, Jim. Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining today's call. The NTRA is excited to once again bring back these teleconferences in advance of this year's Triple Crown races and beyond to highlight the stars of the show, the horses, the horsemen and the jockeys who will be competing in this year's events, beginning with the 151st Kentucky Derby. On today's call, as Jim alluded to, we have the trainers of some of the field's most exciting stories. Bill Mott, trainer of Sovereignty, winner of this year's Fountain of Youth strong finish in the Florida Derby. Michael McCarthy, trainer of Journalism, who won the San Felipe Stakes in the San Anita Derby. Coming from a huge crowd to basically stop and start again and win that race. Going to need that in the Derby. Trainer of Sandman, Mark Casse. Sandman won this year's Arkansas Derby and Lonnie Briley with Coal Battle, the winner of the Smarty Jones and the Rebel.

Next week, we'll turn our eyes to the most lighting 2 minutes in sports are Kentucky Derby. Want to wish everybody good luck. We look forward to enjoying this year's Triple Crown season with all of you. And I will turn it back to you, Jim.

JIM GLUCKSON

Thank you very much, appreciate the remarks. Today we're going to get started here with Bill Mott. We, we can need a little time for Bill. Apparently something came up with him and he asked us to hang in there for a few minutes and we'll reach out to him again. So everyone just and hold on here and we'll, we'll get on with him in a couple of minutes. In the meantime, of course, NBC Sports will be broadcasting the Kentucky

Derby on May 3 of this year. And see, we're going to just pause here for a second and give Bill a little time, and then we're going to call him right back.

Hi, Looks like we have Bill.

BILL MOTT

Hello.

JIM GLUCKSON

Bill, hi, Jim Gluckson here. How are you today?

BILL MOTT

Hi, Jim.

JIM GLUCKSON

Good to hear from you, Bill. Thanks for joining us today on the call. Bill, of course, is training Godolphin's Sovereignty, winner of the Fountain of Youth and runner up in the Florida Derby. Welcome to the call. How is it going today, Bill?

BILL MOTT

Everything's good. Our horse is good and I'm good and the weather's good, so I I got nothing to complain about.

JIM GLUCKSON

Alright, sounds good. Just going to back up here a little bit and I wanted you to give it your assessment here of his second place finish in the Florida Derby. Assess that race for us if you would. And also following up with a comment a little bit about his progress since arriving here at Churchill.

BILL MOTT

Well, he's been, he's done very well since arriving at Churchill. I mean, he's bright and alert. He's traveled well over the racetrack and I've got no complaints about that.

JIM GLUCKSON

Alright

BILL MOTT

He's had a very good work here. What's that?

JIM GLUCKSON

Yeah, I'm just saying he's it makes quite an appearance at 16 hands. How does this running style set up well for him in the Derby?

BILL MOTT

Well, the running style is fine if he doesn't run into too much traffic. I mean, obviously when you're, you know, when you're talking about, you know, running, running against that many horses and you gotta come through a big field, it can, you know, you can run into trouble occasionally. You know, if he gets a good trip. I mean, I think you, you know, we're the distance and we, he's already won a race over the track.

JIM GLUCKSON

All right. Well, Bill, we have some media on the line. I think they want to ask some questions. So Ynnah, if we can go to that question and answer session with us for today, please do so now.

OPERATOR

Ladies and gentlemen, we will now begin the question and answer session. Should you have a question, please press * follow by the one on your telephone keypad. You will hear a prompt that your hand has been raised and should you wish to cancel your request please press * followed by the two. I would like to advise everyone to have a limit of one question and one follow up and if you are using a speakerphone, please lift

the handset before pressing any keys. One moment please for your first question. The first question comes from the line of Byron King from Blood Horse. Please go ahead.

BYRON KING

Hi, Bill. Thanks for taking time for us. I do appreciate it. I was hoping you could chat a little bit about what it might mean for Sovereignty to be reunited with Junior Alvarado in the Kentucky Derby. Through the years, whether it's Jerry Bailey or, or Junior, you seem to have like to have a rider that really, you know, sticks with your horses for a long period of time. And obviously he was injured, Junior was, in the Florida Derby, but what does it mean to have him back for the Kentucky Derby?

BILL MOTT

Well, I think it's good he had ridden the horse in his other races and he's familiar with him. He's got a good sense of what the horse wants to do and you know his way of running. I think he knows. I believe Junior has a feeling for how much horse he's got left under him and when he needs to get him started.

BYRON KING

Thank you. And my follow up question is, is, you know one of the things I think is really interesting and looking at Sovereignty's form is his win in the Street Sense. Last year you alluded to it, the win over the Churchill Downs track. Bill, when you look at that race and you look at not only Sovereignty coming out of it, but Tiztastic and Sandman, three

Kentucky Derby competitors there in that race at Churchill, does it give you a higher degree of confidence knowing how well he performed there in defeating some Kentucky Derby caliber competition?

