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JOCKEY, TRAINER QUOTES FROM THE 2024 KENTUCKY DERBY

LOUISVILLE, KY (Saturday, May 4, 2024) –

Brian Hernandez Jr., Jockey, Mystik Dan, winner: “It still hasn’t sunk in, it’s so unbelievable. We came into the weekend thinking that we had a really big chance at winning both Friday and Saturday. For the horses to pull it off for us, we have to thank the guys back in the barn. It’s definitely a surreal moment. The last 20 years I’ve ridden in Kentucky, and as a young kid out of Louisiana, I had the chance of sitting in the same corner as Calvin Borel. Watching him ride all those Derbys all those years, and today with Mystik Dan, being in the 3 hole, I watched a couple of his rides, with Super Saver and Mine That Bird, and I decided that we were going to roll the dice. That’s the nice thing about Kenny (McPeck), he lets me make those decisions. We had the right kind of horse to give him that kind of trip.”

Kenny McPeck, Trainer, Mystik Dan, winner: “For three weeks, I’ve felt like we were going to win both races. I can’t tell you why. Both horses have been easy to deal with, the team has done such a great job every day. There’s been no drama. I just believe in mojo, in positive energy and we’ve had a lot of it.”

Tyler Gaffalione, Jockey, Sierra Leone, runner-up: “Everything was going to plan as the horse got into a good rhythm on the first turn as we were able to save ground. I got into a nice position and followed Forever Young and he started to make a good move. I decided to follow him and coming into the stretch, I felt like I had plenty of horse. He wanted to lean in today and made it a little difficult. I had a hard time keeping him straight and that definitely cost us. He gives you everything, very responsive but he loses concentration.”

Chad Brown, Trainer, Sierra Leone, runner-up: “You get beat a nose in the Kentucky Derby, it’s a tough one. But he’s a tremendous horse, nearly undefeated. I’m just so lucky to have him, so proud of his effort today. He did what we asked him to do, just came up a little bit short. (I didn’t think I won) watching it live, but then when they started showing the slo mo, I thought maybe this could be a dead heat because I got a great bob. I just wasn’t in front. I got a great bob actually, but it’s tough to know which angles the TV actually has. But it didn’t feel good when they started to show the 3 horse on the pan shot on the TV. It’s just so hard to get here, so many things have to go right and you have to have the right horse. It’s disappointing the result but I’m so proud of the horse. He ran his race. When you have a deep closer like that, you have to go through some traffic and go wide. I’ll have to look at his trip a little bit closer. But it doesn’t really matter, he got beat a nose.”

Flavien Prat, Jockey, Catching Freedom, fourth: “I was traveling well and had a chance to cut every corner and save all the ground. I was behind the winner turning for home and had a good run.”

Brad Cox, Trainer, Catching Freedom, fourth: “Beautiful trip. When he turned for home, he gave him a good kick. He looked like a winner coming off the turn and just couldn’t go on. Maybe that extra eighth of a mile made a difference.”

Kazushi Kimura, Jockey, T O Password, fifth: “He didn’t break well. This was his third time running and he was in a new country. He probably wasn’t 100 percent mature. Today he finished up strong. I hope the horse can stay for the Preakness.”

Junior Alvarado, Jockey, Resilience, sixth: “He ran great. I had a great trip and turning for home I thought I had a chance. He ran great.”

Antonio Fresu, Jockey, Stronghold, seventh: “I had a beautiful race all the way around. I was very relaxed all the way and then in the stretch when I tried to make a move, he went for a little bit, he got discouraged but didn’t show up in the last part.”

Ben Curtis, Jockey, Honor Marie, eighth: “My race was over coming out of the gate. I got speared from both sides, I lost an iron and had to put it back in. He was nearly down on his head but I gave him time to pick himself up. He didn’t get the smoothest first quarter of a mile and I just let him float around a bit after that. Then I took to the inside because I didn’t want to give away any more ground. He paid for the early exertion but he ran a credible race.”

