

Story and Photos by Steve Heuertz (UNLESS NOTED)



Triple Crown and Travers:

A Photographic Story of the 2017 3-Year-Old Season

Every 3-year-old season is first defined by the Triple Crown. In years when an individual horse wins multiple Triple Crown races, it is almost assured that horse will also win end-of-the-year divisional honors. In years when one horse cannot assert himself as the clear favorite throughout the Triple Crown, greater attention turns to the (sometimes referred to) “fourth leg of the Triple Crown,” the Travers at Saratoga. However, through the Travers inconsistency remained the theme of the 2017 sophomore class with four different horses winning each of the four most important 3-year-old races of the season. Here is a look back at Always Dreaming, Cloud Computing, Tapwrit and West Coast and their respective wins in the Kentucky Derby, Preakness, Belmont Stakes and Travers.



143rd running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1)

Louisville, Kentucky - Churchill Downs - May 6, 2017 - Race 12

For Three-Year-Olds - 1 1/4 Miles on Dirt

\$2,000,000 Guaranteed (Available Money \$2,395,800)

Horse: Always Dreaming, Dark Bay or Brown Colt

By Bodemeister out of Above Perfection, by In Excess (IRE).

Foaled February 25, 2014 in Kentucky.

Breeder: Santa Rosa Partners

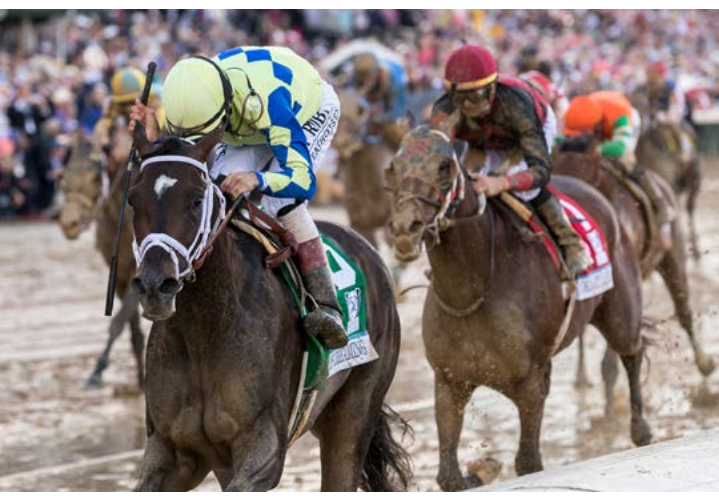
Owner: MeB Racing, Brooklyn Boys, Teresa Viola, St Elias, Siena Farm and West Point

Trainer: Todd Pletcher

Jockey: John Velazquez

Final Time: 2:03.59 on a Wet Fast (Sealed) track

Always Dreaming's began 2017 with consecutive victories at Tampa Bay Downs and Gulfstream Park before stepping up to the Florida Derby (G1) also at Gulfstream. Sent off as the second betting choice, Always Dreaming won the Florida Derby by five lengths and established himself as the eventual Kentucky Derby favorite. On the first Saturday in May, Always Dreaming became the fifth consecutive Derby favorite (Orb in 2013, California Chrome in 2014, American Pharoah in 2015 and Nyquist in 2016) to win the "Run for the Roses." Always Dreaming looked the part of a budding superstar with the Derby marking his fourth consecutive victory and clearly establishing himself at the top of the 3-year-old class.