BILL MOTT

Well, I think the one thing we have to keep in mind is those other horses are probably better and they've probably gotten more experience now and they're probably better horses than what they were in the Street Sense. I believe our horses moved forward, but I'm sure they've probably come together a little bit. You know, not every two year old would have been ready for his best race in in at that point in time. So those horses have obviously made some improvements since then, but I believe we have too. So I think the biggest factor is that we've, you know, we've had a race over the track and we've proven that we ran well at Churchill before. So we can eliminate that that problem.

BYRON KING

Thank you, Bill.

OPERATOR

Thank you. And your next question comes from the line of Dan Wolkin from USA TODAY.

Please go ahead.

DAN WOLKEN

Yeah. Hey, Bill, I was curious as you're preparing for the Derby, how much you are paying attention to what's going on in Florida with the legislative session and the push for decoupling. And just generally, how concerned are you about the future of racing in Florida?

BILL MOTT

Well, naturally, not only for myself, but for a lot of other people, we're definitely concerned and we're definitely confused. And we're certainly hoping that they get this situation worked out where they don't decouple. I mean, I think the horsemen were probably a big part of the racetrack to be able to get a casino in there. And I think they're trying to bail out on us. I really don't think that's right. And I, I hope that the people that make the decisions stand up for us a little bit and, and at least make them run a certain amount of days per year. I mean, for us, for some of the largest stables, the people that travel back and forth that go north in the summertime, which is probably a fairly good amount of people. I don't think it affects us too much. If they could run, you know, 40,50,60 days in the winter time, I mean, it would probably suit us just fine. But I, I don't believe it's fair for me to speak to the people that stay in Florida year round. But, being a racetracker for the extent of my life since I've been on the racetrack, I've had to move. We've got to bounce around and I haven't had the luxury of staying in one spot all year round. And it can be done, you can move. There's racetracks up north that would probably benefit from the horses coming from a good meet in

South Florida if they ran fewer days. I don't think it's really sustainable for them to run year round anyway. But yeah, I think if they run, if they run at all, I think they need to maybe coupled with the casinos, I think that's the only fair way to do it.

DAN WOLKEN

Thank you.

BILL MOTT

I hope that answers your question.

DAN WOLKEN

Yes.

OPERATOR

Thank you. There are no further question at this time. Please proceed.

JIM GLUCKSON

All right, let's just wait one minute and just see if anyone else might want to jump in.

OPERATOR

And we have a follow up question from Dan Wolkin from USA TODAY. Please go ahead.

DAN WOLKEN

So if I can just catch you on a different topic, Sovereignty is a son of Into Mischief and he's obviously had an incredible impact on the Kentucky Derby as a sire. I was just curious, from your standpoint, are there any characteristics that you've seen with the Into Mischief colts over the years that are fairly consistent?

BILL MOTT

Well, I haven't had too many of them. I've had some, but I've never had any that are quite as good as this horse. So he's the best one I've had and he's the one that's probably, had the most substance to him. I think as an individual he's the biggest, strongest one that I've had. And of course, probably the one that's up to this point had the most, most quality. But you can see, looking at him, if, somebody was to tell you he was by Into Mischief, you can certainly see it. So he's got some of the characteristics of the horses that that Into Mischief throws. And you know, he's an awfully good sire. I think they come with with good intentions. I think they try hard and, and they're good race horses. So we just gotta hope this one's one of the best ones.

DAN WOLKEN

When you say there are visual characteristics that you could identify is Into Mischief, what would those be?

BILL MOTT

Well, I mean, just looking at the body type, the way they're built, the way they're balanced. I'm not an artist, so I probably can't pick it apart, perfectly. But somebody that's looked at a lot of horses, you know when you look at the entire horse, you just see the top line on him and, and he's built like many of the Into Mischiefs are. He's not long, and he's not tall and gangly by any means, but, he's well-muscled and, just a very, very strong or strong quarters on him.

DAN WOLKEN

Appreciate it. Thank you.

OPERATOR

Thank you. And we have a follow up question from Byron King from Blood Horse. Please go ahead.

BYRON KING

Bill, obviously you've been fortunate to win the Kentucky Derby with Country House who was elevated the first with Maximum Security's DQ. Sovereignty be your 14th Kentucky Derby starter. How do you think going into the race he rates in terms of his chances relative to your past starters? Would you consider him to be, perhaps the most well backed of the ones you've run through the years?

BILL MOTT

Well, yes, he's probably got, he's got more going for him. I think he's got a very good record and I think he's shown the quality that's probably surpassed some of the ones I've had in the past. But I think I've been very fortunate to come into the Derby every year with a little better horse and a little better horse and a little better horse. And I, I've said it before, when I had Country House and I had Tacitus in there, I thought that was my best chance to hit the board with both horses or, or possibly win it. And you know, we proved out. I think with Country House ran a huge race on that day and they, he did finish second and they put him up, but it was a huge race. And I, I think this horse is probably looking back, if I looked at the entire group, I'd say he's my best, my best chance. I've come in with a lot, a lot of horses that probably weren't ready to get the distance, that weren't real mile and a quarter horses; Taylor Special, Court Vision, Rock and Roll. There's been nice horses, but I don't think they were meant for a mile and a quarter.

