

BARN NOTES

OCT. 2-24 | NO RACING Mondays & Tuesdays | First Post 1 p.m. | Gates Open 11 a.m.

Walden Relishes Rhetorical's Second Coolmore Turf Mile Win

Will Walden celebrated two Grade 1 victories over the span of three days – one that came with more than a few anxious moments and another that looked pretty certain halfway through the race.

The near certainty came in Saturday's 41st running of the \$1.25 million Coolmore Turf Mile (G1), won by Rhetorical. The Not This Time gelding won the Coolmore Turf Mile for the second consecutive year, cruising through slow early fractions under Irad Ortiz Jr. and kicking home to win by 2¼ lengths over the late-running Lake Forest (GB). Walden watched Rhetorical get away to a :49.76 half-mile split and knew he'd be tough from there to the finish.

"Tip of the cap on the masterclass ride by Irad," Walden said. "You can't let a horse of that caliber go those fractions. But look, we caught the wrong end of it in the spring. We were on the wrong end of that with Zulu Kingdom (IRE) and did the same thing. Those talented turf milers, if you let them go anything slower than 48 and 2, it's really tough to catch them, they're so talented."

Rhetorical returned to Walden's barn at Churchill after the race and will do most of his work there for the Oct. 31 FanDuel Breeders' Cup Mile (G1) at Keeneland.

"He ate well last night and looked great jogging this morning," Walden said. "Obviously we'll keep a close eye on him over the next couple days, but right now he couldn't have come out of it any better."

Rhetorical's win came about 48 hours after Minaret Station secured a spot in the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) with a victory in the



Trainer Will Walden

Joe Hirsch Turf Classic (G1) at Belmont Park. Jose Ortiz rode the 4-year-old Instilled Regard colt to victory and needed to survive a lengthy stewards inquiry into the stretch run for his first Grade win.

"Minaret Station, for a long time we felt like he was that caliber and it was nice to see him finally put it together," Walden said. "Even though we had to sweat it out there."

Walden said Minaret Station, winner of the 2024 Castle & Key Bourbon (G2), would also train at Churchill for the Breeders' Cup.

▪ By Tom Law

Race Day Essentials



How to Watch

Sunday, Oct. 4
5-6:30 p.m. Peacock,
FanDuel TV

**Keeneland
YouTube**

WATCH HERE

Complimentary Digital Program



FREE DOWNLOAD

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Oct. 4
Tailgating on The Hill
Thursday, Oct. 8
Make-A-Wish Day



Classic Q Breeders' Cup Bound After First Lady Victory

Trainer Mark Casse and the owners of Classic Q were left with a Breeders' Cup dilemma after the 4-year-old Classic Empire filly edged Lush Lips (GB) on the wire to win Saturday's First Lady (G1).

The FanDuel Breeders' Cup Mile (G1) or the Maker's Mark Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf (G1), both Oct. 31 at Keeneland, are the choices. All that's left are the few weeks of training between now and then and the decision.

"Eeny, meeny, miny, moe," Casse joked about how he'll make the choice as he walked from his barn to the track with Hugh and Valerie Dailey of co-owner Blue Crevalle Racing to watch a set of breezers Sunday morning. "It's how I train all my horses."

All joking aside, Casse said he'd get some input from the Hall of Fame jockey aboard for Classic Q's last five starts, which include two Grade 1 wins, a Grade 2 victory and two other graded-stakes placings.

"I'll talk to Johnny Velazquez a little bit about it," Casse said. "He'll have some thoughts. I have some thoughts, too. We know she can go a mile and I think she'll go a mile and three-sixteenths, too."

Classic Q put the Daileys, Gary Barber and Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners in that enviable position when she won the 1-mile First Lady by a nose. She made up more than a length from the eighth pole to the finish for her second Grade 1 win of the year, along with the Just a Game (G1) Presented by Resolute Racing in June at Saratoga.

Classic Q would face males in the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Mile, a race Casse

won with eventual Hall of Fame filly Tepin in 2015 at Keeneland. Tepin won the Mile after prepping with a victory in the First Lady.

