

BARN NOTES

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

Ag Bullet's Path to Breeders' Cup Starts in Sunday's Franklin Stakes

Trainer Richard Baltas sent Grade 1 winner Ag Bullet from California to Kentucky with one goal in mind.

"If she runs good here, I'll run her right back in the Breeders' Cup," Baltas said while grazing the 6-year-old mare Wednesday morning.

Here is not only Keeneland, where Ag Bullet arrived from Santa Anita Tuesday, but also Sunday's 30th running of the \$400,000 Franklin (G2) for fillies and mares sprinting on the turf. Ag Bullet is the 2-1 favorite in the field of eight for the Franklin, the featured eighth race on Sunday's nine-race program.

Owned by Calvin Nguyen and Joey Tran, Ag Bullet might need a win in the Franklin to earn a spot in the field for the Oct. 31 Prevagen Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint (G1) at Keeneland. She's contested the last two editions of that race, finishing third in 2024 and second in 2025, both times at 5 furlongs at Del Mar.

Ag Bullet comes into the Franklin off two starts this season: a second in the Jaipur (G1) June 6 at Saratoga and a disappointing eighth as the favorite in the Never Say Die Kentucky Downs Ladies Turf Sprint (G1) Aug. 29.

"If she doesn't run well (in the Franklin), we'd probably skip it," Baltas said of the Breeders' Cup.

"She needs to run better than her last race, and I think she will run better."

Ag Bullet was third in the 2024 Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint, a neck behind winner Starlust. She finished 2½ lengths behind future champion female sprinter Shisospicy in last year's edition. The 6-year-old Twirling Candy mare goes 5½ furlongs in the Franklin, the same distance as this year's Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint. She's proven at that trip, with a win over males in the 2025 Jaipur at Saratoga.

Ag Bullet also returns to Keeneland, where she set the pace and faded to fourth in the First Lady (G1) in 2024 going 1 mile off a trio of sharp works on Santa Anita's all-weather training track under jockey Jose Valdivia Jr.

"I've worked her in company, and I've worked her by herself," Baltas said. "She's been doing well. She doesn't need too much. Jose knows her really well and he likes her. He said she's doing great."

John Velazquez, aboard for Ag Bullet's win in the 2025 Jaipur and her second in last year's Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint, will return on the mare. Ag Bullet drew post seven in the field of eight, which also includes Grade 1 winner Usha, Grade 2 winner Kehoe Beach and last year's Franklin winner, Time to Dazzle.

▪ By Tom Law



Race Day Essentials



How to Watch

Every Race Day

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Saturday, Oct. 10

4-6 p.m.
FS2

Sunday, Oct. 11

3:30-5:30 p.m.
FS1

Complimentary Digital Program



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Upcoming Events

Sunday, Oct. 11

Kids Club Family Day
Presented by Golisano
Children's at UK



Two or One for Ward in Sunday's Franklin

Trainer Wesley Ward has entered Shoot It True and Kehoe Beach in Sunday's \$400,000 Franklin (G2) at 5½ furlongs on Keeneland's turf course, but the former might stay in the barn depending on the weather. Ward said she will be scratched if he deems the course too soft for her liking.

"We are going to watch the weather for Shoot It True," Ward said Friday morning about the 4-year-old Munnings filly owned by Ice Wine Stable and Smart Choice Stable. "Kehoe Beach will still run regardless of surface or weather conditions."

A two-time winner on dirt, Shoot It True has been an exacta and trifecta player's dream since switching to grass where her record is 7-3-3-1. She comes to the Franklin off a 3-length victory in a Saratoga allowance race on Aug. 13 and is seeking her first stakes graded triumph after finishing second in the Unbridled Sidney (G2) at Churchill Downs on May 1 and third in Saratoga's Intercontinental (G2) on June 4.

Kehoe Beach enters off a 2¾-length score in an allowance race at Kentucky Downs on Sept. 6. Purchased for \$450,000 at the 2022 Keeneland September Yearling Sale, the 5-year-old Omaha Beach mare was third in Keeneland's Jenny Wiley (G1) at 11/16 miles on the grass last year.

"(Owner) Tom Bachman sent her to me when she was a yearling, and she was beautiful, a stunner," Ward said. "That is why he gave so much money for her. She's a big, beautiful mare and runs like hell."

▪ *By Liane Crossley*



Kehoe Beach

Sycamore Keeps Sharp's Strong Season Rolling

Lambeth's late-running victory in Friday's \$400,000 Sycamore (G2) gave trainer Joe Sharp his second graded stakes win of the Keeneland Fall Meet and added to what's already been a career-best season for the Kentucky-based trainer.

