



146th Longines Kentucky Oaks

Post-Race News Conference
Friday, September 4, 2020
Churchill Downs



JIM MULVIHILL: All right, ladies and gentlemen, the winner of the Longines Kentucky Oaks is Shedaresthedevil. And we are happy to be joined now by winning owner Staton Flurry, who owns the horse in partnership with Qatar Racing and Big Aut Farms, as well as winning trainer Brad Cox, who won three races today and, of course, won the Oaks in 2018 with Monomoy Girl, who just won the La Troienne. Brad, congratulations on your big day.

BRAD COX: Thank you.

JIM MULVIHILL: And, Staton, congratulations to you. Brad, I'd like to start with you and, if you could, just recap the race for us.

BRAD COX: Obviously worked out extremely well. We were closer than expected. Honestly, I didn't think the pace was quite as hot as we expected. Thought Swiss Skydiver may be right there with Gamine. Filly broke extremely sharp and put some pressure on Gamine, and it worked out extremely well. She was able to battle with her and put her way turn for home and then fought off Swiss Skydiver. So it was a big effort.

JIM MULVIHILL: Can you talk more about that pace and when you saw Gamine get away with a pretty easy opening quarter?

BRAD COX: I did before I was very well in hand. It looked like he had a lot of horse, and then I saw the thing was 47.4 (47 4/5). I was like, yeah, these types of horses, that's not that fast and well in hand. So I felt confident.

It looked like maybe she started to lean out a little bit. I thought Swiss Skydiver was going to slip up the inside. And then it looked like Johnny [Velazquez] came back over and put a little bit of pressure on Swiss Skydiver, which probably helped out a little bit.

It was a very good trip. Florent [Geroux] did a fantastic job. Filly was training extremely well. She worked three weeks ago with here with Monomoy Girl. She worked well.

And then two weeks ago, she worked by herself solo, and I think she was 3/4 and :11 3/5 It was a fantastic move over, I thought, a little bit of a heavy track that morning. But she skipped through it, good gallop out, and came back last week with the maintenance work. She had been touting herself with the mornings. She had a big one in her.

We've been pointing for this. We wanted to come into this race with, I'd say, juice left in the lemon, and felt like we hadn't squeezed her too much. Obviously, it was a good move. She responded well today and very, very proud of her.



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JIM MULVIHILL: Can you talk more about what gives you the confidence to train up to a race? I heard you talking earlier in the week about what a good workhorse she is? What about her allowed you to do that?

BRAD COX: That's the big thing. If you have a horse that's willing to put in the work of the morning, it gives you a little confidence moving forward. Monomoy Girl, she's fairly good workhorse in company. She's one that taught us a lot obviously. She had a good bit of time between the Cotillion and the Breeders' Cup two years ago, and she had a lot of time between the Ruffian and the La Troienne today.

These good fillies that put a lot into their works and their daily training, you can get away with giving them eight, nine, ten weeks between races and get a big effort out of them. Honestly, you are much better off doing that as opposed to willing them back every three or four weeks in my experience, especially with the fillies.

JIM MULVIHILL: I'm sure on everybody's mind is what this day was like for you without fans here.

BRAD COX: Yeah, unusual to say the least. But obviously a good one. It was a great day for our barn overall, had a fantastic day. Honestly, running Monomoy Girl, when you're 2-5 on a Grade I, it's pretty exhausting. It's taxing on you. It's really the only time -- honestly, it's the only time I ever really get nervous. Honestly, when you are 15-1 in a Grade I, there's no pressure. You just want to run well.

Coming into the race today, I thought we had a big shot. I told Florent, I said, "Ride to win the race. If she runs third, it's a victory" for her residual value as far as down the line being a broodmare. And he rode to win the race and he did it.

Just, once again, very proud of her, his effort, our whole team, Staton [Flurry], Sheik Fahad [Al Thani] for believing in us, Fergus Galvin. Kind of let us as a team kind of guide the ship and they -- we pulled it off. I mean, it was a great achievement. This is what you get up every morning to do, to try to win these Grade Is and play at a high level. And just very blessed and fortunate to be around a lot of great people and a great team assembled that gives us an opportunity with some great horses. Just very fortunate.