BYRON KING

Thank you, Bill.

OPERATOR

And your next question comes from the line of John Pricci from horseraceinsider.com.

Please go ahead.

JOHN PRICCI

Good afternoon, Bill. Thanks for joining the call. Among the three favorites, mostly acknowledged is Journalism, yourself and Sandman. Each of you have a great turn of foot. Would you say that the turn of foot that you possessed is better than either Journalism's or Sandman's? And whether you do or not, what would give you confidence that you could out kick those assuming a good trip by all?

BILL MOTT

Well, I'd just be guessing, but I suppose if you had somebody to analyze it, they could probably break down the fractions that these horses have run. But I I'd have to say, you that our horse, visually to me, I think his closing kick is is as good as any of the others. But you know, that's just what I've noticed with the naked eye. I haven't broken it down with a stopwatch.

JOHN PRICCI

Journalism showed last out that he could overcome some trouble. You know, he's running inside and the jock had to get him to the outside and such. Obviously this will be Junior's problem once the gates open, but how confident are you can handle adversity, say, as well as Journalism did in the Sant Anita Derby?

BILL MOTT

I think we've already handled as much adversity as what he had in the Santa Anita Derby. I don't think there's any, you know what, I'm sure we've probably overcome as much traffic as what he had. That was what a six horse field? I think we've been in a few larger fields and we've had to run into traffic, run through traffic. And I don't think that's anything that we haven't proven. I think we've proven it as well as he has. He's a nice horse. Yeah, he's a nice horse. Journalism is a nice horse. And he had a good closing kick, you know, take nothing away from.

JIM GLUCKSON

Him. Alright. Done, Bill. Thank you. I have to break in here, Bill. I appreciate the time that you've given us this afternoon and again, best of luck to you and at the Derby and all your horses.

BILL MOTT

Thank you.

JIM GLUCKSON

Thank you, Bill. Alright, let's move right away now and have patiently holding with us, it's Michael McCarthy, the trainer of Journalism. Michael, Jim Gluckson here, good afternoon. How are you today?

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

I'm great, thanks for having me.

JIM GLUCKSON

Great. Thank you for hanging in there with us. Just give an update for us. This is the second day on the grounds for Journalism. What happened with him today and how is his progress moving towards the Derby?

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Yeah, it seems like he shipped in here in good order. Another uneventful afternoon, or uneventful morning. Went ahead, went to the starting gate, schooled in the starting gate. Seemed like he handled that just fine. Galloped a mile and 3/8 afterwards. So we'll do more or less the same thing tomorrow, minus the starting gate. But all is well with Journalism.

JIM GLUCKSON

Great. I wanted just to go back for a second to the Santa Anita Derby, which was a very professional performance in that he had to overcome some trouble on the backstretch during the race. Can you talk about his maturity with us, please?

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Yeah, I thought the San Anita Derby was a little bit of a rider's race, a tactical race, if you will. Seemed like we had a little bit of a target on our backs. I thought from the half mile pole to the 3/8 pole, everybody kind of bunched up. We were stuck down inside.

Thankfully, the horse was relaxed, amenable to whatever Umberto had asked of him. A seam opened up, coming through the 3/8 pole, and Umberto was able to work his way outside. You know that things of that type is going to happen once, possibly twice. Who knows how many times it could happen next Saturday? 20 horses, a lot going on. You know, our problem in California is the smaller field size compared to some of these other preps. But I thought that was a very good experience for him, all things considered.

JIM GLUCKSON

Excellent, excellent. Well, Michael, we have some media on the line and I'd like to turn it over to the question and answer session. So Ynnah, can you please move us towards that session?

OPERATOR

Thank you once again. Should you have a question that is * and one on your telephone keypad, as a reminder, please limit your question to one question and one follow up. And if you are using a speakerphone, please leave the handset before pressing any keys.

Your first question comes on the line of Jay Posner from San Diego Union Tribune.

Please go ahead. Mr. Posner, your line is now open.

JAY POSNER

Can you guys hear me now?

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Gotcha. Yeah.

JAY POSNER

OK. Sorry, Michael. Thank you. I spoke with Aron Wellman earlier this week for a story and he talked about how you guys have known each other for a long time dating back to when you were kids on the at Del Mar each summer. And I was just wondering if you could tell me about your times with Aron and your friendship and how whether this experience with Journalism and Eclipse [ownership group] means even a little bit more to be able to do it with someone that you've known for so long and is a friend.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Yeah, I've known Aaron since the late 80s, early 90s. I used to spend a lot of time sitting with Gary Young, clocking horses in the morning and then going to the races with him in the afternoons when I was kind of learning. I knew a couple of different facets about the industry, and the Wellmans sat right behind Mr. Young and Randy Winick, a former

