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The whip as anything other than a safety device will one day be a remnant of the past

Daniel Ross | November 18, 2018



Cover photo: NYRA.com

Christophe Soumillon's controversial Breeders' Cup Classic ride aboard eventual third Thunder Snow (right) brought very different reactions on different sides of the Atlantic. Photo: Alex Evers/Eclipse Sportswire/CSM/Breeders' Cup

For all the glorious fireworks that lit the skies during this year's Breeders' Cup — Enable's remarkable Arc-Turf double, Monomoy Girl's worthy win in the Distaff, and on and on and on — one image resonated with spectators that was infinitely less awe-inspiring.

As Accelerate accelerated down the Churchill Downs straight, right behind him toiled the honorable Thunder Snow, who just held on for third-place under a ride by jockey Christoph Soumillon that saw him use the whip about 17 times.

Back in the UK, high-profile jockeys, trainers and racing commentators took turns to call the display “dispiriting”, “absolutely brutal” and “unedifying.” Nor has the criticism yet relented.

Other countries can act as a bell-weather — like Australia, where the issue has played out very publicly, including on prime-time television.

In comparison, the response to Soumillon's ride on this side of the pond has been noticeably muted — hardly surprising, given our altogether more permissive whip rules. Similar rides are seen week-in, week-out.

That these rides, however, don't generate more wholesale rigorous debate over here — on whichever side of the issue you lean — should give anyone who cares about the long-term future of the sport serious pause for thought.

That's because the winds of social change are blowing ever more vigorously, and racing better take heed. For there will surely come a time — possibly sooner than we care to consider — when negative public perception of the crop will reach critical mass, forcing a major reckoning within the sport.

The whole industry must be prepared for that moment. Right now, we're more ostrich than owl.

'Unintended consequences'

This isn't some distant, abstract threat. The court of public opinion is one already weighted against those using animals for entertainment, gambling or not.

Other countries can act as a bell-weather — like Australia, where the issue has played out very publicly, including on prime-time television. A recent poll there found three-quarters of the public against whip use during a race. South Africa just announced a series of whip-less races, authorities there describing them as a "statement that needs to be made".

What's more, it would be all too easy to dismiss the UK's reaction to Soumillon's ride as an

opportunity for overseas critics to, once again, look down their noses at their U.S. counterparts. To do so would be wrong, however, for theirs is a Pavlovian response to an issue they've been grappling with for quite some time.

Major revisions to the whip rules were instituted in 2011. But, far from clearing the matter up, the debate has raged hotly ever since, in the press, on TV and in the House of Commons.

Racing Post journalist Tom Kerr, who believes the crop "will have to go", and At The Races' Kevin Blake, who believes that "taking away the whip as a means of encouragement would risk unintended consequences", have penned two of the most eloquent missives on the issue from opposing corners.

Some would say that airing racing's dirty laundry in such a public manner damages the sport. But really, spirited public debate achieves something altogether different. Something important.

It demonstrates to Jill and Joe Public that the industry takes the issue very seriously indeed — proving its willingness to wrestle with the hard questions openly and transparently in order to figure out the best way forward.

'Without extreme measure'

That's not to say the U.S. has neglected the issue. Far from it. The catastrophic injuries during the 2008 Kentucky Derby that ended Eight Belles' life prompted significant revisions of the crop. Some states, like California and Minnesota, have subsequently picked up the gauntlet and run with it.

Likewise, every so often the issue

receives a helpful public airing — like a Jockey Club Round Table Conference, or this TDN feature from 2015, presenting a variety of views from heavy-hitting stakeholders — with arguments on all sides typically thoughtful and worthy of merit.

Indeed in that feature, jockey John Velazquez spoke for many when he said that "when you are one, two, three, four in the stretch and in contention and you are trying your best to get the best out of the horse, you should be able to use the whip as you see fit". And there are many sound, logical points that support this view.

But I'm not here to debate the nuances, the number of times a horse can be hit, and how and where. That's because framing the issue this way misses something fundamental as it relates to public perception:

It's not the number of times a jockey uses the crop that turns some away from the sport — no matter how padded the stick is — it's the act itself that does.

'A social license'

This is something that Jennifer Durenberger, who operates a consultancy firm called Racing Matters, has given much thought to. In a lecture given multiple times in recent years to industry audiences, she chronicles the evolution of our relationship with animals through an ethical and legal lens.

