

November 2, 2013



An interview with:

MARTIN GARCIA

BOB BAFFERT

PAUL WEITMAN

MIKE PEGRAM

THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of the \$1.5 million Xpressbet Breeders' Cup Sprint. We're joined by winning jockey, Martin Garcia. He had his second win on the day in the Breeders' Cup, both of them for trainer, Bob Baffert. Martin, this was not an easy trip. You were in tight early on, and then had to circle everybody. Tell us about the trip?

MARTIN GARCIA: Well, I was having a really good post, and then like I know you say I had a rough trip, but I was considered like I have a lot of horse, so that's why I just waited. Then I just decided to go outside.

Q. You've been on this horse in the morning, so you must have had a lot of confidence. He's kind of touted himself the last few weeks as a major contender, despite only won one race in the last 18 months?

MARTIN GARCIA: Yes, he was doing really, really good the time before he ran. And then Mr. Baffert told me just give me a race, and he's going to be ready for the Breeders' Cup,

and I think that's one of the best horses that I've ever run, really fast.

Q. You could tell that you had a lot of horse. You had no hesitation about circling them all, going six-wide into the stretch.

MARTIN GARCIA: Well, you can see, I was having a lot of horse, and then when I went by everybody he started looking around and he was trying to like it a little bit and trying to go find other horses.

Q. As long as we have you here, can we ask you about New Year's Day as well, and can you give everybody a description of that trip as well?

MARTIN GARCIA: Of course. Well, I --

Q. Just tell us how the ride was and about that win as well?

MARTIN GARCIA: Well, I've been pretty lucky to be on top of him too. He's a really good horse. He has been learning a lot since the first time that he went.

Q. What was your instructions?

MARTIN GARCIA: He told me you need to win. If you don't win, don't come back, just keep going around (laughing).

Q. Can you talk quickly about going wide and not worrying about it in such a short race?

MARTIN GARCIA: I didn't have a choice. There were plenty of horses in front of me.

THE MODERATOR: We have here, Mike Pegram in the middle, and Paul Weitman on the right, and Bob Baffert is joining us as well. Mike, you seem pretty happy?

MIKE PEGRAM: Yeah, you know what? You need to be lucky to win these kind of races. It's all about people and horses and I've been lucky to have people like Martin, Karl and Paul as greatest partners that you can ever have. And what can I say about Bobby? I mean, we've been here before. He deserves it all, and Martin a little bit. You did listen today.

THE MODERATOR: Martin, this is a major day for you. Your first two Breeders' Cup wins. Can you talk about what these wins mean to you?

MARTIN GARCIA: This means a lot to me because I don't have that much experience in these big races, and I think it's kind of going to open a lot of doors for me, and Mr. Bob to give me more opportunities like these.

THE MODERATOR: Bob, this is another interesting training feat on a day where we've seen horses come off long layoffs and this is the second start in 18 months for this horse. Can you talk about getting the horse ready for this race off such a long break the second time?

BOB BAFFERT: Yeah, you can only do it -- they have to be a great horse. I almost had him ready last year, and then he had one of these little setbacks, something totally different. But he came back this year, and we just freshened him up. I didn't want to take him to Del Mar.

I got the race into him here, and he was training really great. I thought he'd win and run well, but the way he won when he went 7 and change, and the way he did it and he came back, you know, my first -- I wanted to see how he was, and he wasn't really tired. And Martin said when he came back to the winner's circle, he said, now he's ready. So when he told me that, I said we'll just monitor him.

I just told the boys here that if he's good, we're going to definitely take a shot at it. Here we are. It's a training feat, we have great staff. We have a great staff and we get them ready. Mike Marlow, Jimmy Barnes, my assistants. Everybody works hard.

But you have to have the ingredients. If you don't have a horse like this, only certain horses like a Midnight Lute, Secret Circle can pull something off like this, especially going six furlongs three weeks later. The bounce factor and all that stuff, well, he bounced back in the winner's circle.

Good horses, if you have them ready, they'll show their stuff. We had a great post. I was a little bit leery of him. But about the 3/8 pole I saw the outside horse was pressuring him like he didn't look comfortable. Once they got in front of him, then he looked like he had them in a good spot. Then turning for home, when he came wide there, I thought, well, he's given up a lot of ground. But you could just see this does not like to lose, if you look at his record.

You know, the loss to Bodemeister at Oak Lawn was too far for him. I think he was tailing off a little bit. But at that distance, it's just way too much for him. But what he showed today was incredible. What a race horse he is. Billy Bush was doing a segment on him the other day, from Access Television, whatever it is, they were doing a thing. I was showing him all the horses, Game on Dude, Paynter and everything, and we're walking around the barn.

