

NTWA Newsletter from President Tom Law

Good afternoon fellow members and a belated Happy New Year to you all. Hopefully everyone is getting settled into stride for 2007 and getting geared up for the busy pre-Triple Crown season. There are several areas of importance I'd like to discuss this month, some of which should be of primary importance to members of this organization.

Warm congratulations go out to NTWA members Dick Jerardi of the Philadelphia Daily News and Mike Jensen of the Philadelphia Inquirer for winning Media Eclipse Awards for their coverage of Barbaro shortly after the 2006 Preakness Stakes.

Jerardi won in the News/Commentary category for his two-part series on the events surrounding the injury and treatment of Barbaro in the hours after the Preakness published on May 22 and 24, 2006. Jensen earned his second Eclipse Award when he topped the Features/Enterprise category for his profile on Dr. Dean Richardson titled "The Man Whose Job is Saving Barbaro" published on May 28, 2006.

Jerardi and Jensen both attended the Eclipse Awards and were two of several NTWA members who attended the Turf Publicists of America Big Sport of Turfdom luncheon at Mastro's Steakhouse in Beverly Hills prior to the ceremony. Other NTWA members in attendance were former NTWA President and current NTWA director Jay Privman of Daily Racing Form, former NTWA Secretary/Treasurer Dan Liebman of The Blood-Horse, Steve Crist of Daily Racing Form, Jeff Lowe of Thoroughbred Times, and freelancer Julie Sarno.

Several members of our organization have either written, to me or in columns, expressing dissatisfaction with information distributed and/or available to Eclipse Award voters. A column from NTWA director Kevin Modesti in the *Los Angeles Daily News* examined the subject from the perspective of jockey Garrett Gomez, who finished second to Edgar Prado in the outstanding jockey category.

The issue involves purse money Gomez earned in Dubai not being credited to him on the jockey rankings that appear on Page 20 of the Daily Racing Form supplement that is provided to each Eclipse Award voter.

As you can read in the column, which is attached below, the United Arab Emirates earnings were not included because officials from the National Thoroughbred Racing Association said the Eclipse Awards are "North American awards" and only North American earnings are included.

Purse money earned by other jockeys and trainers in other major racing nations outside North America were presumably also not included.

However, in the past performances section for the candidates, races from the United Arab Emirates, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Hong Kong, and Sweden were listed for several horses, including eventual Horse of the Year Invasor, whose past performances include one race from Dubai, and eventual champion turf female Ouija Board, who shows races from Japan, Ireland, England, Hong Kong, and the United Arab Emirates.

Jim Gluckson of the NTRA/Breeders' Cup said the issue will be revisited. Since Vice President Tom Pedulla and I are members of a committee that meets frequently to discuss issues related to the Eclipse Awards, I would implore members of this organization to give me some of their opinions and feedback on this issue, particularly on what information is distributed to eligible voters.

In my opinion, this inconsistency and the incomplete information that is distributed to Eclipse Award voters (for example, the supplement also does not include results of all Grade 1 races for the entire year) could possibly undermine the credibility voting process and perhaps not give the participants involved a fair chance to win.

Speaking of Eclipse Awards, I am currently in the process of obtaining the complete breakdown of the votes cast by Regular members of the NTWA to release to the membership as soon as possible.

Thanks to Elisabeth Jensen Collier of the Race for Education for providing an update on Jennifer MacDonald of Pasadena, California, who received the inaugural Youbet.com/National Turf Writers Association scholarship. MacDonald, who received a \$10,000 grant renewable for three additional years to use toward her pursuit of a journalism degree, is a student at California State University, Chico. The note from Jennifer is reprinted below.

Elisabeth also informs me that the application deadline for the next scholarship is February 28. The selection committee will meet to distribute applications on March 9 and then review those applications until March 20.

There are a few final notes this month, including deepest sympathies to NTWA member Craig Donnelly, whose wife passed away in late December.

NTWA member Steve Davidowitz wants to correct an error regarding J.O. Tobin's upset of Seattle Slew in the 1977 Swaps Stakes that was published in his book, *The Best and Worst of Thoroughbred Racing*, published in December 2006. The correction/clarification is at the end of this newsletter.

