

Keeneland Successfully Hosts First Breeders' Cup in 2015

American Pharoah captures \$5 million Breeders' Cup Classic in career finale

The Breeders' Cup World Championships made its Keeneland debut Oct. 30-31, 2015, delivering a memorable homecoming to Central Kentucky, the heart of the Thoroughbred industry. Capping the series of 13 Grade 1 races worth \$26 million was the performance by Triple Crown winner American Pharaoh, who won the \$5 million Breeders' Cup Classic by 6½ lengths in track-record time in the final race of his career.

"This was a day that people will look back on and tell people they were here and it's exactly why the Breeders' Cup was created: to showcase the very best of our sport," Breeders' Cup President and CEO Craig Fravel said. "We're thrilled with the crowd over both days, the strong business levels and our gracious hosts here at Keeneland and the greater Lexington area."

Keeneland's picturesque surroundings provided a thrilling backdrop for the Breeders' Cup. The track accommodated guests from around the world with 44,947 fans on Friday, a track record that stood for one day and a record attendance for a Breeders' Cup Friday. Saturday's attendance reached 50,155.

Fans at Keeneland wagered \$20,663,054 for both days of racing. Total common-pool handle for the two days was \$150,574,658.

"The Breeders' Cup at Keeneland has been a tremendous success in every way, from the brilliant performances of the Breeders' Cup champions, both equine and human, to the huge crowds on track



and the unprecedented way in which the Central Kentucky community embraced this great event," Keeneland President and CEO Bill Thomason said. "I couldn't be prouder of the Keeneland team who executed operations at the highest levels to provide guests with an incredibly memorable two days of racing."

The Breeders' Cup was the centerpiece of a slate of globally significant events at Keeneland that filled September, October and November, beginning with the premier 12-day September Yearling Sale followed by the 17-day Fall Meet. On the day before the Breeders' Cup, Keeneland held Prelude to the Cup, which served as a dress rehearsal for the event. The nine-race card, which featured the \$100,000 Lafayette Presented by Keeneland Select, drew 11,818 fans.

Immediately following the Breeders' Cup was the 12-day Keeneland November Breeding Stock Sale, topped by the sale of champion Take Charge Brandi for \$6 million to be the world's most expensive Thoroughbred sold at public auction in 2015. Keeneland successfully closed the fall with the third annual Sporting Art Auction.

Historic Connection

On June 24, 2014, Breeders' Cup Ltd. announced that Keeneland would host the 2015 event, following three consecutive years at Santa Anita in Southern California.

"The Breeders' Cup at Keeneland is a homecoming for many of these great champions who were foaled and raised at Central Kentucky farms, and often sold at Keeneland," Thomason said at the announcement, which was held at Keene Place while Keeneland employees gathered in the Sales Pavilion to watch a broadcast of the event. "The Keeneland team feels that sense of connection and history with the Breeders' Cup, and we look forward to offering fans an extraordinary racing and entertainment experience."

Through its sales and racing, Keeneland's connection to the Breeders' Cup is extensive. Graduates of Keeneland sales (page 269) include Classic winners Wild Again, A.P. Indy, Curlin and Zenyatta. The Fall Meet has produced a number of Breeders' Cup winners (page 273), including two-time Horse of the Year and Mile winner Wise Dan.

From the start, Keeneland emphasized providing a quality experience for fans rather having a quantity of fans attending the Breeders' Cup. To accommodate the crowds while ensuring its noted hospitality and customer service, Keeneland planned to make full use of its entire campus from the Clubhouse, Grandstand and Sales Pavilion to the Keene Barn & Entertainment Center and tailgating area called The Hill.

2015 Breeders' Cup World Championships

Oct. 30 Races

- \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G1)
- \$1 million Las Vegas Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1)
- \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf (G1)
- \$2 million Breeders' Cup Distaff (G1)

Winner

- Hit It a Bomb
- Liam's Map
- Catch a Glimpse
- Stopchargingmaria

Oct. 31 Races

- \$2 million 14 Hands Winery Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (G1)
- \$1 million TwinSpires Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint (G1)
- \$1 million TwinSpires Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint (G1)
- \$2 million Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf (G1)
- \$1.5 million TwinSpires Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1)
- \$2 million Breeders' Cup Mile (G1)
- \$2 million Sentient Jet Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1)
- \$3 million Breeders' Cup Turf (G1)
- \$5 million Breeders' Cup Classic (G1)

Winner

- Songbird
- Mongolian Saturday
- Wavell Avenue
- Stephanie's Kitten
- Runhappy
- Tepin
- Nyquist
- Found (IRE)
- American Pharoah

"Thanks to Keeneland for taking on the enormous job of hosting the world's best Thoroughbreds and their human entourages. It's an honor but also a chore that's demanded over a year and a half of intense planning and preparation."