trainer in Southern California. So became friendly with the Wellmans, Mike and Corey, small breeders in California with a lot of success. Obviously, Aron and his brother Kyle. And that sort of morphed from there. We went to high school, we grew up, we went our separate ways. Aaron went to University of UC Santa Barbara. I ended up going back to the East Coast to go to work for Todd Pletcher. Aron was obviously bitten by the horse racing bug at a young age and had some success before he even started Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners on his own right. When he started Eclipse, he reached out to me about a filly Todd was training named Sweet Cat, if she could possibly be for sale. I put Aron in touch with Todd and the rest is kind of history. We've had a great relationship during my tenure with Todd Pletcher. Then in 2014 I decided to go back to California, start on my own. Aron was the first outfit. Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners was the first outfit to send me horses and we've had a growing relationship ever since, a successful relationship. We've had Grade One winners together. We've sold million dollar horses together. This is the first time we've kind of come to the Kentucky Derby together. Our friends, our families are very good friends. My daughter is roughly in between Aron's daughter and Aron's son (age). So they are all friendly, you know, I'll forever be grateful to Aron and everybody at Eclipse for getting me started. It's been a wonderful relationship. Aron and I are very like-minded. We think alike . It's become more and more like a family type of a situation. The majority of our conversations are about life and about other things, other than horses. You know, it's been comfortable for both of us. It's been a great fit. I'm glad I've been able to keep up my end of the bargain and have the kind of results that Eclipse is used to having, obviously with having horses,

with other trainers, you know, Todd Pletcher, Graham Motion, Wayne Catalano. So I'm fortunate to be a part of the team and hopefully we can add to our resume here next Saturday.

JAY POSNER

Great. Thanks very much. Good luck.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Thank you.

OPERATOR

Thank you. And your next question comes from the line of Dan Wolken from USA

TODAY. Please go ahead.

DAN WOLKEN

Yeah, Michael, hey, thanks for doing this. You mentioned that you, you wish that Journalism maybe could have faced a little larger field. What is the issue in California right now where the three-year old, top three-year old prep races are only attracting, five horse fields and how can that be fixed at some point?

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

I think there's a few things. It's kind of twofold. A, I think the majority of the better two year olds and three-year olds are being sent to Bob Baffert. He has the clientele, you know, he can spend unlimited amount of funds on a horse simply by picking up the phone and piecing together the partnership, if he even needs to piece together a partnership. And I think from the outside looking in, I think people have been reluctant to send horses to California just because of that reason that Bob is so tough to beat. But as we always say, it only takes one. There is a declining foal crop in the United States. Does it have a direct correlation or a direct connection to California? In some way possibly, yes, but I think it's you're seeing that all over. I think you're starting to see fewer outfits get more horses from better clientele instead of spreading the wealth. The Kentucky Derby point system as it is now, I think that is sort of shrunk the pool a little bit. You see many of the same names every year with horses lining up in the starting gate. You know, I think a horse like Coal Battle, Lonnie Briley, that's a great story. There are several people out there that could train a horse like Journalism. You know, I just consider myself in this situation to be the lucky one, grateful for it. But prize money is also another factor in the state of California. You see the casino funds and things like that, that are attracting people to Kentucky racing, the large persons garnered from the casinos and Kentucky Downs, those types of things. So those are attractive. I mean, when anytime you've got \$140,000 or \$130,000 maiden race, and you're running for \$100,000 in graded stakes in California, it's a huge, there's a huge disconnect there. So California by and large, the gaming is controlled by the Indians. And I think that makes a

huge kind of, I don't know what the right word you use. It like I say, it's not a downfall for racing, but it's a burden. We just don't get to share any of those funds, say from the lottery, the casinos, Indian casinos, those types of things. We're strictly relying on our portion of signal sent across the United States to different betting, different online platforms.

DAN WOLKEN

Thank you very much.

OPERATOR

Thank you. And your last question comes from the line of Cameron Drummond from the Lexington Herald Leader. Please go ahead.

CAMERON DRUMMOND

Hey there, Michael, appreciate the time. Thank you for meeting with us this afternoon. You mentioned Bob Baffert just a second ago. And one question I wanted to ask you would just be, So what do you anticipate from him coming back to Churchill Downs? Obviously, you're a bit more of close quarters with him than some of the other trainers in the field, just being based out of Santa Anita. But can you just speak a little bit to your past experiences with him and what it'll be like going up against some of his Derby horses this year that you're obviously a bit more familiar with as well from that past as Santa Anita?

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Yeah, I think it's well publicized. The issue that Churchill Downs has had with Bob Baffert and vice versa. I think this will draw, I'm not going to say it's going to draw more people, but it's certainly draw more attention now that he's back. Hopefully that's good publicity. You know, he's got a couple starters. I see Bob Baffert on a day-to-day basis. I don't really get into the minutia of what transpired here with the KHRC (Kentucky Horse Racing Commission), with these lawsuits, with Churchill Downs, CDI. It's good to have him back. He is a polarizing figure in our sport. He puts people in the seats. He is a two time Triple Crown winner. He's won seven Kentucky Derbies, six? Not sure what the exact number is, but hopefully things just kind of go smoothly for him this week. And you know, he enjoys his time being back at Churchill Downs. I mean, obviously written quite a bit of history here, so we'll see.