Finally, you should have received an invoice for 2007 dues, which are due no later than March 15, from Secretary/Treasurer Jill Williams. Thank you for the quick response with payment from Dirk Allen, Rick Bailey, Andrew Beyer, Ted

Black, Denis Blake, Jerald J. Bossert, Christina Bossinakis, Mike Bruner, Bill Christine, Joe Clancy, Sean Clancy, Mark F. Cusano, Van Cushny, Steve Davidowitz, John De Santis, Jody Demling, Craig Donnelly, Dick Downey, Shelby Downs, Bob Ehalt, Robert D. Fierro, Bill Finley, Bill Giauque, Cliff Guilliams, Ron Hale, Gregory A. Hall, Russ Harris, Bill Heller, Dan Johnson, Dan Kenny, Nick Kling, Audrey Korotkin, Mike Marten, John McEvoy, Marty McGee, Ed McNamara, Bill Mooney, Bill Oppenheim, Amy Owens, Tony Palmisano, Anne Peters, James Platz, Edwin Pope, Jennie Rees, Paula Rodenas, Paul Rolfes, Steve Schuelein, Ralph Siraco, Richard Sowers, Chuck Stogel, Charles H. Stone, Bob Summers, Brad Telias, T.D. Thornton, Paul Volponi, Robert Yates, Gary Yunt, Don Zamarelli, and Victor Zast. Honorary members Pierre Bellocq, Bob Benoit, and Joe Hirsch are not required to pay dues.

As always, please get in touch with any additional questions or concerns at tlaw@thoroughbredtimes.com, my office at 859-260-9800 ext. 125, or on my cell phone at 859-396-9407.

Thanks and all the best,
Tom Law
NTWA President
February 5, 2007

(From Los Angeles Daily News, January 25, 2007)

Snub gives Gomez even more motivation

By Kevin Modesti

Staff writer

ARCADIA - Garrett Gomez got rooked in the 2006 jockey-of-the-year voting announced Monday at the Eclipse Awards dinner in Beverly Hills amid talk that Edgar Prado backers might have been swayed by incomplete information.

So in case he needed extra motivation to win Saturday's \$1 million Sunshine Millions Classic at Gulfstream Park, in the richest race of the unique California vs. Florida event split between Gulfstream and Santa Anita, he has a shot at a measure of revenge if Gomez's Texcess beats Prado's Silver Wagon.

Not that anybody is mad at Prado for winning the Eclipse for outstanding jockey, or for the shockingly out-sided balloting that saw Prado get 56 percent of the first-place votes to Gomez's 33 percent and scattered support for Russell Baze and others. The recriminations have focused on National Thoroughbred Racing Association executives' decision to exclude \$1.8 million earned by Gomez's mounts in three major races in Dubai from the statistics sent to Eclipse voters in early December. The subtraction meant Prado and not Gomez appeared at the top of the earnings list that many voters read.

"I really and truly believe," said Ron Anderson, agent for Gomez, "that not being on top of the money cost us whatever chance we had."

Said Gomez: "To think maybe we did enough to win the Eclipse, to come so close and not get it, it's a little disappointing."

NTRA spokesman Jim Gluckson said Monday that only North American earnings were printed because these are North American awards, even though the \$6 million

Dubai World Cup and other races on the United Arab Emirates card each March are targets for U.S. horsemen.

Gluckson said the issue will be revisited.

Overlooked were Gomez's earnings from Wilko's second in the World Cup, Testimony's second in the UAE Derby and Jet West's third in the Golden Shaheen. That dropped Gomez to \$18.8 million, about \$800,000 behind Prado, on the list updated Nov. 29. Prado had a great year highlighted by riding Barbaro to victory in the Kentucky Derby and Round Pond to win the Breeders' Cup Distaff. Voters might have rewarded him for "saving" Barbaro by pulling the colt to a stop and jumping off quickly after the Preakness breakdown.

But Gomez had a better year overall, ending up ahead of Prado on earnings (\$21.9-\$19.8 million), wins (261-248), win percentage (20.5-19.0) and Grade I wins (12-11). Riding for No. 1 trainer Todd Pletcher after John Velazquez's injury, the California-based Gomez was a factor on the East Coast for much of the year.