Durenberger notes, for example, that the average American is "four generations removed from an agricultural lifestyle," and that the emotional importance of the "human-animal" bond is only going

The crop as anything other than a safety device will one day be a remnant of the past. Racing must decide how painful the journey to get there is going to be.

to strengthen with each passing generation.

She also links broader cultural movements to public referendums and boycotts that have shaped animal husbandry practices in other livestock industries, like California's Proposition 2, which in 2008 revised confinement standards for farm animals.

Like Kerr, she sees it as "inevitable" that the crop as a motivational tool will one day be banned. Which is why she believes we ask "the wrong questions" about whip use when we approach it from a regulatory standpoint.

"The question that people who are not involved in the industry are asking is, 'you want us to trust you when you tell us that horses love to run, so why would you need to whip the at all?'" she said.

As to the responses her lecture garners, Durenberger said that, every so often, someone will approach her with a variation on the following: 'Those people [welfare activists] are a fringe group. I don't have to justify what I do for them.'

To which she responds, "Well, yes you do, actually, if what you do requires a social license."

'Modern business must have its finger continuously on the public pulse'

Durenberger is far from the only figure in racing who views the issue through racing's "social license". Camie Heleski is an equine lecturer at the University of Kentucky who regularly engages her students on the issue. "Most of them have serious concerns about the whip," she admitted, "and that's the next generation of horse people."

If the science was in our corner, racing might have legs on which to couch its arguments, she said. But, for all the educated conjecture about adrenaline and cortisol levels masking the whip's impact, we're still unable to point to rock-hard empirical proof that the whip doesn't inflict pain.

And, even if we could, would that be enough to overcome the ugly visual optics? As is evident in so many corners of the modern world, the general public appears less swayed by facts and experts than it is by raw emotion and gut reaction.

That doesn't mean we should sit idly by, however, while others shape the narrative. We need to shape the narrative ourselves, be more willing to bring the topic to the fore, just as has happened in the UK.

Edward Bernays is largely considered the founding father of public relations. As he wrote in his seminal 1928 book, *Propaganda*, "Modern business must have its finger continuously on the public pulse. It must understand the changes in the public mind and be prepared to interpret itself fairly and eloquently to changing opinion."

As loathsome a human being as Bernays was, he's bang on the money. Thankfully, racing has all sorts of tools at its disposal.

Imagine NBC Sports hosting a racing official who explains how veterinarians and stewards police whip use, and a top jock who explains the evolution of the crop over the years, juxtaposing the harsher instruments of yore with the kinder foam-covered crops of today.

Imagine track spokespeople on prominent race days explaining to curious members of the public the

whip rules. Imagine short educational videos played on racetrack monitors across the nation. Imagine an ongoing debate in the media, rather than the current episodic conversation.

When, not if

All of this, however, will be window-dressing until the day of reckoning comes, and public distaste at the sight of jockeys turning to their crops to propel tired horses forward proves overwhelming. A matter of when, not if. A broad poll on the U.S. public's attitude to the riding crop would give us a good indication where we stand currently.

That there isn't already such a poll is disappointing, to say the least.

Many reading this will make the valid point that an industry our size is immune from the sorts of pressures that have brought SeaWorld to its knees. Valid, yes, but complacent.

We're a sport that's struggling in many states and in many ways, and the leverage we enjoy now might be significantly diminished in years to come. What's more, experts have noted that it takes only a ten percent slice of the public with an unshakeable belief in something to sway the broader consensus. Those who truly dislike this sport are a mightily influential minority.

More must be done, certainly, to make sure the crop is uniformly used effectively and not abusively. And we must shout these efforts towards reform from the mountain tops when successful. But let's not disabuse ourselves of what appears inevitable:

The crop as anything other than a safety device will one day be a remnant of the past. Racing must decide how painful the journey to get there is going to be.

All Skitter Scatter needed to do was win one little race. She's done a fair bit better than that

Donn McClean | November 11, 2018



Skitter Scatter with jockey Ronan Whelan and owner-breeder Anthony Rogers after winning the G2 Debutante Stakes at the Curragh. Photo: Healy Racing

Strange the way things can go full circle. Airlie Stud bred Dane Street, in partnership with Three Chimneys Farm. They had already bred Intense Focus out of their Danehill mare Daneleta, who was bred by Jim Bolger, and who was trained by the Wexford man to win a fillies' maiden at Tipperary in June 2001.