CAMERON DRUMMOND

Got it. Yeah. And one follow up for you as well, kind of circling back to Journalism. Obviously you had your first Derby starter last year with endlessly and I'm curious just how did that experience maybe prepare you better for this year, especially given the fact that Journalism is probably the presumptive favorite for the Derby. Obviously we'll figure that out Saturday night, but just how are you kind of handling any kind of increased expectations, attention, question from folks like us on media conference calls, just everything that goes into, you know being a of a horse that will get a lot of attention and a lot of share of the bets in the next week and so.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Yeah, I've been fortunate enough to work for Todd Fletcher for 11 years and change nearly 12 years, what have you. During my time with him, I lived here in Louisville for nearly six years, so was fortunate enough to walk over to the paddock with 20 participants in the Kentucky Derby. Between Barbaro's Kentucky Derby to the last Kentucky Derby I was here was in 2012, so I've seen it attached from all different ways with favorites, with longshots, what have you. You pretty much know what's expected of you. As the week goes on here, things will start ramping up. Plenty of patrons on the backside, plenty of commotion, a lot going on. Racing that week is obviously huge with Thirby, Oaks Day, what have you. So Journalism will make his way to the paddock a few times to school. We'll get him used to that, to the large crowd, the music, the humidity, maybe even the rain. We'll see what's coming this week. But these are all things as a trainer that I'm sort of responsible for. I just try to make sure that he is as well schooled as possible for everything that goes into Saturday's event.

Some of it is almost circus like with the amount of people and the amount of noise. So there's a lot of things going on. Journalism will be taking a lot of things in, let alone the walk over. You know, it used to be trainers, grooms, hot walkers, stable employees. Now it's turned into this whole sort of an event in its own right where each horse walks over with 30, 40, 50 people walking around it, walking behind it, you know, it can get a little hectic. You're almost hoping that they just get to the paddock without hurting anyone just because there's so much going on. People aren't paying attention, they're looking up into the grandstand. So you know, Journalism is a pretty intelligent horse.

He's been able to take everything in stride. His first day out here on the track yesterday, walked out like he'd been here all of his life. Went to the starting gate this morning, was an absolute gentleman over there. Took it all in stride even though we had to wait a short while. So he is a mature horse. He is a well broke, well-schooled horse, doesn't seem to let things upset him too much. So all these things are going to work his way or work in his favor hopefully come Saturday.

JIM GLUCKSON

Good. Thank you, Michael. Thank you very much. We're going to have to pause. We're going to have to move on from here. I'm sorry for people who have to ask more questions, but we need to move on. Michael, thank you so much for your time today and answering all the questions. And good luck to you and Journalism coming next week.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Thank you guys. I really appreciate you having me on.

JIM GLUCKSON

Very welcome, Michael McCarthy, everyone. Now let's shift gears here and bring in Mark Casse here. Mark Casse, inducted into both the Canadian and US Halls of Fame, Trainer of Arkansas Derby Winter Sandman. Mark, good afternoon. How are you doing today?

MARK CASSE

I'm great, thanks for having me.

JIM GLUCKSON

Thank you. Thanks for joining us. I think you've been very confident in the way Sandman has taken to the track. It's home for him. He had a very good race in the Arkansas Derby, obviously. Can you talk about his continued improvement and the confidence you have in him coming to this derby?

MARK CASSE

Yes I mean, I think he's just gotten better and better. It really all started in his first start at Oaklawn. I thought he ran very well in an allowance race and then when we stepped up to the Southwest, I, I kind of felt like I always been a little disappointed in him. Prior to that, I've always had high hopes for him and, and thought he trained like a very good horse. I think in the Southwest is when he really showed me something special after getting away bad and then still running so well and he had plenty of excuses in the Rebel. He got shuffled back and finally everything, for all his bad luck he had had in those two previous races, he got a lot of good luck in the Arkansas Derby. You know, they set a very fast pace and he came running and was impressive. And, and since then, he's, just done better and better. He's grown. He's 17 hands tall now. He's a big boy and

he's happy. Churchill Downes is home for him. He's thrived since arriving and I'm expecting big things from him.

JIM GLUCKSON

And just quickly your work schedule, exercise schedule for the horse over the next few days.

MARK CASSE

He's not going to do much anymore. He had to work yesterday. I thought he worked really well, galloped out strong. I'm going to train him the same way we trained him up to those races at Oaklawn. I'm not going to do a lot with him. He's a very happy horse. He's not a big robust horse. He's more of a tall, leaner type. Puts a lot into his gallops and right now I just want him to stay happy. And he's extremely happy right now. He's a big ham. He loves all the attention. He's got a ton of attention and I think he'll continue. You know, he's so beautiful. There are a lot of people love his name. And so, yeah, he's been very popular.

JIM GLUCKSON

Very good. Alright, Mark, let us see we have some questions from the media on the line.

Ynnah, so let's move back to the question and answer session please.

OPERATOR

Thank you. Once again. Should you have a question, please press * follow up by the one on your telephone keypad. And should you wish to cancel your request, please press * follow up by the two. Please have a limit of one question and one follow up. Your first question comes from the line of Jim Chariusmi from Wall Street Journal. Please go ahead.

