



Breeders' Cup World Championships Friday, Nov. 3 and Saturday, Nov. 4

\$6 million Classic Recap & Quotes Saturday, November 4, 2017

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GUN RUNNER DOMINATES IN \$6 MILLION BREEDERS' CUP CLASSIC; DEFENDING CHAMPION ARROGATE DEAD-HEATS FOR FIFTH

DEL MAR, Calif. (Nov. 4, 2017) – Winchell Thoroughbreds and Three Chimneys Farm's Gun Runner (\$6.80) went to the front shortly after the break and never trailed as he defeated Collected by 2 ¼ lengths to win the 34th running of the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) for 3-year-olds and up Saturday afternoon to close the first Breeders' Cup World Championships at Del Mar racetrack before a crowd of 37,692.

Defending champion and favored Arrogate finished in a dead heat for fifth in his bid to join Tiznow (2000-2001) as the only back-to-back winner of the Classic.

Trained by Steve Asmussen and ridden by Florent Geroux, Gun Runner covered the 1 ¼ miles on a fast main track in 2:01.29. Gun Runner is a 4-year-old Kentucky-bred son of Candy Ride.

It is the sixth Breeders' Cup victory for Asmussen and second in the Classic, having prevailed 10 years ago at Monmouth Park with Curlin. It is the fourth Breeders' Cup victory for Geroux and first in the Classic.

It was the fifth victory in six starts in 2017 for Gun Runner and fourth Grade 1 triumph. It also avenged his lone defeat to Arrogate, who had prevailed by 2 ¼ lengths in the Dubai World Cup in March.

Gun Runner went to the front at the break and Collected immediately took up the chase. The two raced through early fractions of 22 2/5, 46 1/5 and 1:10 2/5 in their own little duel.

Leaving the far turn, Collected made one more run at Gun Runner but was quickly rebuffed as Gun Runner drew away to improve his career mark to 18-11-3-2.

West Coast finished another 1 ¼ lengths back in third and was followed in order by War Story, Arrogate and Gunnevera who dead-heated for fifth, Churchill, Mubtaahij, War Decree, Pavel and Win the Space.

BREEDERS' CUP CLASSIC QUOTES

Winning trainer Steve Asmussen (Gun Runner) – “It’s a good team and he’s an incredible horse. Incredible horse. Everyone is part of the team and they did a phenomenal job. Scott (Blasi, assistant trainer), Angel (Garcia, exercise rider), Florent (Geroux, jockey), the owners... we did the right things at the right time and all that made it special. What an awesome feeling this is. Florent has the ultimate confidence in Gun Runner and he rode Gun Runner. It’s all part of the process. We had discussed what we’d see (in the race) through the day and I told him to ‘ride Gun Runner.’ I’m the lucky trainer of the Horse of the Year.”

Winning jockey Florent Geroux (Gun Runner) – “This (win) means a lot. It’s the biggest win of my career. It’s the big race with Horse of the Year on the line. I’m glad he was the best horse.

Were you surprised you were in front? “No, not really. I think he was the quickest horse in the race from the beginning of the race.

“(Trainer) Steve (Asmussen) was the one who gave me the opportunity to ride this horse. We knew from the beginning he was the real deal. We were so confident going into the Kentucky Derby; we really thought it was his best chance ever to win it.”

(Collected was pressing Gun Runner) “It wasn’t like my horse was going crazy and would lose his chance. I really like (Collected) and I respect him a lot. He was the horse for the course for sure. He showed it today. He was just second best; my horse was the best horse today.”

Bob Baffert (Second with Collected, third with West Coast, fifth with favorite Arrogate and eight with Mubtaahij) – “My horses ran well. Arrogate...I don’t know. He just can’t find the plate. He’s like a pitcher who can’t find the plate. Gun Runner is a really good horse and he ran a great race. My other horses ran great. I hate to make any excuses for the big horse (Arrogate), but he’s just not the horse he was. He struggles over this track, but when I got him up to Santa Anita, I thought maybe...When he broke, he broke flat-footed and broke in and he weaved in. He lost a lot of momentum there. We were hoping to really send him away from there. I don’t know what happened to him. I don’t know if it’s this track or what. He’s just losing interest and I think that’s what it is. He’s run so many incredible races that I really think he’s just losing interest. That’s what it is. It’s time (for him to retire).