The Jim Bolger connection runs deep. Bolger trained the Airlie-bred Margarula to win the Irish Oaks in 2002.

Intense Focus was bought as a yearling at Goffs in 2007 by Bolger, who trained him to win the G1 Dewhurst Stakes at Newmarket in October 2008. That was just four and a half months before Dane Street was born. By Street Cry, out of Daneleta. Full circle.

He was value all the way through his life, and it's not often that you can say that about a stallion.

Airlie Stud, in County Kildare, is steeped in history. Established by the late Captain Tim Rogers just after the war, it has been run for the last 30 years by Sonia Rogers, who took over the running of the farm after the death of her husband in 1984. She was joined in 1996 by her son, Anthony, who brought back to Airlie the wealth of experience that working in different sectors of the bloodstock industry all over the world brings.

Dane Street didn't meet her reserve at Tattersalls in October 2010, so Anthony Rogers took her back home with him.

Doing the right thing

"We put what we thought was the right reserve on her," recalls Anthony now. "We thought that 80,000 guineas was fair. But that was in 2010, they were tricky times, and that was a tough sale for everybody. If she didn't meet her reserve, she didn't meet it. We tried to sell her, but we weren't going to let her go for any less than what we thought her value was."

These are the breaks, and you ride them. You trust your judgement. Airlie could have sold the mare for less than they thought her value was, but you have to do what you think is the right thing.

They put the mare into training with Jessica Harrington, and she didn't do badly. She won a maiden at Fairyhouse and she won a handicap at Leopardstown, both over ten furlongs. They put her into the Keeneland November sale in 2016, and they bought their American partner out.

Skitter Scatter was seven months old by then. Of course, she wasn't Skitter Scatter then, she was a filly foal out of the Street Cry mare Dane Street, by Scat Daddy.

"There was a bit of talk about Scat Daddy then. He was only \$30,000, but he was full. It wasn't easy to get into him. They knew that something was brewing. But nobody could have imagined that he would turn out to be the stallion that he was. He was value all the way through his life, and it's not often that you can say that about a stallion."

Skitter Scatter was entered in the Keeneland September Sale in 2017, but the vets had an issue with her x-rays, so she never got to the sales. Anthony and his mother Sonia decided that they would race her.

"We put her into training with Patrick Prendergast, whose remit was to win a race. Just win a race. She was out of a young mare, so if she could win a race, that would be job done. With any horse going into training, your first hope is that they will win a race. When you've been around long enough, that's all you hope. Then, if you are lucky enough to win a race, you start to get greedy."

Skitter Scatter did not win a race at her first attempt – a maiden at Dundalk last March – but she ran well to finish a close-up third. Everyone was buoyed. Patrick Prendergast told Anthony that he thought she could be listed class. She went back to Dundalk two weeks later for another maiden. It looked like she was up against it, taking on a highly regarded Aidan O'Brien-trained Scat Daddy colt, a \$1.1 million yearling named Sergei Prokofiev, but she scrapped it out and got home by a short head.

Drinks all round

"That's one of my favourite races of hers," says Anthony, pointing to a photograph on the bookshelf. The diminutive filly on the far side, side on, stretching her neck out, with the colt on the near side towering over her.

"She proved her toughness that day. Mum and I were away on business, but we convinced the owner of the pub that we were in to put it on the telly. We had to buy drinks for everyone afterwards. Fortunately, there weren't too many people in the pub! That was a big day for the filly. That was the day that we started to think that she could be very good."

But the Moyglare Stud Stakes in September was the pinnacle. It is the definitive juvenile fillies' race in Ireland. Just take a cursory glance at the roll of

honour: Habibti, Park Appeal, Sayyedati, Sky Lantern, Misty For Me, Minding. Now add Skitter Scatter.

The Airlie Stud's filly had already won the G3 Silver Flash Stakes and the G2 Debutante Stakes. These are the races that funnel to the Moyglare. Even so, it took a while for the market to conclude that she should be sent off as favourite. It wasn't the first time that she was underrated.

"We stood in the place that we had stood for the Debutante Stakes. Same place. Just beside the winning post, by the rail. That hadn't worked out too badly for us in the past. But we couldn't see the race very well. It was difficult to tell how well she was travelling from the big screen, and then, she whizzed past us. When she won it, I picked Patrick up. I actually lifted him off the ground. People were looking at us. We didn't care."