Always Dreaming





142nd running of the Preakness Stakes (G1)

Baltimore, Maryland - Pimlico - May 20, 2017 - Race 13
For Three-Year-Olds - 1 3/16 Miles on Dirt - \$1,500,000 Guaranteed
Horse: Cloud Computing, Dark Bay or Brown Colt
By Maclean's Music out of Quick Temper, by A.P. Indy.
Foaled April 29, 2014 in Kentucky.
Breeder: Hill 'n Dale Equine Holdings, Inc. & Stretch Run Ventures, LLC
Owner: Klaravich Stables, Inc. and William H. Lawrence
Trainer: Chad Brown
Jockey: Javier Castellano
Final Time: 1:55.98 on a Fast track



Although Always Dreaming carried heavy favoritism in the Preakness, his main competition appeared to be defending 2-year-old champion and Arkansas Derby (G1) winner, Classic Empire; who finished a troubled but game 4th in the Kentucky Derby. Always Dreaming and Classic Empire duelled on the lead throughout the Preakness before the Derby champion tired into the stretch and his rival appeared clear for victory. However, Cloud Computing made a late run from just off the pace, closing the gap with Classic Empire and eventually grinding to win the Preakness by a head. It was Cloud Computing's second win of the year with his most recent finishes a 2nd and 3rd in Aqueduct's Gotham (G3) and Wood Memorial (G2). In fact, Cloud Computing skipped the Kentucky Derby after the Wood Memorial and appeared to relish the extra rest leading up to the Preakness.



Cloud Computing





Mohagan Sun G.H. MUMM LONGINES WOODFORD RESERVE



BELMONT PARK





149th running of the Belmont Stakes Presented by NYRA Bets (G1)

Elmont, New York - Belmont Park - June 10, 2017 - Race 11

For Three-Year-Olds - 1 1/2 Miles on Dirt

- \$1,500,000 Guaranteed

Horse: Tapwrit, Gray or Roan Colt

By Tapit out of Appealing Zophie

By Successful Appeal.

Foaled March 28, 2014 in Kentucky.

Breeder: My Meadowview LLC

Owner: Bridlewood Farm, Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and Robert V. LaPenta

Trainer: Todd Pletcher

Jockey: Jose Ortiz

Final Time: 2:30.02 on a Fast track



The connections of both Always Dreaming and Cloud Computing chose to skip the Belmont Stakes in favor of resting their horses for a summer campaign. The now seemingly wide open division earned Classic Empire likely favoritism at Belmont until a hoof abscess forced the colt to withdraw from contention. With the top three colts out of the race, Kentucky Derby 6th place finisher, Tapwrit, became the crop's newest star. After skipping the Preakness, Tapwrit settled just off the pace in the grueling Belmont before grabbing the lead deep in stretch from favorite, Irish War Cry. Tapwrit rolled to a two-length victory, completing the Triple Crown with a different winner in each race.



Tapwrit





148th running of the Travers Stakes Presented by NYRA Bets (G1)

Saratoga Springs, New York - Saratoga - August 26, 2017 - Race 11

For Three-Year-Olds - 1 1/4 Miles on Dirt - \$1,250,000 Added

Horse: West Coast, Bay Colt
By Paltter out of Caressing, by Honor and Glory.

Foaled May 14, 2014 in Kentucky.

Breeder: CFP Thoroughbreds LLC

Owner: Gary and Mary West

Trainer: Bob Baffert

Jockey: Mike Smith

Final Time: 2:01.19 on a Fast track



By late August, Always Dreaming, Cloud Computing and Tapwrit returned from post Triple Crown breaks and targeted the "Midsummer Derby." This became the first Travers since 1982 to have field containing the three separate Triple Crown race winners (excluding years when one colt won multiple Triple Crown races). Tapwrit, making his first start since his Belmont win, was listed as morning line favorite. Always Dreaming and Cloud Computing entered the race off 3rd and 5th place respective finishes in their Travers' prep, the Jim Dandy (G2) at Saratoga, four weeks earlier. Despite the presence of the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont winners, the upstart West Coast was the star of the the Travers show. Fresh off three consecutive victories including the Easy Goer (on the Belmont Stakes undercard) and Los Alamitos Derby (G3), West Coast turned in arguably the most impressive victory of any 3-year-old this season in defeating the talented Travers field by 3 1/4 lengths.