Hugh Dailey said he'd leave the decision to Casse, a nod to his longstanding relationship with the trainer that dates back to dealings with Casse's late father Norman Casse. Mark and Tina Casse, through their Quintessential Racing Florida operation, are frequent partners with Blue Crevalle horses.

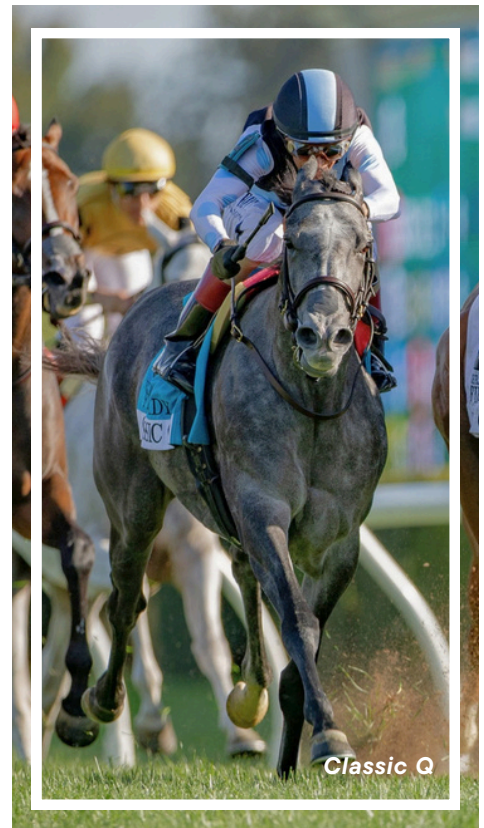
"We've been partners for a long time," Dailey said. "I was a banker in Florida for 42 years. His dad was one of my big customers. And of course Mark was in Canada for a while then came back and we started doing a lot of stuff. My wife has been breeding horses for 40 years and this has been a thrill."

The Daileys are also partners in Group 1 winner Bacio, who figures to be the favorite for the Oct. 31 Prevagen Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint (G1) for trainer Wesley Ward.

"The first time I got interviewed was at Saratoga when we won a stakes, the Wild Applause, listed stakes and the woman said, dream big, you just won a race at Saratoga. What's your big dreams for this horse?" Hugh Dailey said. "I told her, 'Our dream was winning a race at Saratoga.' It was a stakes race then we went back and won the Just a Game. Yesterday was on another level. That was just unreal."

"We know full well the Breeders' Cup might never happen again. This is surreal."

■ **Tom Law**



Classic Q

WHAT'S IN A NAME

CACTUS CLOSER



KAK-tus KLOH-zer

Race 8

Charlie Monfort, a partner in the horse, is the owner of the Colorado Rockies, who play in the "Cactus League" during Spring Training.

FROM KEENELAND LIBRARY ARCHIVES

OCT. 4, 2014

The Shadwell Turf Mile (G1), now the Coolmore Turf Mile, became Keeneland's first million-dollar race. Hall of Famer Wise Dan won it.



COOLING OUT AFTER FALL STARS SATURDAY

BREEDERS' CUP JUVENILE NEXT FOR CLAIBORNE BREEDERS' FUTURITY TRIO

American History secured a spot in the Oct. 30 FanDuel Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1) with his off-the-pace win in Saturday's Claiborne Breeders' Futurity (G1).

His trainer, Todd Pletcher, watched the performance between races at Belmont. He didn't feel great about what he saw from the start.

"I was pretty concerned," Pletcher said after American History spotted the field a few lengths with a bad start. "He didn't break well, broke outward and put himself in a compromised position. I started to feel better watching him regain himself, get around the first turn and on the backstretch, then he kept coming down the lane."

Owned by WinStar Farm, First Go Racing and CHC Inc., the \$825,000 Keeneland

September Yearling Sale purchase came into the Claiborne Breeders' Futurity off a 7¼-length win Aug. 22 at Saratoga going 6 furlongs.