And I said, but, if you're back in the west in the old days and you wanted to rob a bank, this is the horse you want to get on right here. This is the horse you want. He saw him and said, wow, what a difference. He's that kind of horse. He's just incredible to have.

We're just so lucky to have him. I thank my friend Donato Lanni, when we got there he said I think I found a sleeper, and sure enough he did. Here we are.

THE MODERATOR: He had touted himself a little bit in the mornings the last few weeks. Can you just talk, despite the circumstances, you must have had high expectations based on what you had seen in the mornings?

BOB BAFFERT: I go by what Martin tells me. He work these horses and knows them really well. I could see the way he worked his last work. It was great. But you just don't know, you know. He's off that long, and then to win and run that fast and then to come back and do it against the best sprinters in the world, it's like, boy, it's almost impossible. For him to pull it off, it just shows you he's cut from a different -- he's in a different area code. He's just that -- you can only do it with a super horse like a Midnight Lute or a Secret Circle.

THE MODERATOR: I want to ask you sort of a bigger question about training horses for big days in general, because today we've seen all these horses coming off these long layoffs. Just how things have changed in terms of the desire to have a fresh horse and traditional assumptions about preparing a horse for a big day kind of being out the window these days?

BOB BAFFERT: Sometimes when you have a big stable you're running sometimes, I've come into the Breeders' Cup where my horses haven't performed that well, because they were coming into the end of the race and they'd won really big races. A lot of horses start tailing. It's hard to keep them. The championships are given away in the fall, so you have to keep that in mind. When I brought him back, I really didn't want to do a whole lot. I wanted him on his best on his big days. It's just like most horses. But you just have to -- you want to win the big races. If you want to be involved in the

Breeders' Cup, you've just got to really come into it in a different way, freshen them up.

THE MODERATOR: After two Arkansas Derbies ago, we thought this horse would only be gone a few months. Can you talk about how that turned into more time and more time? Your thoughts as time went on and this horse needed more time to come back?

MIKE PEGRAM: We don't have to get involved with things like that because Bobby knows what he's doing. He's the one that brought us here. He's the reason why you all know our names. So, you know what, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Q. Paul, can we get your impressions from this performance and your thoughts on the race today?

PAUL WEITMAN: Well, obviously, when you win a race like that, you're just elated. Again, Bobby, this is the second horse that we've had -- congratulations, Martin. Good job.

This is the second horse we've had. Midnight Lute was the first. Midnight Lute had one race in a year, and Bobby brought him back. He won --

BOB BAFFERT: It was a bad race.

PAUL WEITMAN: It was a bad race. He grabbed himself. Anyway, here's a horse that's been off for 16 months, and now Bobby runs one race and comes back. So, you know, you just let the coach coach, and that's what we do. We've got a pretty good coach, I think. He knows how to get them ready.

Q. Obviously this horse has had a long layoff, can you go into detail a little bit about why and you said there was more than one setback, and what they were?

BOB BAFFERT: None of it had to do with surgery or anything. It was just he was -- he

wasn't moving well. He was just stiff and jarred up. Mostly just jarred up. I brought him back, and he had an issue with the hind end. Actually, it was the tibia. It was a little bit off one day. So we had to kick him back out one day. So I gave him a lot of time the first time just to get him right. When you have a super-talented athlete, they've never -- they always say just do what's best for the horse, so some, we can bring them quicker, so he just needed that extra time.

Q. Bob, can you talk about the importance of having owners that showed so much patience, so much trust in you through this process of bringing a horseback?

BOB BAFFERT: Well, they know that I want to win at this championship level as much as they do. They know I know the horse really well. But they're like our children. So they know them. You know you're going to do right by the horse and have them ready. If he needs more time, give him more time. Sometimes, if they're not right, they're not going to run well. So it helps. Our timing was just right on, but we just barely made it. Another week and I wouldn't have been able to have made it. I'm lucky I got a race into him. So it just worked out.

Sometimes it's just things happen for a reason. I believe in fate. It was supposed to happen, and it happened.

THE MODERATOR: He's doing really well right now. Does he stay in training for the winter?

BOB BAFFERT: Well, he'll stay in training as long as he stays healthy. I don't see him -- he's a pretty fresh horse. You know, so hopefully he'll be around for a while, have more big races, you know? We have Midnight Lute for the sire. We don't need Secret Circle yet.

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