JIM MULVIHILL: Thank you. And just so everybody knows, Florent Geroux will be joining us after riding the finale. Staton, I want to check with you. Congrats again. If you can just capture what your emotions have been over the last 20 minutes.



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STATON FLURRY: Just a blur, honestly. Everybody that asked, Hey, how do you think you're going to run? Are you going to win? I told everybody, If we run anything better than 4th, it's a bonus. If we run worse than 4th, it's a disappointment. So it's a bonus.

We're tickled to death. Never dreamed six months ago we would be sitting here. We knew we had a nice filly after a couple of Oaklawn races. But to come in and beat Swiss Skydiver, who crushed us in the Fantasy at Oaklawn; and Gamine, who is phenomenal, maybe one of the best fillies we've seen in a long, long, long time -- to come in and beat both of those, I don't think I would have dreamed it.

Like I said, anything better than 4th was a victory for us, just because we knew what we were running against. But at the same time, we knew we had a fresher horse coming in just because we have kind of dodged the tougher races.

We went with the allowance race two races back and won it by double digits. And went into the Indiana Oaks and went in by six or seven. That was kind of the plan to come in with a fresher horse instead of knocking heads with the big ones early on.

JIM MULVIHILL: How much did Brad [Cox] share with you about what he sees in the morning? What kind of vibes were you getting?

STATON FLURRY: Brad and I talk quite a bit. He's just been telling, she's been training like a monster. We knew when we breezed against Monomoy Girl -- and I think we breezed the bullet that day, or close to it, we knew it was game on then. So it was up to the trip and what the other jocks did, too.

Q. Been ten years since a filly ran in the Derby with the points system. Do you think that's likely to ever change?

BRAD COX: You know, Churchill Downs is home for me, so I can't say a lot. It does make it tough. I think it does. I don't know. I don't really know. It could be tweaked a bit, but it does obviously make it a little tough on the fillies.

Q. Do you think these fillies -- your filly was capable of running in the Derby?

BRAD COX: She would have made a good account of herself. I'm a big fan of Tiz the Law. I'll admit that. Travers was one of the better races I have seen of any horse this year, or in years. It's a fantastic performance. If he runs that race back, he's going to be very tough tomorrow. To say she could be competitive, absolutely she could be competitive over that group.



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Q. Brad, I know you talked a little bit about hoping to get into the Derby at one point, and you had two really good colts earlier in the year with Wells Bayou and Mr. Monomoy. I wonder if you might take us through your year. I know with trainers, it's always up and down. Does this maybe take some of the sting out of the spring?

BRAD COX: We're very fortunate to have Mr. Monomoy and Wells Bayou to accomplish a good bit. Honestly, we had another nice colt, Shared Sense. We just opted to not run in the Derby. And he's still kicking. He's still up and going.

Yeah, this is a major accomplishment for us. I mean, this is -- you know, second biggest race run in Kentucky. We're still after the first one. We're looking forward to winning it. We're looking forward to our first starter. But very pleased with the year we've had. And, hopefully, we'll be able to continue to build and point for the Breeders' Cup with some of these horses.

And we'll see what happens with Shedaresthedevil moving forward. It was a big race today. We'll see how she comes out of it, what kind of number she receives, and we'll see.

But it's a tough race to get to, the Derby, back to your question. It's -- I mean, it's obviously been very tough for me. We had two horses. In February, we had the leader in the clubhouse with Mr. Monomoy. And then end of March, we had the leader with Wells Bayou. And either were able to make it -- make it beyond that. I mean, they kind of fizzled out. Both horses hopefully will be back by the end of the year, early 2021.

JIM MULVIHILL: Brad said to the Breeders' Cup would be a goal. But for a Hot Springs boy, we also know the Apple Blossom is the real long-term goal, right?

STATON FLURRY: Absolutely, absolutely. For me, winning in Hot Springs at Oaklawn, that's the top of the bucket list. That's up there, so... Hopefully we can give her some time off and bring her back fresh and maybe run two or three races there. I think there's a Bayakoa there. There's even the Apple Blossom. If we can sweep all those, get on the Breeders' Cup trail.

Q. You guys talked about it a little bit on the track, how challenging 2020 has been for everyone. What does it mean to get a win of this magnitude when you have to deal with the things that everybody has had to deal with this year?