JIM CHARIUSMI

Hey Mark, you mentioned Sandman's name, is that based on the Metallica song?

MARK CASSE

That's a good, that's a good question. I didn't name him and I don't know exactly, but I can tell you that they have been very supportive. They actually sent us all kinds of T-shirts and, and everything, for our staff. They're all wearing it and they're excited. I have a feeling that they didn't have a concert that day, they may be at the Derby. So, you know, they've been very supportive. The horse is kind of funny because he has of young people loving, I think probably because of his color. And now with Metallica, everybody is. The older gang is starting to the older group is people are starting to really go towards him and supporting him.

JIM CHARIUSMI

One unrelated follow up, we lately we've seen the trend where if you don't win the Derby, you'd probably skip the Preakness. But in 2019 you had a horse, War of Will, where you ran in all three races, and that doesn't seem to be a very popular thing now.

Do you sense that that's the growing trend where if you lose, you're not..

MARK CASSE

I think that's new school. I'm more old school. I had that conversation this morning. I was talking about Wayne Lukas and Wayne believes in running. You know, I, I came, I've been doing this 47 years. I, one of my closest friends early on in my career was a guy named Allen Jerkens. He was, he was one of the greatest trainers of all time. And he always would tell me run when they're good, rest them when they're not. As long as you know, he [Sandman] gives us a good performance and I'm happy with him. You'll see us at the Preakness. I have no problem. We, as you said, we did it with War of Will. I did it with Classic Empire. Yeah, I I have no problem running them back.

JIM CHARIUSMI

Thanks, Mark.

MARK CASSE

Thank you.

OPERATOR

Thank you. And your next question comes from the line of Byron King from Blood Horse.

Please go ahead.

BYRON KING

Hi, Mark. Thanks for taking time with us. I wanted to pivot slightly to the Kentucky Oaks and ask about La Cara and specifically if you could talk a little bit, Mark, about your long association with Tracy Farmer. You've obviously won some major races for him, including the Belmont Stakes with Sir Winston. Now you got a leading Kentucky Oaks contender with La Cara, but talk a little bit about your all's long association and your thoughts on her heading into the Oaks.

MARK CASSE

I don't know, [about first meeting Tracy Farmer] I think Sir Winston was the first year I trained Sir Winston as a 2 year old and what happened, a lot of people would know, but I trained for a long time for John Oxley. And John Oxley is very close with Tracy Farmer and Tracy and I, we, we were at the all of Fame ball and we were sitting together and talking and he told me he wanted to maybe start running and racing some more. And

interesting enough, you know, Sir Winston was a home bred for him, as is La Cara, and he has a small broodmare band, but it's mighty. I mean, it's, there's some good ones. I had told him Sir Winston was a late developer and, and, and it took him a while, but from the beginning kind of La Cara has shown that she's something special. He has a tremendous group of young horses again this year. He's breeding. He's, he's got a small but very good broodmare band. And he's wonderful, him and Carol, training for him. And there are great winners and they're great losers. And, you know, they're just a pleasure. And it makes me feel really good when we can win races. The Ashland was huge for us. You know, Tracy told me at the beginning of the year, he said, I really would like to win the Ashland. So I said, OK, we'll come up with the plan. And it worked. And La Cara has thrived even since the Ashland. Her work the other day was amazing and she's ready. She loves Churchill Downs and they're she's going to play catch me if you can.

BYRON KING

Very good. And then my follow up question, just a little bit more related to the Hall of Fame. Of course, they made the announcement today and of course you were inducted just few years ago. I think if I'm remembering right, it was right after the 2019 year of winning the Preakness and the Belmont. I was a bit surprised, Mark, today to see that that Kenny McPeck wasn't among the Hall of Fame folks that was selected. Obviously he won the Derby last year and of course the Oaks and trains Thorpedo [Anna]. And I was curious if you had any thoughts of someone who's just kind of been down that road.

MARK CASSE

It's a tough, it's tough. I think in the last 15 years that I can remember, I think it's only been Todd and I and, and in all honesty, I was up for the Hall of Fame for a couple years and I didn't know that I really deserved to be in there. We had won six or five Breeders Cups at the time. Of course, we've been dominant in Canada, but I didn't know if I really deserved to be in there. I thought after we won the Preakness in the Belmont that yes, probably, maybe, I'm worthy of it and, I was lucky they voted us in. It's very tough. I think that the voter are tougher in the people category than the horse category. And it takes a lot. I can't really comment on whether Kenny should or shouldn't be in there. There's some great trainers that are still not there. I can think of John Shirreffs, who has done so many great things. So the way it works right now, it's extremely tough to get in. And I, I was not surprised that there was no, no human awards.

BYRON KING

Thanks. Thanks, Mark.

MARK CASSE

OK.

OPERATOR

Thank you once again. Should you have a question, please press * then the number one on your telephone keypad. Our next question comes on the line of Cameron Drummond from the Lexington Herald Leader. Please go ahead.

