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Indiana Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association



Jockey Ezequiel Lara Scores First Win at Indiana Grand Racing & Casino

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Pictures By Linscott Photography (unless noted)



SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (Oct. 27, 2018) – Although there are only a few weeks left in the meet, Ezequiel Lara has arrived at Indiana Grand to ride as many horses as he can before the meet concludes Wednesday, Nov. 7. It didn't take long for the 22-year-old apprentice rider from Oklahoma to find the winner's circle. It's no surprise as he has strong ties to Indiana, coming up under veteran jockey Cisco Torres, who now serves as a jockey's agent.

Torres, who is ranked among the track's top 10 all-time leading riders, retired from riding last fall at Fair Grounds. He completed a stellar career with 3,194 wins and more than \$68 million in purse earnings. The multiple Graded Stakes winner knew he wanted to stay in racing and serving as a jockey's agent fulfilled that desire. With his shift in the business, he also has an eye for up and coming talent, and Lara caught his attention as a rider with a bright future.

"You will be hearing great things about this kid," said Torres. "He will ride until the end of the meet here at Indiana Grand and then go to Churchill Downs before we head to New Orleans (Fair Grounds) for the winter."

Lara comes into the business through family ties. His father, Martin, rode in both Oklahoma and Minnesota in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Although the Del City, Okla. native has two brothers that never shared his interest in horse racing, it was a passion that he knew he wanted to pursue from an early age.

"I knew in high school I wanted to be a jockey," said the well-spoken Lara. "But my dad wanted me to finish school first and I promised him that. As soon as I got out of school, I started working at the track."

Lara started his bug in 2017 and has continued his trade this year, first starting out at Remington Park before venturing to Texas to both Sam Houston and Lone Star and later trying his luck in Maryland at Laurel. With 19 wins to his credit, he learned through a suggestion from a friend that Torres had an open spot and knew right away this was a great opportunity for him.

The personable Lara has enjoyed his time as a jockey thus far and his stay at Indiana Grand just got a little better Friday, Oct. 26. The rookie booted home his first Indiana winner Mr. Gary D in the afternoon's sixth race, a one mile turf event for trainer Kim Hammond and owners Charlene and Larry Whitaker.

Lara noted that he has especially enjoyed the travel and meeting new people since becoming a jockey. Although his stay in Indiana is short, he has already settled in well and is excited for a new chapter in his career with Torres.

"Not only am I getting a good agent, I'm getting a mentor, and you can't beat that," added Lara. "It's great to have an ex-jockey show you the ropes and show me what I need to learn. And, Cisco is not only teaching me about racing, but life in general."

The 16th season of Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horse racing continues through Wednesday, Nov. 7. Racing is conducted Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 2:05 p.m. with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 p.m.

Indiana Grand Racing & Casino, which is owned and operated by a subsidiary of Caesars Entertainment Corporation (NASDAQ: CZR), holds multiple awards for customer service, entertainment, gaming, dining, and diversity. Located in Shelbyville, Ind., Indiana Grand features 2,200 of the latest slots and electronic table games in addition to a one-mile dirt race course and a seven-eighths mile turf course offering live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing each year. Simulcast wagering is also offered year-round at Winner's Circle Brewpub & OTB located on the casino floor as well as a Winner's Circle OTB located in Clarksville, Ind. For more information, please visit www.IndianaGrand.com. Must be 18 or older to wager on horse racing at racetracks and 21 or older to gamble at casinos. Know When To Stop Before You Start.® Gambling Problem? Call 1-800-9-WITH-IT (1-800-994-8448) ©2018 Caesars License Company, LLC.