STATON FLURRY: For me, it's just been so much unknown. Two weeks ago as an owner, didn't even know if we were going to be able to come to the race. So to be here and experience all this and to win the race is great. I'm from Hot Springs, so Oaklawn was halfway through their meet when we had to pretty much pull the plug on all the fans and spectators coming in. We were kind of day-to-day



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there. Are we going to get to run tomorrow? Every horseman was scratching their heads, trying to figure out a plan B if things fell apart there.

So starting in March to now, it's just such a big relief to actually still be able to race and to win something of this magnitude, and to be here to experience it. Because back when we won our allowance race here -- what was it? May? June? Sometime. Owners weren't allowed to be here. So just to be able to be here and experience it is what really means a lot to me.

JIM MULVIHILL: For those who haven't heard, Staton, can you recap the story of the November sale, and how you ended up in partnership with Qatar Racing --

STATON FLURRY: My blood stock agent, Clay Scherer, he was looking at this filly and called and said, Hey, I got this filly I really, really, really, really, really like. Let's see what we can do. And right before the -- I guess about 10, 15 minutes before the horse went in the ring, I think Fergus Galvin, Sheik Fahad [Al Thani's] -- one of his blood stock agents over here approached Clay and said, Hey, let's go in 50%. So let's do it. I'd rather been with him than against him.

My buddy Autry Lowry, who's Big Aut Farms, we had been looking at other horses in the sale that went for much more than what we thought they were worth. I bought 50% and said, Hey, I'm not going to screw you over. We've been looking at horses together. If you want a small piece of this one, you can have it, too.

JIM MULVIHILL: Can you tell us a little bit about your background in racing in Hot Springs and your relationship with Oaklawn Park?

STATON FLURRY: Born and raised in Hot Springs. My family owns most of the parking lots around Oaklawn. Before I could drive, I have been on the parking lots helping out, taking money. Then my dad passed away in 2011, so I pretty much had taken them over. I've gotten to know a lot of different owners and trainers that park with us and fell in love with racing early on. Different people would be like, Hey, come over and watch our horse run. Come get in the picture.

When I graduated college in 2012, I claimed my first horse. We won our second race, and it's been all downhill ever since. (laughter)

JIM MULVIHILL: Brad has been amazing the last few years. How did you get hooked up with Brad, and what can you say about the job he's done?



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STATON FLURRY: A friend of mine, Kevin Martin, my very first trainer, he decided not to come back to Oaklawn that year. He went to the fairgrounds and he said, Hey, there's this younger guy that I really want you to use as a trainer. He's the next big thing. I think Brad had maybe 12 horses at the time. We claimed -- I believe it was a 12-5 claimer. Full steam ahead.

BRAD COX: Yeah, Kitten's Joy.

STATON FLURRY: About the only Kitten's Joy that could run on the dirt. He won the first race, Three Hatter. Got claimed. We claimed something else. And one was it. Everything has been going great with Brad, and I don't think we've ever had a cross word. We are both so easy to deal with. He's the captain. I'm just along for the ride.

We had a lot of success with Mr. Misunderstood, and a couple of other horses have won some minor stakes around here. Feels good to get a Grade I together. Feels good to get a Grade I. This is the first one I've had. I think we have run fifth a time or two at Keeneland with Mr. Misunderstood. But knock that off the bucket list, sure a nice thing to do especially in 2020, as bad as everything else has been. A little bright spot.

JIM MULVIHILL: A bright spot, indeed. Congratulations again.

STATON FLURRY: Thank you.

JIM MULVIHILL: We have Florent Geroux with us, the winning jockey from today's Longines Kentucky Oaks.

Florent, congratulations. I just want to hear from you in your words in as much detail as you can give, just tell us about the entire race -- from stepping on the track to hitting the wire.

FLORENT GEROUX: Everything started in the paddock, I thought my filly looked phenomenal physically. Her mind was in business and her coat was great. She was 110% ready. She looked really, really good in the paddock. The warmup went very well. After that, when the race started, she broke extremely well, which always gives you a big advantage, gets you out of trouble right away. Actually, I broke on top of Gamine. I let Gamine go, which everyone expected her to be the quickest filly in the race early on.

From there, I just let her walk out. I just used him as a target and just stayed where I was and tried to pull the trigger at the right time.



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JIM MULVIHILL: Can you talk more about Gamine being the target and whether the fact that it was her on the lead affected any of your decisions?