*Lexington Herald-Leader editorial,
Oct. 29, 2015*



Keeneland fans crowded together for a glimpse of Triple Crown winner American Pharoah, shown entering the tunnel on his way from the Paddock to the race track before the Breeders' Cup Classic.

Race Track Transformation

Fans first saw signs of the Breeders' Cup during the 2014 Fall Meet when a new two-story Clubhouse Chalet situated on the parking lot at the South Lawn between the Clubhouse and final turn underwent a test run for accommodations and food services. During the 2015 Spring Meet, a newly erected Saddling Paddock Chalet was the site of the post position draw for the Toyota Blue Grass (G1) and Central Bank Ashland (G1) and was available to patrons during the racing season.

Breeders' Cup and Keeneland invested \$5 million to create additional premium seating options to enhance the on-site experience for fans and participants. During the summer of 2015, Keeneland added luxury chalets and box seating, which were

available to the public on selected days during the Fall Meet. To meet the strong demand from fans who wanted to be a part of the historic event, approximately 50 percent of the available tickets went on sale to the general public on March 4, 2015, an unprecedented three months earlier than the normal release date for tickets. Offerings included a wide range of seating options located across the Keeneland campus.

Among the venues added for the Breeders' Cup that offered guests unique views were two Trackside Chalets located on the Clubhouse turn. **Trackside Chalet 1** was a two-story facility that featured 17 suites and included the Trophy Lounge, a Breeders' Cup-hosted area for sponsors, VIPs, Breeders' Cup Ambassadors and celebrities. **Trackside Chalet 2**, which

housed 18 private suites, was the first three-story luxury chalet to be used at a sporting event in North America. Suites on the second and third floors had private balconies overlooking the track.

Other venues included:

Grandstand Loge Boxes: Two tiers of Loge Boxes were placed slightly below the permanent box area from the sixteenth pole to just past the Finish Line. Each of the 217 boxes seated six people to accommodate a total of 1,300 fans. The Loge Boxes were accessible from the first-floor Grandstand.

Saddling Paddock Chalet: The chalet ran the entire length of the Paddock.

Breakfast Marquee: The two-story structure located between the north end of the Grandstand and the Racing Office hosted horsemen and VIPs for breakfast

"Keeneland rose to the occasion by building 'chalets' and temporary structures that increased the number of seats significantly and also helped the Breeders' Cup raise tremendous revenue from seat and ticket sales that matched or exceeded other host tracks despite concerns about capacity."

"And all those worries about traffic problems getting in and out of the track? Unwarranted. Keeneland and the Breeders' Cup were extremely efficient in getting people to and from the facility by using limited on-site parking and providing a well-orchestrated shuttle system from off-site locations. The consensus of most who attended was a big thumbs-up."

— Mark Simon, *Daily Racing Form*, Nov. 6, 2015

"With foresight, planning and the ability to test-drive new seating venues and work flows at its regular meet, Keeneland pulled off a remarkably successful Breeders' Cup. To say it exceeded the expectations of horsemen and fans would not be an overstatement."

— Eric Mitchell, Editorial Director and Editor-in-Chief, *The Blood-Horse*, Nov. 7, 2015

"Consensus seems to be out that our 'small' city and racetrack put on a 'world-class' performance"

— Tom Eblen, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, Nov. 8, 2016

Breeders' Cup Highlights

Attendance for Oct. 30: 44,947

This was a track record that stood for one day and a record attendance for a Breeders' Cup Friday.

Attendance for Oct. 31: 50,155

This is the highest on-track attendance in Keeneland history.

Total on-track handle for the two days: \$20,663,054

Total common-pool handle for the two days: \$150,574,658

No. of media credentials issued: more than 800

Keeneland sales graduates that won Breeders' Cup races:

Catch a Glimpse (Juvenile Fillies Turf)
Liam's Map (Las Vegas Dirt Mile)
Mongolian Saturday (TwinSpiresTurf Sprint)
Nyquist (Sentient Jet Juvenile)
Runhappy (TwinSpires Sprint)
Stephanie's Kitten (Filly and Mare Turf)
Stopchargingmaria (Distaff)

"I couldn't be more impressed with how Keeneland, the Breeders' Cup and Lexington handled the event. ... From the moment I got off the airplane, it was like stepping into a world wrapped in Breeders' Cup purple. Signs at the airport, a banner over downtown counting down the minutes, host hotels dressed in signage and Breeders' Cup logos worn by everyone, and an energy downtown that was unlike that in any host city I have seen. ... I have to say that Keeneland was more than up to the task, Lexington embraced the event like the horse capital of the world, and making them a permanent part of the rotation is the only logical conclusion."