"We were hoping for a good effort in his debut and he ran to the way he had trained," Pletcher said. "And we always felt that more distance and two turns was what he was looking for. Throw in that he got a Grade 1 win Saturday and it was that much better."

Pletcher said American History would remain with his string at Keeneland to prepare for the Breeders' Cup Juvenile, a race he's won five times, including last year with Claiborne Breeders' Futurity winner Ted Noffey.

Runner-up Coach Pope and third-place Q B Rocket will remain at Keeneland for a possible run in the 1 1/16-mile Juvenile.

"He will stay at Keeneland and point to the Breeders' Cup Juvenile," said Kenny McPeck, who trains Coach Pope. "I said pre-race that if a horse beat us it probably was going to be American History. They went a little quick early and went eyeball to eyeball with Q B Rocket. That was asking a lot. He held off the one he was up against and then he got run down. He will get a lot out of this race and move forward."

Blake Cox, assistant to his father, Brad, said Q B Rocket, beaten 1 ¼ lengths by American History and just a neck for second, will stay at Keeneland for a few days before heading back to Churchill Downs while his connections consider the Breeders' Cup.

THOROUGHBRED CLUB OF AMERICA TOP THREE HEADED TO BREEDERS' CUP

The top three finishers from the Thoroughbred Club of America (G2) appear headed to the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint (G1).

Green Lantern Stables' Evanescence earned an automatic spot in the field with her "Win and You're In" victory and the connections of runner-up Praying and third-place Ecclatant also appear on the way.

Eddie Kenneally trains Evanescence and said the 4-year-old Munnings filly returned to his barn at Churchill after the race.

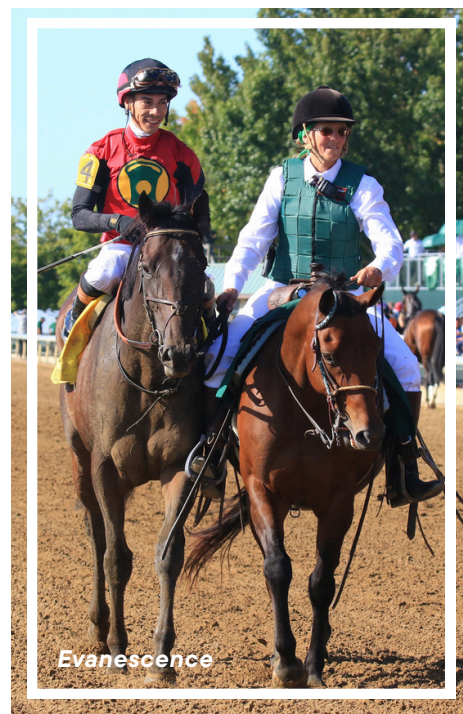
"She's been training for a while there," Kenneally said. "We have some at Keeneland, but we wanted to send her back for now. It all looks like the Breeders' Cup. We'll get together soon and make a final decision, but that looks like the plan."

Robbie Medina said the same for Praying, last year's TCA winner who set the pace before being caught at the wire to finish a

neck back in second. The 4-year-old daughter of Vekoma will stay at Keeneland to train for the Breeders' Cup.

"Looking at her this morning, she doesn't tout you too much," Medina said. "She's kind of antisocial, stands at the back of her stall, she trains like she's aggravated. For the two weeks going into that race, this filly really started touting herself. She was happy. It was probably because the weather started getting a little cooler. Looking at her this morning, she was bright-eyed, standing in front of the stall, something she rarely ever does. She's never run a bad race at Keeneland. As long as she keeps ticking over well, we'd be foolish not to give her another chance."

Blake Cox, assistant to his father Brad Cox, said Ecclatant would stay at Keeneland to prepare for the Filly and Mare Sprint. She finished 4¾ lengths behind Praying in third, her first loss in three starts at Keeneland.



JOE SHIESTY PUNCHES BREEDERS' CUP TICKET IN WOODFORD

Joe Shiesty delivered another strong performance Saturday at Keeneland, capturing the Woodford (G2) Presented by FanDuel and putting himself on track for the Oct. 31 Prevagen Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint (G1).