FLORENT GEROUX: No, I did not. I would have done the same thing if it was another horse. But when you have a horse of her caliber being in front of you, you go to a speed you already know and go head to head because those guys who are going to be behind you are going to be the beneficiary of that crazy walk, you know? Like I did early on, I was on the fence. And we went ding-dong butter with Julien [Leparoux] and we are both even money, and we finished 2nd and 4th.

So that was the race. At the end, I'll digest well today. There was a hiccup. It was an amazing day. But this one, I think there was a mistake. But need to turn the page. And just sensational.

Everything went very well with her. We tried to take all the backward with her. We could have gone to a Grade I, like the American Oaks or the Alabama. We said, you know what? We are going to do Indiana Oaks. And from Indiana Oaks, it's going to give us plenty of time to get her ready for the Kentucky Oaks.

And there was some temptation. There was some short seasons in New York. We just stick with the plan. And I am glad to know the owner also responded very well to that and they were on board. And we got rewarded today.

JIM MULVIHILL: Florent had five wins today. This is his second Kentucky Oaks win in stakes' record time. The first Oaks win, of course, was Monomoy Girl, also for Brad. So naturally people are going to want to compare the two. It's a question I hate to ask, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Can you compare the two?

FLORENT GEROUX: One is a champion and one is not, yet, first of all. Monomoy Girl, the year she was a 3-year-old was not even close to what Shedaresthedevil did. We won a few races with Shedaresthedevil. Shedaresthedevil has been on the go since earlier this year at Oaklawn. She had a couple defeats, but I rode her in 3 3/4 on her.

Monomoy Girl, just incredible. Talk about her, winning six Grade Is and the Cotillion as a 3-year-old. Horse of the year. Hall of fame type of performance right there, you know?

The only thing I'm thinking now, it's going to be very, very hard to find another filly and mare like her. Pretty much impossible.

Q. Coming off a record time and knowing that it's very difficult now for fillies to get in the Derby, do you think that there's a place for your horse in the Preakness?



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FLORENT GEROUX: Shedaresthedevil? It's possible. I mean, right now there's plenty of time between races. It's not like it's back in two weeks. It could be possible. I'm sure there are also other races on board. But I'm sure the trainers and the owners are going to take a look at it. It could be a possibility all right.

Q. Back in July, you had a mild case of COVID-19, and how challenging 2020 has been, not just for you but really for everybody, knowing all that, what does a victory like this mean to you?

FLORENT GEROUX: You are right. 2020 has been rough for everyone in the world. And just being here to have the Derby, even if it's September with no spectators, it's amazing. Because at the beginning of the year, when everyone was staying at home, you know, you thought that was pretty much impossible.

But like you said, I had the COVID, too. I didn't have any symptoms, thank God. But some others, it's not the same case. Many people are dying from this virus, you know? It's very contagious. Even me, I tried to be the most careful as I could and ended up testing positive. It just shows how extremely contagious this virus is. And we are all in this together, and hopefully 2020 will be a nightmare when the year goes on.

Q. Just going back over the start, when you'd break from the gate, what kind of feeling did you have aboard her that just pretty much got you into contention?

FLORENT GEROUX: She gave me a good feeling. When she broke very sharply like this and she came back to me, and she was content, because sometimes you break sharp like this and the horse just wants to go there. They don't come back -- they don't come back relaxed.

When she come back to me in the first time, I thought I was in a great spot. And from there, it was just a question if the filly has enough finish at the end, energy. At least I think I did everything I could, my part, to give my filly the best trip she could.

Q. Just talk about that stretch in pushing her. You might not have been aware of the record, but just that last push she had toward the finish?

FLORENT GEROUX: It was great! There was some very good horses in the race. Grade I winners like Gamine and Swiss Skydiver and for her being able to fight all the way to the wire and finish on top was an amazing performance for sure.



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Q. Five wins today. What was going so right for you all day?

FLORENT GEROUX: Ride horses, simple. You know, when you are on good horses, it helps a lot. After that, everything needs to align. The stars need to be aligned. But the horses are the one. If I was riding three horses in 45-1 shot, I'm not sure I would have won any of them, you know? I think I was -- I was very happy with my day starting. I was hoping to win a few races. Some days you go like this and you end up having zero wins, and sometimes days like today, amazing race.