"So ... when are we going back?"

— Barry Weisbord, Breeders' Cup Ltd. Member, *Thoroughbred Daily News*, Nov. 4, 2015



Keeneland presented the first three-story luxury chalet to be used at a sporting event in North America.

during Breeders' Cup Week. The first floor accommodated Breeders' Cup racing and ticketing offices.

Enhancements also were made to these familiar places:

Paddock: In the north end of the Paddock, the horse path in front of the stone saddling stalls was enlarged and an additional saddling ring was created. Four mature oak trees, the largest of which stands nearly 40 feet tall and weighs 30,000 pounds, were transplanted. New sod was laid over much of the area.

Meanwhile, Keeneland worked with state and local officials to organize traffic flow and parking. Fans parked their vehicles at off-site parking locations at the Kentucky Horse Park, Rupp Arena and Whitaker Bank Ballpark and rode shuttle buses to Keeneland. The track's drive-thru betting windows became taxi and Uber stands, and a number of private vehicles,

coaches, limousines and other vehicles were accommodated.

Community Support

"One of the things that made Keeneland an attractive host site for the Breeders' Cup is the interest from Central Kentucky," Vince Gabbert, Keeneland's Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, said at the June 2014 announcement.

The Lexington area embraced the Breeders' Cup with an enthusiasm unlike any other host site. To help raise awareness about the event and Keeneland's preparations, the track began offering Breeders' Cup Tours on Aug. 22.

The KentuckyOne Health Breeders' Cup Festival Week from Oct 24-31 offered diverse events with such programs as free outdoor concerts in Courthouse Plaza and Cheapside Park; tours of area Thoroughbred farms; art exhibits and plays in venues



Patrons filled luxury chalets that began on the Clubhouse turn and were able to stand at the rail to watch the races.



Fans in the Saddling Paddock Chalet received a unique view of pre-race activity.

around Lexington; a food truck competition titled the Feeders' Cup; and the "Kentucky for Kentucky" 5k Fun Run & Walk.

At Keeneland on Oct. 26, University of Kentucky men's basketball coach John Calipari helped announce the post positions for the Classic and Distaff at a special gathering at the Maker's Mark Bourbon Lounge. The event drew 1,500 horsemen and fans, equal to the total for the previous seven years combined, according to Breeders' Cup officials.

Another Bluegrass favorite took center stage at Keeneland on Oct. 30, the first day of the Breeders' Cup, when Kentucky native Marlana VanHoose – whose talents have attracted national attention – sang the national anthem.

Several weeks after the Breeders' Cup, Craig Fravel discussed the success of the event before a group gathered for the

Bluegrass Sports Commission.

"All the things we set out to do with the Keeneland Breeders' Cup, I'm happy to say we accomplished," Fravel told the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. "I feel confident we will be back."

"The 2015 Breeders' Cup proved to be a resounding success in so many ways, but it starts with the remarkable work from the management and staff at Keeneland, whose attention to detail and superb execution created a spectacular racing event for all."

– Breeders' Cup President and CEO Craig Fravel,
Nov. 17, 2015



Assisting Keeneland Racing Secretary Ben Huffman (left) in the post position draws for the Classic and Distaff was University of Kentucky men's basketball coach John Calipari.

"Lexington set a new standard for cities hosting the Breeders' Cup World Championships, and it appears likely the city will entertain the racing event again, Breeders' Cup officials said."

— Lexington Herald-Leader, Nov. 24, 2015

Equine Accommodations

Horses competing in the races on the days of Prelude to the Cup and the Breeders' Cup were stabled in the nine barns on Rice Road formally called the Keeneland Training Center. Barns were equipped with new data and wireless systems and a new public address system.

Keeneland also renovated the five-furlong Training Track during the summer of 2015. The old Polytrack surface was removed and maintenance was performed on the asphalt base and existing drainage system. The Training Track was resurfaced with Polytrack repurposed from the chutes of Keeneland's main track, when it was covered in Polytrack through the 2014 Spring Meet.



Located across Versailles Road from Keeneland, Blue Grass Airport attributed its growth in 2015 to its ability to serve as the gateway to visitors – both human and equine – from around the world as Keeneland hosted the Breeders' Cup.