CAMERON DRUMMOND

Hey, Mark, appreciate the time you're taking with us this afternoon. This was a question I also asked to Michael McCarthy, who was on with us just before you, but obviously with Bob Baffert coming back to the Derby this year after a few years away. Michael spoke a bit to his experiences with him at Santa Anita and also maybe hint to that the fact that because Bob is such a polarizing figure that this might drive a little bit of increased viewership, just interest in the race. And I'm just curious from your perspective as someone who's been in the sport for so long and been in several Derbies obviously if you think there's kind of any correlation to that or maybe just your thoughts about Bob being such an accomplished trainer, getting to come back to Churchill Downs with some obviously super talented horses this year again.

MARK CASSE

You know, I'm excited to have Bob back. Look, we all want to win. We want to win, but we want to beat the best. You don't really want to win with a little asterisk. And so I'm happy Bob's back and, and, and I hope to beat him. But there's no question that Bob

Baffert is very popular and draws a lot of people's attention and he deserves to be back.

And, and I'm giving the best of luck to him. Best of luck to Mike. I, I really might like

Mike's horse. I think Journalism. If you said to me, Mark, you get to pick one horse and you don't have to run against him, it would be Journalism.

CAMERON DRUMMOND

And just a quick follow up to that, that that's pretty high praise for Journalism. I guess what makes you say that or what kind of characteristics about the horse really pop out to you in that way that that he has that kind of you have that opinion of him I should say?

MARK CASSE

Yeah, well, he's been extremely consistent, well bred horse. I think his races have been impressive. I've got to see him now train for the last two days and I've been impressed.

The other horse I'm really impressed with as well is, is Bill Mott's horse. I think both of those horses look excellent and, and they're both going to be extremely tough. And I just, I think Journalism is, Bill, I can't think of Bill's horse's name (Sovereignty), Right to see, I always relate every horse to the trainer, not so much the name, Bill's horse is a really good horse and he likes Churchill Downs. So yeah, I think both of those horse will be very tough.

JIM GLUCKSON

Well, Mark, this is Jim again. Wanted to thank you for joining us on the call today. Very good luck with you and Sandman and all your horses running on Derby week. Best of luck to you.

MARK CASSE

Well, I appreciate and hopefully after the Derby you want to talk to me again.

JIM GLUCKSON

We'd like to do that, absolutely.

MARK CASSE

OK. Have a great day. Thank you. Bye bye.

JIM GLUCKSON

Thank you, Mark. Bye, bye now. Alright, let's jump gears here and move right in to Lonnie Briley, who is joining us here. Lonnie, of course, the trainer of Coal Battle, winner of the Smarty Jones, The Rebel and 3rd place finisher in the Arkansas Derby for owner Robbie Norman. Lonnie, thank you for joining us this afternoon.

LONNIE BRILEY

Yes, Sir.

JIM GLUCKSON

Good to have you, Lonnie. I must say that it's a great story here with Coal Battle, a \$70,000 Texas Thoroughbred Association yearling purchase two years ago and now he's earned more than \$1.1 million. Can you tell us first from the sale, what was it that caught your eye about him, about him that you wanted to make that purchase?

LONNIE BRILEY

Well, I probably looked at about 20 horses and I had on my list and then it got down to two, Coal Battle and another horse by Street Boss. And then I kept looking him over and then I just kept going back to Coal Battle and I figured he was the one, you know, I wanted. And he's a nice colt. He's a good looking colt, you know, pretty head on him and good eye, good long neck arm, good hip, shoulder, you know, a good walk on him. He had all the tools to be a racehorse.

JIM GLUCKSON

Very good, very good. Lonnie, yesterday you were pleased with this half mile work of 47.80. Can you comment a little bit more about that and his future workout plans before the Derby?

LONNIE BRILEY

Yeah, usually he's not a big workhorse, you know, he'll go out there and work, but he protects himself. And his last couple of works have been a little more serious, you know, like he's starting to kind of mature and, and come into himself and, you know, order seven and four kind of surprised me for him, really. And not that he can't do it, it just he usually doesn't do it, but he came back good. And I walked him the next day and today he jogged and he was full of himself. And he'll probably about 5 days from the Derby, he'll work a little 3/8 kind of open his lungs a little bit, OK.

JIM GLUCKSON

Very good, very good. Well, Lonnie, I think we have some media on the line that they want to ask you a question here. So, Ynnah, let's turn this back over to the Q&A session, please.

OPERATOR

Yes, Sir. Thank you. Thank you once again. Should you have a question, please press * followed by the number 1 on your telephone keypad. Your first question comes on the line of Byron King from Blood Horse. Please go ahead.

BYRON KING

Hi Lonnie, thanks for taking time for us. I we do appreciate it. I wanted to ask you about Coal Battle's fan support or attention back in Louisiana. Have you gotten much feedback

from the folks back home and how excited are they about a horse that began his career at Evangeline Downs running in the Kentucky Derby?