I have five wins today. And to be honest, at day one, I'm not very pleased knowing eight days I was even money favorite. I went to a speed duel and I finished fourth, you know?

Q. Florent, did you notice that -- does the horse behave differently when there's no fans? Is there anything you noticed?

FLORENT GEROUX: The horses are much calmer when there's no spectators. Horses sometimes get very excited because of the noise. So that's the main thing. That's why those races are very hard to win because those horses, they also need to be very good and very composed and very relaxed before the race, you know?

So I'm not saying today was chilling, but it's not the same. Sometimes we have a very long post-race before the Oaks or the Derby. Those are young horses at 3 years old. They get excited very easily.

Today it was much nicer. I don't know how many people we had. Maybe we had 800 people, and it's pretty quiet. For those horses, it's a very good atmosphere.

Q. Florent, what kind of roller coaster has this been for you the past few months?

FLORENT GEROUX: It's crazy actually, because I've been staying in Kentucky. I've been running at Ellis Park. Usually I use Ellis Park as a base. I kept walking horses here in the morning at Churchill Downs. And I'd travel a lot during the summertime from stakes to stakes. And I was unable to go anywhere. The door closed in New York. I just couldn't ride. Doesn't matter if I bring them a COVID test or whatever. The door was closed. Couldn't go to California. Couldn't go anywhere. So I was stuck here running Ellis Park three days a week.

JIM MULVIHILL: Congratulations again on the Longines Kentucky Oaks. We're also glad to be joined by Lowry Autry, Jr. He's one of the co-owners of Big Aut Farms, is how you will see his name in the program. Autry, congratulations to you.

AUTRY LOWRY: Thank you very much.



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JIM MULVIHILL: Can you just tell us about your emotions over the past half-hour, what this has been like for you?

AUTRY LOWRY: I spent more time crying than anything. (laughter)

It's unbelievable. I knew she was an unbelievable filly. This is a very tough race, in my opinion. It's probably one of the toughest in the last ten years or so. And for her to come out on top was just absolutely amazing.

JIM MULVIHILL: And if you could give us a little bit of the background of your friendship with Staton -- Staton told us the story how you guys ended up in partnership with Qatar Racing. I understand he made sure you were going to be part of it as well.

AUTRY LOWRY: He did. We've been friends about eight to nine years now. He was in a fleet with me, and that's kind of how we developed our relationship. And it just kind of moved forward from there. I race and breed horses. He's up in Arkansas. He's up in Hot Springs. So we just kind of got together and started looking for some. It's worked out very well.

JIM MULVIHILL: And your base, however, is?

AUTRY LOWRY: Bossier City, Louisiana.

JIM MULVIHILL: Bossier City. You race primarily at Louisiana Downs? That would be your home track.

AUTRY LOWRY: Home track, yes. More at the fairgrounds than Louisiana Downs.

JIM MULVIHILL: Very good. Can you talk about what this day has been like without fans here and the different circumstances of 2020?

AUTRY LOWRY: It's been a very challenging year. We've scheduled races, thinking that you're going to be able to run in this race, and then you have to reschedule and go somewhere else. Tracks closing. I was hoping there would be fans here today. That would have been amazing to be able to enjoy this with my family.

But nonetheless, it's still priceless. It's been an unbelievable experience. It's just kind of weird not having any fans at the track when you got horses running down the stretch, when normally that's the loudest time.



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JIM MULVIHILL: What was making you so emotional after the race?

AUTRY LOWRY: I've been a basket case ever since she crossed the line. It was 22 years of blood, sweat, and tears put into this. Me and my dad, we started off extremely small. I'm a fireman in Benton, Louisiana. And we had to manage our money appropriately. And I think we did an outstanding job because now we're Kentucky Oaks winners.

JIM MULVIHILL: I would say so.

AUTRY LOWRY: Very happy with that.

JIM MULVIHILL: Autry, congratulations. We'll let you go celebrate. How does somebody celebrate a Kentucky Oaks win during a pandemic?

AUTRY LOWRY: There's a lot of wine drinking going on right now. (laughter)

I don't know what the rest of the night holds but there's a lot of wine drinking going on right now.

JIM MULVIHILL: Very good.

AUTRY LOWRY: It's absolutely delicious, too.

JIM MULVIHILL: Congratulations, again.