Umberto Rispoli, Jockey, Endlessly, ninth: “This was his first time on the dirt and he got a lot of kick back in his face. He actually handled it pretty well. Just before the quarter-pole I was trying to follow Sierra Leone but I got in a little traffic. I think he’s a horse that needs to be clear. He ran hard down the lane.”

Michael McCarthy, Trainer, Endlessly, ninth: “He got away from there OK. But the way he runs from the back wasn’t good today. We were concerned about him taking too much dirt in the face, but maybe we shouldn’t have been. He ran ninth and I am happy for him.”

Luis Saez, Jockey, Dornoch, 10th: “He had a really rough trip. Everyone came down on me leaving the gate even after he jumped well. It was just a tough position.”

Danny Gargan, Trainer, Dornoch, 10th: “He had a very bad trip. He was eliminated early. He got very tired. I’m disappointed in the way he ran today.”

Joel Rosario, Jockey, Track Phantom, 11th: “I was on the lead for a while. He ran his race but we couldn’t hang in there. He did his best.”

Jesus Castanon, Jockey, West Saratoga, 12th: “I have no complaints. I was in a good spot early with him but when I got to the half-mile pole, I felt like my horse wasn’t picking up the bridle. He gave me a little run late but it wasn’t his best.”

Irad Ortiz Jr., Jockey, Domestic Product, 13th: “I was very disappointed. We missed the first jump out of the gate, stumbled a little bit. After that, I tried to slow him down and he was fighting me. I was trying get the best out of him and it didn’t work out.”

Adam Beschizza, Jockey, Epic Ride, 14th: “I broke super sharp from the outside post. It was probably a little too fast for the opening quarter-mile. I was a little too aggressive going past the wire. It was a rough, busy race. I was able to keep it uninterrupted for the most for him. It’s just probably a bit too far.”

John Ennis, Trainer, Epic Ride, 14th: “He ran good. He probably didn’t want to run a mile and a quarter. That’s too far for him.”

John Velazquez, Jockey, Fierceness, 15th: “His first jump was not very good. His second and third jump he was OK. He got pretty aggressive since I had to give him a nudge out of there. The horses on the outside put the pressure on and then he got into the bridle. I tried to keep him as settled as much without letting doing too much but he was already engaged. When I let him go, he just didn’t have it.”

Todd Pletcher, Trainer, Fierceness, 15th: “Johnny (Velazquez) said he hopped a little at the start. Then he got wound up in all the company around him trying to make the lead. He couldn’t shake loose like he did in Florida. Just one of those races.”

Frankie Dettori, Jockey, Society Man, 16th: “It was a great atmosphere. My horse tried but he’s probably not at this level. I enjoyed myself, absorbed all the atmosphere and really enjoyed it.”

Danny Gargan, Trainer, Society Man, 16th: “He had a nice trip. He tried hard and that’s the way it goes.”

Keith Asmussen, Jockey, Just Steel, 17th: “I got squeezed a little bit leaving the gate. He was a little aggressive down the frontside for the first time but relaxed beautifully up the backside. I think the world of the horse still. I thought he was in the position to win but just couldn’t get it done today.”

Wayne Lukas, Trainer, Just Steel, 17th: “I thought he ran OK. But he got roughed up leaving there and that :22, :46 did not help at all.”

Jose Ortiz, Jockey Catalytic, 19th: “I broke very cleanly. I was very happy with my trip to the first turn and it was what I was looking for. I was following Brian (Hernandez) on the backside and when we hit the half-mile pole, I couldn’t keep up.”

Florent Geroux, Jockey, Just a Touch, 20th: “I was in the middle, got bounced around a lot from both sides. From there, my horse was very keen, a little relaxed and when it was time to go, he wasn’t there for me. He used a lot of energy early.”

Brad Cox, Trainer, Just a Touch, 20th: “He got bounced around at the start and his race was kind of over after an eighth of a mile, looked like to me and Florent (Geroux) kind of agreed. Overall I was very happy with Catching Freedom’s effort, I really was and the ride Flavien (Prat) gave him. We’ll regroup, not sure where we’ll land.”

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