Trainer Eric Foster was pleased with how the gelding came out of the effort. "He's doing really well," Foster said. "As long as he's healthy and training good, that (the Turf Sprint) will be our plan."

Foster also credited the Keeneland atmosphere as a factor in the gelding's success.

"He's got a good record everywhere, but I think he thrives off the crowd at Keeneland," Foster said. "He likes the crowds. We were tickled with him."

The 5-year-old gelding by Air Force Blue shipped back to Ellis Park following his victory, where he will train before returning to Keeneland for the Breeders' Cup.

Wesley Ward said the "Breeders' Cup is still on the table for Woodford runner-up No Nay Hudson (IRE) (after we) spoke with Charlie O'Connor, who manages For the People Racing Stable and Andrew Farm."

No Nay Hudson finished a half-length behind Joe Shiesty in the 5½-furlong Woodford.

"I spoke with Jose Ortiz after the race and he said we might have won if the race had set up a little different," Ward said. "We asked him what he thought about the Breeders' Cup and he said 'Absolutely.'"

No Nay Hudson will remain at Ward's Keeneland base.

• Jax Rogers, Liane Crossley and Tom Law

PERSONAL

PICK 5 KASSIE CREED

Keeneland Equine Safety

Birthplace: Las Cruces, New Mexico

Birth Date: Aug. 5, 1992



Q: What's your favorite part of the job?

A: Probably that I still get to be around horses all day. I basically get paid to stare at horses all day, so that's really my favorite part. They're so important to what we do here at Keeneland. I also love managing the crossing guards; it's a really good group of people.

Q: What's your favorite Keeneland memory?

A: Probably Breeders' Cup 2022. I'd worked a couple Breeders' Cup's before that, but this was the first time being on the safety side, and I got an in-depth look at how they do everything here. I'm really excited for this year.

Q: Do you have a favorite vacation spot or place you go on your time off?

A: I do love camping. I got to go to South Africa in February, and I will likely visit there again because of how amazing it was.

Q: How have the skills you learned in the U.S. Navy transferred to what you do now?

A: The teamwork part. There's so much of what you do in the military that you have to rely on each other, and we're very much about that here at Keeneland. We work with outside maintenance and security; there are a lot of pieces that go together, and so because of that, I've really been able to transfer that skill here at Keeneland.

Q: If you could have dinner with one person, who would it be?

A: Isabel Klee. She's an author, and she's really big in the dog rescue space, and that's something that I hope to do one day, so I would love to have dinner with her.

INSIDE THE DETAILS

Know the Game

Milestone Trophy

Keeneland's Milestone Trophy collection recognizes owners for graded stakes victories. Owners receive a Keeneland Trophy Cup for each graded stakes win. After eight wins, the Cups add up to a Keeneland Tray. Every additional eight graded stakes wins earns an owner the next milestone piece: a Pitcher at 16 wins, a Bowl at 24 and a 24-karat gold Vase at 32.

PEOPLE • HORSES • STATS

Worth Knowing

Ready to Unleash, dam of the Woodford (G2) Presented by FanDuel winner Joe Shiesty, had a big Saturday as her daughter by Yaupon, Brickyard Belle, captured the Matron (G3) at Belmont Park within an hour on the same day.



Joe Shiesty wins the Woodford

Barn Notes Contributors

Liane Crossley
Meredith Daugherty
Gabby Gaudet
Tom Law
Amy Owens
Jax Rogers
Keeneland Photos

2026 Breeders' Cup at Keeneland

Pre-Entries Released | Thursday, Oct. 22

Post Position Draw | Monday, Oct. 26

Racing | Friday, Oct. 30 and Saturday, Oct. 31

Upcoming Sales Events at Keeneland

Championship Sale at Castleton | Wednesday, Oct. 28

November Breeding Stock Sale

Tuesday, Nov. 3-Wednesday, Nov. 11

November Horses of Racing Age Sale | Thursday, Nov. 12



Browse the

**BARN
NOTES
ARCHIVE**