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Indiana Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association



Brooklynsway under Robby Albarado wins the Grade III Doubledogdare at Keeneland and will be vying for the title in the Mari Hulman-George Stakes at Indiana Grand. (Photo by Coady Photography)



ALBARADO SEEKS FOURTH INDIANA DERBY WIN AT INDIANA GRAND RACING & CASINO

Albarado rides nine of 10 races on Indiana Grand's showcase Indiana Derby card, including all six stakes totaling \$1 million. He's coming off a big weekend at Arlington Park, where he won two graded stakes last Saturday. In riding the intriguing minor stakes-winner Whateverbodywants for trainer Kellyn Gorder in the Indiana Derby, Albarado will match Jon Court's record nine mounts in the \$500,000, Grade II stakes.

"He's riding really, really well right now," Gorder said. "I've always been a big fan of Robby's. He hardly ever makes a mistake and he rides hard and wins for me a lot. One of the things I really like about him is he can give you a lot of input after a race that actually helps."

Albarado is spending his second summer riding regularly at Ellis Park in western Kentucky. He rode for years at Chicago's Arlington Park, then moved onto America's most celebrated meet: Saratoga. Albarado rode two horses to combined three Horse of the Year titles in Mineshaft (2003) and Curlin (2007-2008), winning the Preakness Stakes, Breeders' Cup Classic, Dubai World Cup and prestigious Jockey Club Gold Cup twice with the latter.

Four years ago, it came crashing down.

Having enjoyed a squeaky clean image, being friends with many of Louisville's corporate power-brokers who got behind his Robby Albarado Foundation to help underprivileged kids and the disadvantaged in Kentuckiana, Albarado two springs in a row was involved in heated altercations. The first was with his soon-to-be ex-wife, the second with a former girlfriend.

Charges were dismissed in the first case; a jury levied a \$500 judgment in the latter, which a judge threw out on appeal.

"When you're on the bottom, you learn, too," Albarado said. "You don't burn any bridges, and it comes back around. People who wouldn't ride me two years ago are riding me again. I still respected them all; I understood why. They had owners to answer to. I just had to contain myself and do the right thing."

While he says he didn't do anything wrong, Albarado acknowledges he could have handled things differently.

"I felt that I let a lot of people down, friends and family, who looked up to me and respected me," he said. "Believe me, I'm not saying I did the things I was accused of -- I didn't.... But I kept working hard, grinding down. The biggest thing is I made changes: the people, places you go to. You surround yourself with positive people. It has a lot to do with my wife, Paige. She got with me at the lowest point of my life. I was in the court system when we started dating. She had every chance to run. And she didn't. She stuck with me, and that helped me quite a bit."

Now, he's looking to the future. Albarado's Indiana Derby triumphs (One Bold Stroke, 1998; Orientate, 2001; and Zanjero, 2007), as well as his three Indiana Oaks victories, came at Hoosier Park. He wants to start a new streak at Indiana Grand.

Whateverbodywants, whom he rides in a race for the first time, won Iowa's Prairie Mile in his third start. Mines and Magic, his mount in the \$200,000 Indiana Oaks, was impressive in maiden and allowance victories at Churchill Downs. He's live in every stakes.

Said Albarado: "I could have a good Saturday."

Live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing is conducted Tuesday through Friday at 2:05 PM EST with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 PM. The 120-day season runs through Saturday, Oct. 29.

About Indiana Grand Racing & Casino: Indiana Grand Racing & Casino holds multiple awards from industry publications for customer service, entertainment, gaming and dining. 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 an off-track betting facility located in Clarksville, Ind. For more information, please visit www.IndianaGrand.com.

Please Note - Story provided by Jennie Rees, Eclipse Award-winning freelance writer

SHELBYVILLE, Ind.; - July 14, 2016 - Robby Albarado -- whose three Indiana Derby victories are the most for a jockey and who is looking for a fourth Saturday night aboard Whateverbodywants -- recently became only the 14th rider to surpass \$200 million in North American purse earnings. He figures to attain his 5,000th career victory next year.

The jockey also has plates in his head, fallout from twice fracturing his skull in spills. He once won a Grade I race three days after getting kicked square on in the face by a horse.

He's also 43 years old and says he's riding better than he ever has in a career spanning almost 27 years, not counting the five Albarado rode at Louisiana's unsanctioned bush tracks when he was too young to get a jockey's license.

"You have a lot of wisdom and knowledge about racing now," the Louisville-based Albarado said recently on the Churchill Downs backside after working the Bernie Flint-trained Brooklynsway, who runs in Saturday night's Mari Hulman George.

"Physically, I'm able to do what I was 20 years ago. People who were here 20 years ago, like (jockey) valets, come up to me and say, 'Man, you're riding the best I've seen you since you've been here.' I used to win five a day here, and they never said that.

"Actually, I feel so much better riding now than I have in a long time... Professionally, I'm just riding some good horses, riding smart races, giving them a chance and in position to win."

Albarado is wasting no time working toward \$300 million in purses. "I can't," he said with a laugh.



From left, Paige, Liam and Robby Albarado pictured on the backstretch at Churchill Downs following his work aboard Brooklynsway. Liam, the newest member of the family, is three weeks old in the photo. (Photo by Jennie Rees)

The jockey, who ranks No. 3 in all-time wins at Churchill Downs and No. 2 in stakes, was making a joking reference to now facing college educations and more for four kids. Paige Albarado, the jockey's second wife, gave birth to their son, Liam, on Memorial Day after three days in labor. Robby has three children with his first wife.

At 43, Albarado has a far different perspective on being a father. He acknowledges he's a more-involved daddy with Liam than when his other children were babies. Liam came nine years after his daughter Larkin, who followed brothers Kaden and Kash. The jockey even enjoys handling the 3-5 AM feeding shift, after which he frequently goes straight to the track to work horses.

"I think he's happy," Paige said on a recent morning at Churchill Downs, when she brought Liam out to the backside for the first time. "He's so in love with this little guy."

"Mentally, I'm in a real good place right now," Albarado said. "I could be a young jockey psychiatrist. Because you've been through it. But if it's good at home, it's going to be good at work. You might not believe it and try to fight it. But it's true."