“But he has done so much. What he accomplished in a short period of time, the Travers win (in track and stakes record time), beating California Chrome (in the 2016 Classic), winning the Pegasus and the way he won in Dubai. You have to give Gun Runner credit. He laid it down and he took a lot of heat. Collected is a really good horse. We know how good he is.

“West Coast ran really well. He’s a horse that wants to be forwardly placed. It looks like they were just marching around there. They just sort of didn’t change positions. They just stayed the same all the way around there.”

Second-place jockey Martin Garcia (Collected) – “He ran great. I can’t be sure, of course, but I think if our positions were switched – if I was inside (Gun Runner) and he was out – we might have had a different finish. I wanted to get to the rail and save ground, but I couldn’t. I’m proud of him, though. He gave me what he had.”

Third-place jockey Javier Castellano (West Coast) – “I thought I was in good position on the far turn, but I just could not catch the top two. I have no complaints. He ran his heart out today.”

Fourth-place trainer Jorge Navarro (War Story) – “What can I say? I’m very happy. The jockey (Jose Ortiz) listened to me and rode a great race. Fourth with a 60-1 shot in this race? Very happy.

Fourth-place jockey Jose Ortiz (War Story) – “I just followed the instructions Jorge [Navarro]. He told me he doesn’t like horses outside of him. On the first turn, he was traveling well and I was able to put him where Jorge wanted him. He ran a good race.”

Dead-heat fifth-place jockey Mike Smith (Arrogate) – “He just doesn’t like this track. For whatever reason, I hate to say it, he has shown it time and time again and showed it today. (His bad start) is what he’s been doing every time he runs here. When he’s on his A race, he’s one of the fastest horses we have ever seen. He just won’t run over here. I have tried to talk myself into thinking he would. He has just showed me time and time again that he wouldn’t.

(On the bad start) “That’s just what he does over this racetrack. I don’t know what it is. Every time I ride him here, he never seems to get underneath himself.”

Dead-heat fifth-place trainer Antonio Sano (Gunnevera) – “We ran against good horses but my horse ran good. I’m happy. It’s a tough race but he was very good.”

Dead-heat fifth-place jockey Edgard Zayas (Gunnevera) – “I think he had a good trip. It was a very tough race. It seemed like the beginning of the day the horses off the pace were running, but as the day went on the speed was holding. They came out of the gate and kept on running. He ran his race. He just couldn’t get there.”

Trainer Aidan O’Brien (Churchill, sixth and War Decree, ninth) – “Churchill has had two or three hard races. We will go back to the turf with him next time. He seems OK after the race and appears relaxed.”

Sixth-place jockey Ryan Moore (Churchill) – He was going ok, I tried to give him a chance down the backstretch, but he didn’t seem to handle it.”

Eighth-place jockey Drayden Van Dyke (Mubtaahij) – “I had a perfect trip. I was right behind the leaders and it was good. But then those front two (Gun Runner and Collected) took off and we just couldn’t catch them.”

Ninth-place jockey Seamus Heffernan (War Decree) – “He didn’t handle the surface.”

Tenth-place jockey Mario Gutierrez (Pavel) – “I liked my position early. I was where I wanted to be. But it just wasn’t there at the end.”

Tenth-place trainer Doug O’Neill (Pavel) – “He appeared to come back healthy. We’ll go over him good when we get him back to the barn. (Jockey) Mario (Gutierrez) said he might have bled. I loved his position for a while, but he didn’t maintain that.”

Eleventh-place Trainer George Papaprodromou (Win the Space) – “He never looked comfortable to me. Joe said the same thing. He just never got hold of the track. I guess Santa Anita is best for him.”

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