The enormity of the achievement was not immediately apparent to Anthony. It took a while. You go to the races in hope, but you don't allow yourself to think of the implications of winning a Group 1 race. Then, when you do win it, it takes time for it all to sink in.

"That was my best day's racing. Unquestionably. Mum had some great days with Dad in the past, but for me personally. I've been working with horses for 29 or 30 years, and it was my best day at the races by far. And it was brilliant for Mum too. For her to lead the filly into the winner's enclosure, at the Curragh, a Group 1 winner, a Moyglare winner. That was a special day."

There have been offers for Skitter Scatter. No real surprise there. They started in earnest after her win in the Silver Flash, and they continued and grew after she won the Debutante. But Sonia Rogers decided no. Let's keep her. Let's enjoy her. Let's dream.

"We have her mother. We have a lot of the family. We have her grandam. Daneleta is in foal to Gleneagles. And it's the type of family that we love. It's those really good families that you've had a bit of luck with, that you can persevere with. Keep the odd filly. And start the whole thing off again."

There's that full circle again.

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	DEEP IMPACT	26	24
4	DUBAWI	30	18
5	SCAT DADDY	25	16
6	QUALITY ROAD	22	14
7	KODIAC	21	12
	TAPIT	22	12
	WAR FRONT	25	12
10	DARK ANGEL	19	11
	INTO MISCHIEF	31	11
12	INVINCIBLE SPIRIT	18	10

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It's not always a smooth ride for these three outstanding racing photographers

Emily Shields | NOVEMBER 19, 2018



Star photographers: Enzina Mastrippolito, Anne Eberhardt Keogh and Barbara Livingston at the Kentucky Oaks in May. Photo: Emily Shields

The combined ages of photographers Anne Eberhardt Keogh, Barbara Livingston and Enzina Mastrippolito totals 181 years. That's a lot of time spent perfecting their craft while capturing some of the greatest runners to grace the American turf.

Along the way, they have dealt with chauvinism and copyright issues, and now face a growing challenge from cell phone-wielding fans masquerading as professional photographers. Despite the challenges, the three women are widely considered some of the very best in the Sport of Kings.

A love of horses preceded photography for both Eberhardt Keogh and Livingston. Eberhardt Keogh's family has always been in the horse

business, and she remembers, "...dinner every Sunday night with my family at Darby Dan Farm, where my grandfather worked, so I learned the farm manager life from a young age."

Her mother taught her to read the Daily Racing Form at Keeneland as a wide-eyed 5-year-old. It wasn't until her father started playing around with a Super 8mm camera that Eberhardt Keogh's interest in photography grew.

Ruffian on an Instamatic

Livingston recalls two photos from her past: the first depicts her at just three years old sitting on the back of a pony with a massive smile. "Horses were in my life from the minute I could remember any minute, and probably before that," she said. The second photo shows her at nine years old fearlessly galloping bareback, hands looped through billowing mane.

She remembers photographing Secretariat working out at Saratoga in 1973, but even more vivid is the memory of the immortal Ruffian winning the Spinaway Stakes a year later. "I took these photos that were darned good for an Instamatic camera," Livingston said. "Looking back they were pretty bad, but they felt really good at my age. The next year Ruffian died. There was something about it, I had these pictures enlarged and on my wall, and she kept living through them to me. Like she was always going to be alive because of those photos."

As for Mastrippolito, who is best known in the industry simply as 'Z', photography came first. She was working as the production manager for the Thoroughbred Record, but, "couldn't stand sitting in an office". She noted that the Record's photographer George Featherston was "getting on in age, so I thought shadowing him would be a good way to get outdoors".

As a fine arts major, Mastrippolito was a natural. "I had that inclination towards composition," she said. "It had nothing to do with horses."

That was until Alysheba came on the scene. The Kentucky Derby and Breeders' Cup Classic winner of 1987 and 1988, respectively, gave Mastrippolito a moment she still finds emotional. "He turned around and

looked right at me," she said. "The photo I got then is the only one I have at my house. That was the beginning for me, realizing how much I liked it."

Since then, the photographers have been around some of racing's true greats. "I took a vacation day to photograph Secretariat at Claiborne," Eberhardt Keogh recalled.

"Secretariat was in a paddock next to Round Table and Nijinsky," Livingston said. "I always asked to see Riva Ridge; I loved that big lop-eared guy."