Gomez, 35, who fought substance abuse for nearly two years before returning to the track in 2005, said he gained perspective on his disappointment after a conversation about gratitude Thursday with Bob Fletcher, executive director of the racetrack anti-addiction program Winners Foundation.

"It was disappointing," Gomez said of the vote. "But was it mind-boggling? Did it really fry me? No, it's not a big deal. . . . If I win big races, maybe I'll have a chance to win the Eclipse next year."

Jennifer MacDonald
Youbet.com/NTWA Scholarship
Fall 2006 report
California State University, Chico

I learned so much during my first semester at Chico State. I really enjoyed all my classes and the learning environment at the school. I also enjoyed being far away from home (eight hours)—this fact really allowed for me to delve into my studies and my own personal being.

My favorite class this semester was my civil rights/civil liberties class. This was a class about Constitutional Law. The teacher was really fun and the class material was interesting. We read Supreme Court cases that set precedent for Due Process, Equal Protection, Free Speech and Freedom of Religion. The class taught me the reasoning behind many important court decisions which directly effect everyday life. The process of analyzing laws and actions is formulated yet malleable, and directly related to the founding documents of this country, like the Constitution. This class was towards my political science minor and I look forward to taking more classes like this one.

It worked out really well that I also took a Mass Communication Law class last semester. Both of my law classes overlapped at times in certain areas of study, like obscenity law. Having both of these classes at the same time allowed me to have a greater understanding of the material in both classes, and I was able to make connections between what we were studying.

My photojournalism class was a very demanding course, requiring me to learn the skills of photojournalism and lose any anxiety about approaching people to take their picture. After being a reporter for newspapers for two years, this class turned the tables as I became the photographer instead of the writer—not a role I was used to.

But I was determined to be as good of a photographer as a writer. With some more practice I think I can succeed. After taking this class I'm more aware of what constitutes a good picture. I would like to use the skills I learned in this class to take pictures of racehorses.

The class that perhaps had the greatest impact on my day-to-day life was my race and diversity in media class. This class analyzed how difference matters between sexes, race, ability, age, and social class. I've always noticed these differences, but now I'm equipped with the knowledge of why people act the way they do depending on their differences. This class was an eye-opener and I don't think I'll ever have another class like it. It forced me to confront some of my preconceptions about others, and in the process discover my own identity.

This semester I also worked on the school newspaper, The Orion, as a sports reporter. Since I want to be a horseracing journalist, my time spent covering basketball, soccer and volleyball games were well spent. I learned how to talk to coaches and players which will help when I need to interview trainers and jockeys. I broke one story late in the semester. The story was about the women's basketball coach using verbal abuse and intimidation against the players. We scooped all the other media outlets in town in posting the story to the internet. The next day, after reading the story on-line, the local news channel and newspapers were hurrying to interview the coach and players.

As a slightly older student, I am really able to relish my time spent in class at Chico State. I take class seriously so I retain the information I learn in class. This is a strategy I will continue to use next semester. I liked all my classes and I'm sure next semester I'll enjoy my classes again.

Note from Steve Davidowitz:

Author's insert, bottom of page 9. Please note that Laz Barrera did not train J.O. Tobin for the upset of Seattle Slew in the Swaps stakes of 1977, as depicted on page 9 and 10 in this book. The late Johnny Adams did. Barrera did not train the horse until the fall of 1977. The quotes and details attributed to Barrera came from faulty recollections that stemmed from three sources over time, even though my recollections seemed so vivid.

* Barrera and I had many conversations about his horses, including J.O. Tobin, but it is likely that I superimposed his comments about wanting to desire to defeat Spectacular Bid (with Affirmed).

* Barrera also may have been discussing with me after the fact what he thought about Johnny Adams' work with J.O. Tobin leading up to the Swaps.

* Comments made to me by Hall of Fame jockey Bill Shoemaker at a lunch meeting in 1996 included a repeat of published comments he made prior to the Swaps. Shoe strongly believed that J.O. Tobin was going to defeat Seattle Slew. In particular, as noted by other reporters, Shoemaker said that J.O. Tobin had been 'training much better for the Swaps than he did for the Preakness.'

I regret having made this error, but in no way does it diminish the historical importance of J.O. Tobin's victory under Johnny Adams skillful handling. It was one of the most significant upsets of modern times.