While the Triple Crown and Travers are over and the calendar turns to fall, the quest for 3-year-old divisional honors remains an undecided race to the finish. Considering his current form, West Coast appears the new leader of a division that has seen previous leaders struggle to maintain that title. Regardless, the upcoming fall campaign and eventual Breeders' Cup World Championships at Del Mar will likely play a significant role in sorting out an exciting yet confusing season of parity.



West Coast





About the Author:

It started with a horse named Cowboy. Disregarded and discounted, this nine-year-old Red Dun Quarter Horse left his life as a ranch horse in South Dakota and ventured a new path into the life of Steve Heuertz in 2004.

Shortly thereafter, a bond was formed that fully catapulted Steve into the world of the horse where he became fascinated with the wonderful capabilities of this majestic animal. Of particular interest were the speed, endurance and competitive spirit demonstrated by the equine heroes within the sport of Thoroughbred Racing. Although initially satisfied with observing from afar, Steve became increasingly captivated by the sport and turned toward capturing the splendor of racing via his other passion, photography. The result was a recipe where he could combine his great love for horses, racing and photography into one harmonious blend that was greater than the sum of its parts.

Since then, racing has taken Steve across the country to such wonderful places as Saratoga Race Course, Churchill Downs, Santa Anita Park, Pimlico Race Course, Belmont Park, Keeneland and Hooiser Park. During these travels, Steve has been fortunate to witness and photograph equally wonderful races such as the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes (racing's famed Triple Crown) as well as the Travers Stakes, Santa Anita Derby, Indiana Derby, Stephen Foster Handicap and Breeders' Cup, among others. However, residing in the Chicago suburb of St. Charles, IL, Steve regularly frequents Arlington Park and Hawthorne Race Course where he has enjoyed capturing magnificent races like the Arlington Million and Hawthorne Gold Cup.

Today, Steve's passion for horses, racing and photography is like a fire that continues to be stoked. While either behind the lens capturing the thrill of a Grade 1 race or in the saddle loping around a field with Cowboy, Steve has learned to operate under the simple truth that the more he is able to involve the horse in his life, the happier his days become.



Brought to you by The Horse Resource:

My name is Christa Conway and I have been riding horses since I was old enough to sit on a saddle by myself. I am a third generation barrel racer and my kids make a fourth.

I met my husband, Vick, at a horse show. It was probably sometime in the 70s (no, we are not that old...we just met when we were really young.) Our families competed at horse shows together back then and I believe it was an arranged marriage. Someday I may write it all down.

The Horses

I've competed at barrel races since I can remember and have had made many great memories over the years.

My dad hauled me around the Midwest with a little red roan mare that taught me how to win and to never doubt the underdog. She was only 14.2H tall, but her heart was big enough for both of us.

Highlights include a qualification to the International Finals Rodeo in 2002 and a crushed knee just months before.

Vick and I have shared futurity wins, rodeo wins and watched our kids compete and win on horses we've raised and trained. We've watched others go on to compete and win with horses we trained and forged great and lifelong friendships along the way.

All of these accomplishments and life experiences were possible because of God's grace, a supportive family, wonderful friends, hard work and of course great horses.

About The Horse Resource

It all started in 2004 when I began writing a Christian Barrel Racer's Newsletter that included inspirational articles and devotional material that I either wrote or that was submitted by others. I distributed the newsletter to hundreds of people via mail and passed them out at the rodeos and barrel races I attended until 2008.

In 2008 the Christian Barrel Racer's Newsletter became the preface for the start of something bigger. My passion for the horses and the equine industry as well as the experience with the newsletter led me to start The Horse Resource in 2008 as a printed magazine. The Christian Barrel Racer's Newsletter became the monthly featured column called "Christian Cowboy Collection."

My goal from the beginning has been to bring great articles, relevant news, upcoming events and event coverage to other horse people like me while keeping a positive and uplifting message of hope that Jesus provides in the forefront.

It grew into a full time career for me and by the grace of God I've been blessed to turn something I love into something I do for a living.

I'll keep doing the work as long as God provides the platform.

Many blessings and thanks for reading,

~Christa