"I had gone on a trip to meet Northern Dancer," Mastrippolito said. "There have been so many; Seattle Slew, Affirmed. The greats."

Special Triple Crown moments

Livingston's favorite major racehorse of all time is Alydar, who famously lost to Affirmed in all three legs of the Triple Crown in 1978. "There was something about how he never gave up trying that was remarkable to me," she said. "You can lose and there may happen to be someone better, but you keep trying."

All three women agree on the greatness of Cigar, Livingston remembers watching Forego power down the track, and Eberhardt Keogh was on hand to photograph Kentucky Derby-winning mare Genuine Risk and her very special son Genuine Reward.

"Zenyatta was a real favorite of mine," Eberhardt Keogh said, "because of the way she ran. It was amazing to be standing on the track when she was racing to the finish, almost like you could feel it."

They also agree that being present at the recent Triple Crowns won by American Pharoah and Justify have been special. "I remember being there eight or nine times that the Triple Crown wasn't won," Eberhardt Keogh said. "You have to do the same amount of work and preparation either way, so when it happens, the excitement is palpable."

But their respective careers of documenting the sport in the best light possible have been far from smooth.

"When you are first seen as a female photographer, not everyone is thinking, 'That's a top class photographer!'" Livingston said. "Sometimes, they are thinking, 'How sweet, it's a girl and she takes pictures of horses, so she must

love horses.' It's not that we don't, but I also study every camera I have, and study every possible setting. I need to know what I'm working with so I can try to be the best at it."

"I took photo courses in Lexington with one of the Lexington Herald Leader photographers," Mastrippolito said. "I did my research and my practice, and I made my mistakes."

"I majored in communication, and learned audio, photography, video, and journalism," Eberhardt Keogh said. "I didn't know where it would all take me. At one time I was covering horse sales, doing both the photography and the writing. There's no way you can do that now."

Gender issues

At the same time, the three women held positions as the head photographers of the Thoroughbred Times (once merged with the Thoroughbred Record), Blood-Horse, and the Daily Racing Form. They still deal with gender issues; Eberhardt Keogh said, "It is a male dominated sport, yes, but my job is to document the sport and people have been pretty good about letting me accomplish that."

"To do it professionally at the top level is incredibly hard," Livingston said. "I've had farm shoots over the years where people said the owner didn't want to hire you at first because you're a female, as if that had anything to do with talent, but later on they did hire me."

She recalled a moment six years ago when she was setting up remote cameras under the rail at a major race and a friend noted that of all the people doing the same thing, she was the only woman.

"There really aren't many of us," Livingston said, "and there's certainly not many in charge of setting up five remotes as well as heading a team of people. I really strive for my team to try to be the best, but it hasn't always been easy."

Zenyatta on a thong

More modern issues they face include issues of copyright law and the fact that "anyone" can be a photographer with a cell phone. "Copyright has always been an issue," Eberhardt Keogh said.

“Barbara is very good at monitoring photo usage, and I’m best at staying up on copyright law.”

Sometimes fans can feel that, if a photo is posted online, it becomes public domain and they are free to do with it as they wish, such as put the image on clothing and sell it, which is actually a direct violation of federal law. “There are so many angles and gray areas,” Eberhardt Keogh explained. “If we have an issue, we contact the person, that person will either say they weren’t aware and take it down, or they won’t and they will receive a cease and desist letter.”

Eberhardt Keogh laughingly recalled an incident with a thong bearing Zenyatta’s image being sold in China. “There wasn’t much that could be done with that one except laugh,” she admitted.

And what of technology?

“I’ve made my peace with the technology,” Mastrippolito said. “I integrate it. If this is the way, then we need to accept it.”

Eberhardt Keogh noted that, between races at the Breeders’ Cup, she is editing photos on her phone directly from her camera, and uploading them via Twitter with “the various hashtags already in place”.

Shortcomings of the selfie age

“It’s an incredibly different time, professionally,” Livingston said. “Mentally, I’m stuck in the earlier time where the professionals were professional and people were working for actual publications. They were concerned with doing a good job and being professional with each other; they weren’t consumed with taking a selfie or getting the quickest thing on Twitter possible, even if it is blurry, crooked, inaccurate, even if it doesn’t represent racing well. It’s really difficult for me, because I believe we can show horse racing as world class, beautiful, and interesting.”