LONNIE BRILEY

Well, there's a lot of people from Louisiana that's, you know, they calling and leaving text messages and things of that nature, you know, opening look and stuff like that, you they know it's a tough battle. Twenty horses and kind of get positioning and the luck of the draw, you know. But yeah, they pretty excited, you know, having a horse from Louisiana coming up here.

BYRON KING

I believe it. I believe it. Obviously Louisiana is known for developing its jockeys to come up on the make it on the national stage, but fewer, fewer race horses, obviously the great John Henry once raced down than Evangeline. But talk a little bit about how a good horse can kind of come from, a relatively off the radar sale, compared to say, the big ones that Fasig-Tipton in Kentucky and begin his career at at Evangeline and make it all the way to the first Saturday in May at Churchill Downs.

LONNIE BRILEY

Well, you know, today, the way horses are bred, I think anybody can come up with a runner. You know, 20 years ago, it's like it was a handful of good horses and stallions I'm

saying. And then now the way horses are bred, it seems like anybody can come up with a runner. When I found this colt in Texas, I love the first foal out of the mare and then, I had a Stay Thirsty colt that I liked and it kind of the same pedigree. So it kind of made me look at this horse twice and then I got him, broke him and, he was very, very smart from day one. And then I ran him at advancement and he went very easily. And then I went to Kentucky Downs with him and running on the grass and he got in trouble. He was the 12th horse, the 11 horse kept bumping him a couple of times. So the rider took him back. And then at Kentucky Downs, they got that long crooked stretch and he come running down there and made a heck of a move and then galloped past the winners 5 or 6 lengths after the wire. And so it kind of he showed me there's a little more to him, you know, and, and then I ran him in the Jean Lafitte at Delta (Downs) and he won that. And then I went to the Springboard Mile and he won that. And then I went to the Smarty Jones, he won that and then the Rebel Stakes, he won that. And then the Arkansas Derby he was a little fresh that day. And I had to actually put (inaudible) on the walk and normally I wouldn't have to do that with him. And, and then when it broke and there's 2 speed horses kind of copying and speed came, went to the front and open up 5,6,7 lengths, I guess, and we're sitting third. And, and I was OK with that because I knew they were setting good fractions. And when they went 45, I said I had that's just what I wanted, and but the two front horses start backing up and my rider kind of pulled the trigger a little too soon at the half mile post instead of waiting until the 5/16 pole and then, he went to the front. But he was done. He got, you know, a little heavy, just

moved him too early. And when he ran third, he still ran a good race and we proud of him.

BYRON KING

Thank you, Sir.

OPERATOR

Thank you. And your next question comes from the line of Chelsea Hackbarth from Paulick Report please go ahead. Miss Hackbarth, your line is now open.

CHELSEA HACKBARTH

Hey, Lonnie, after the Arkansas Derby, you said you had a plan for Kentucky so that he wouldn't be quite so hot in the in the post parade and the warm up. Can you tell us a little bit about what that plan looks like?

LONNIE BRILEY

Well, it's a little, it's cool over here. The weather's real nice and he's taken to the track real nice and he's been training hard. I mean, he's worked a half mile a couple of 5/8 and just worked 1/2. And he's more or less, like I said, he's never been a real big workhorse, but his works have improved every time he worked over here. And, and it seems like

mentally he's matured a lot more since the Arkansas Derby and, and he has one more little prep for work and then that'll be it.

CHELSEA HACKBARTH

Do you have any concern about how he'll handle the crowds on Derby day?

LONNIE BRILEY

Well, yesterday we schooled him in the paddock. We brought him to the paddock and we saddled him in the paddock. And it's a lot bigger arena than at Oaklawn Park. You know, Oaklawn is small and congested and, but this is a pretty good arena, a nice arena and I think you'll be OK in it. I mean, that's a lot of people. You know, you're putting a lot of pressure on a horse when you do the walk up and you're going to bring them to the 1/8th pole and, and everybody goes in the paddock, then you bring the horses. You know, it's a lot of pressure on a horse.

CHELSEA HACKBARTH

Good luck, Lonnie.

LONNIE BRILEY

Thank you.

OPERATOR

Thank you once again. Should you have a question, please press * or fall for the one on your telephone keypad. Once again, that is * and one to ask a question.

LONNIE BRILEY

OK.

OPERATOR

No further question at this time. Please proceed.

JIM GLUCKSON

All right, Lonnie, this is Jim again. Thank you very much for joining us today on the call.

And we really appreciate, we really appreciate the time. And best of luck to you and

Coal Battle in the Kentucky Derby.

LONNIE BRILEY

Thank you very much and y'all have a wonderful day.

JIM GLUCKSON

Thank you, Lonnie. Lonnie Briley, everyone. Thank you. Now this concludes our conference call for today. Want to thank all our guests, Bill Mott, Michael McCarthy, Mark Casse and Lonnie Briley, of course, for joining us. I want to remind everyone that today's call has been recorded and the playback of the call and the transcript will be posted on ntra.com in the next 48 hours. So thank you very much and have a great day. And we'll speak to you soon at the Preakness call in a couple of weeks. Thanks very much.

OPERATOR

Thank you. And this concludes today's call. Thank you for participating. You may all disconnect.