Lambeth's winner's share of the Sycamore – \$226,300 – plus \$15,513 collected when Spur of the Moment finished second in Friday's finale, a 6-furlong maiden for 2-year-old fillies, pushed the barn's purse haul to more than \$11 million for the year. The barn made \$8,913,479 in purses last year. Sharp is also close to a career season by wins with 144, just two shy of 2025 and his best in 13 years of training.

"It's been a good year," Sharp said Saturday morning. "I already knew I passed it because I've already had a bunch of people say that."

Sharp entered seven horses in five races for Saturday's Keeneland card and another four in three races here Sunday. The stable will send out runners at Keeneland, Belmont Park, Horseshoe Indianapolis and Presque Isle Downs over the next week in everything from maiden claiming to claiming races and allowance to stakes races.

"That's one thing I've prided myself on, having all kinds of horses," Sharp said. "I remember I had an owner early on tell me that if you claim horses nobody will send you good horses. I don't believe that. I've made it my life's work to make sure that's not the case. You watch Steve Asmussen and he does it all. He's a guy that I would gladly model my career after."

Lambeth, a 5-year-old son of Arrogate owned by Carl R. Moore Management, joined Serenas Ghost as Sharp's graded stakes winners at the Fall Meet. She won the Jessamine (G2) Presented by Keeneland Sales on opening-day Fall Stars Friday. Sharp has five graded wins this year – also a career best for a single season.

Lambeth drew in off the also-eligible list to win the Sycamore under Jose Ortiz. A stakes winner going 12 furlongs in the Temperence Hill (L) in late March at Oaklawn Park, Lambeth finished 11th in the Hagyard Fayette (G3) at last year's Fall Meet before earning some time off. He's raced exclusively on grass this season, including a run of three straight stakes heading into the Sycamore. Lambeth ran in two stakes at Kentucky Downs – finishing a troubled eighth in the Tapit (L) going 1 1/16 miles and a close second in the Marsh McLennan Bowling Green Gold Cup Invitational nine days later.

"Distance is his friend," Sharp said. "It was a good setup yesterday. I can't say enough good things about that horse. We gave him the winter off last winter, he came back and he's had a really, really good year. He's also one of those horses that had some tough trips, some tough luck. It was nice to see him get the trip he needed yesterday. He had tough trips at Ellis (in the Green River Island Presented by Sterling Industrial), and at Kentucky Downs in the Tapit, so it's been rewarding to see him now win a stakes. It was nice for him to have that breakthrough." ▪ *By Tom Law*

PERSONAL

PICK 5

SHANE BOREL

Jockey Valet

Birth Date: June 9, 1974

Birthplace: Opelousas, Louisiana



Q: Describe your race day as a valet.

A: A typical day is coming in (the Jockeys Quarters) and just prepping my guys' (Irad Ortiz Jr. and Jose Ortiz) work: what they need to ride with, their helmets, their silks, their saddles, their boots. Just making sure everything's clean and safe and in proper order.

Q: What's your favorite Keeneland memory?

A: There's so many because I've worked here so long. I've been here for 28 years. I've won the (Toyota) Blue Grass Stakes (G1) a couple times: Sierra Leone with Tyler (Gaffalione in 2024), Burnham Square with Brian (Hernandez Jr. in 2025). Those were great moments for me.

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: Occasionally I play golf, but other than that, I like to swim. I have a pool at home, and I really enjoy mowing grass. I also love to travel. I love the Caribbean. I've been to quite a few places in the Caribbean. I've been to New Zealand. (When) it's wintertime in Kentucky, I want to go somewhere warm.

Q: What are you looking forward to for the rest of October at Keeneland?

A: The Breeders' Cup is coming around (Oct. 30-31). One thing I love about Keeneland is it's a destination. People come here to see the place, and they get to watch good racing, really good racing — great racing actually.

Q: Describe the camaraderie in the Jockeys Quarters.

A: Everyone's got to work together to make it work. In what other sport do (athletes) compete on the track and come back in here and sit next to one another in the same corner? You don't see that in basketball, hockey. You got different teams going different directions. There's an understanding (here). Everybody's helpful and wants everybody to succeed. It's a great atmosphere. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

MELEYS



MAY-lees

Race 5

Known as the "Red Queen," Meleys is one of the largest and most powerful dragons in the television series "House of the Dragon."

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Worth Knowing

Braida (FR), who will race in today's Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup (G1) Presented by Dixiana, is trained by Francis-Henri Graffard, who on Sunday sent out Daryz to a second consecutive victory in the famous Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1) at Longchamp in Paris.

WORK TAB

"Everything went well, good breeze for me to get a feel of him. I love him. He's a good mover, well balanced and handles everything. It was just a maintenance work and for me to get a feel of him. He did it very well."

Jockey Flavien Prat on his first time riding Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) candidate Magnitude on Saturday morning. Magnitude went 5 furlongs in 1:00.60 with stablemate Preside.



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