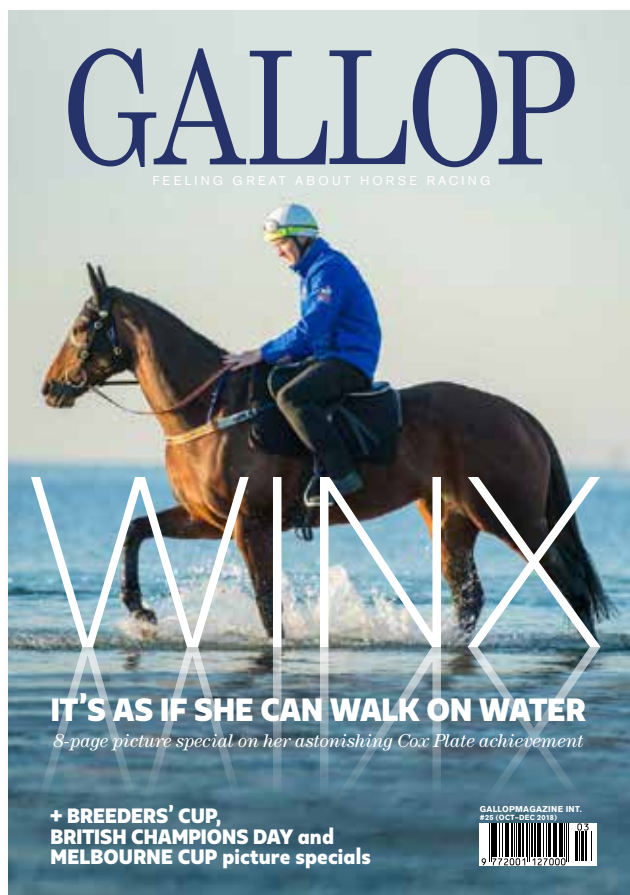
And the need for professional, trained photographers still exists. “If you know how to use your equipment and the

equipment doesn’t use you, you’re the one in control,” Mastrippolito said.

“The camera can give you all these settings, but if you don’t know what makes a good picture or you can’t see it happening or you don’t have the patience, then you’re not adding to the mix, you’re just pointing and shooting.

“The phones do have good quality, but, if the phone would fail, the professional would know how to circumvent. Take away all of the computerized knowledge that the machine has and do it without that, look up at the sky and note what is that in terms of f-stop and ISO. You have to know how to compose. You need to see what is working in your image to make it. That’s what makes the difference.”

Despite the bumpy road, none of them would change their careers. “People that are in the horse business love it,” Eberhardt Keogh said. “The hours are bad, and the pay scale is all over the map, but I love horse racing right there with them.”



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Tattersalls

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Two Year Olds & Horses In Training

July Sale

July 9 - 12
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*All dates may be
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Book 3* October 17 - 18

Book 4* October 18 - 19

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Tattersalls

From near-champion jockey to star TV pundit: the transformation of Jason Weaver

Graham Dench | November 09, 2018



Jason Weaver: "Jockeys aren't riding a helicopter, and, if you are shut in with six horses around you going equally well, someone will call it a bad ride when in fact it's down to bad luck and circumstance." Photo: Alan Crowhurst

There are some excellent pundits who never played their sport to any great level, but a former top professional with a sharp mind can offer something extra.

Gary Neville and Jamie Carragher have taken British football analysis to another level, while cricket is lucky to have the likes of Mike Atherton to continue in the style of the late Richie Benaud.

In racing, we have a host of former jockeys to inform and entertain us, but few are as consistently good as Jason Weaver, who has completed 50 or so days in his second year with ITV

Racing and will continue through the winter on At The Races, where his 'Get In' double act with Luke Harvey is a regular highlight.

Weaver rode around 1,000 winners and enjoyed classic success in 1994 on Mister Baileys in the 2000 Guineas only months after being crowned champion apprentice. That same year, he rode 200 winners, a score bettered that season only by a rampant Frankie Dettori, and, although he was never again a serious contender for the championship, he continued in the

top flight until weight issues finally got the better of him in 2002.

‘I couldn’t do it anymore’

Riding credentials as good as Weaver’s are no guarantee of on-screen success, as plenty of others have demonstrated, so how did the opportunity come about, and what has made the transition such an obvious success?

Weaver recalls: “I hadn’t become the product I wanted to be, and I wasn’t in a great spot mentally, so after battering it all through the winter, I sat down one night for a heart to heart with my better half, Fiona, and told her I couldn’t do it anymore.

“I didn’t have a clue what I would do, and I had only just turned 30 and so still needed to work, but the sheer release was unbelievable and I’d always worked so knew I was going to find something.”

A key asset was a self belief, which someone once said was bordering on arrogance, and so, when Jim Ramsey, a producer from what was then the Racing Channel and someone he had once ridden winners for, approached him for a trial, he had no hesitation.

Weaver says: “I thought it would be something I could do, and I was lucky to work with very good people talking about a sport I absolutely loved. I’d ridden a lot of good horses - a lot more than many jockeys do - and I’d also had a really good schooling from excellent tutors, because, after Milton Bradley, who I worked for while still at school, my only proper jobs had been with Luca Cumani and Mark Johnston.”

Weaver does not over-complicate matters in front of the camera, and he is well aware that it’s the horses, not the presenters, that people tune in for.

He says: “The most important thing is the horse, and then I aim to be open and honest in my assessment and to hopefully be lucky enough to pick a couple of winners. Understanding the horses and the way they can progress is important, and so obviously is being able to read a race, picking up on incidents that others might not see in the cut and thrust, and understanding the importance of the draw, the pace and all of those other things.

“I love it. It changes all the time and no two days are the same. Anything can happen at any time, and every now and

again we see a little sprinkling of magic, and not always where you might expect it. Racing has such a lot to offer, and I enjoy promoting it as best I can.”

Frankie’s ‘beast of a ride’

Refreshingly, Weaver has never pulled his punches when he feels a jockey has ridden a poor race. He says: “Jockeys aren’t always going to be happy with what I say, and they can be incredibly prickly, but that’s because they are a one-man band and so it’s not like football or cricket, where there’s team responsibility.

“I’m also aware that they aren’t riding a helicopter, and, if you are shut in with six horses around you going equally well, someone will call it a bad ride when in fact it’s down to bad luck and circumstance.”

Weaver’s honesty has caused problems once or twice, but no long-term falling out. He says: “I remember Philip Robinson wasn’t very complimentary after I’d said something about a ride of his at Yarmouth, but a few days later he invited me to play golf with him, and so, without exactly apologising, he had accepted it maybe wasn’t a great ride.

“Then, when Frankie Dettori was going through that difficult time after his ban and couldn’t ride a winner for love nor money, he gave one an absolute beast of a ride at Royal Ascot. I was honest in my assessment and had a text from him that night, but when we talked about it he agreed it wasn’t his best.

“Frankie accepted that, while there was the odd ride of his I might have criticised, there are hundreds more when I’ve said he was brilliant, as of course he soon was once again and still is - just look at the rides he gave Expert Eye and Enable at the Breeders’ Cup.”

Great times with Mark Johnston

Dettori had been at Cumani’s when Weaver began his successful apprenticeship there with five odds-on winners - some in Newmarket still call him ‘Odds-On’ - and he has played an important part in Weaver’s life one way or another. Indeed, it was what turned out a poor choice by the Italian that led to Weaver getting the ride on Mister Baileys in the Guineas.

Weaver explains: “I wasn’t guaranteed the Mister Baileys ride when I first went to Mark’s from Luca’s, but Frankie chose Grand Lodge in the Guineas instead, and so I was lucky enough to get the leg up and go on and beat him a short head. It was the start of a great relationship with Mark, and I couldn’t have been luckier.”

As he had done with Cumani, Weaver enjoyed plenty of great times with Johnston, with high profile success with many more after Mister Baileys, notably on Double Trigger and Bijou D’Inde. However, there were weight problems throughout.

He can admit now that, even before he was apprenticed, it was clear it was going to be an issue. “While I was still in school, my mother put me on boiled rice and apples for six weeks just to get me into the British Racing School at under their eight-stone maximum, and it was a constant battle every single day throughout my riding career.

“Riding winners and dealing with people was the easiest part of the job, and I loved it, but I was on a treadmill throughout, having to waste and cheat the scales every day. It was fairly routine for me to have to take 3lb off in the morning, but, once you get into the 4lb or 5lb territory, it’s really unhealthy.

“The body can accept an amazing amount of punishment, but it will pack up on you at some stage, and I put mine through so much torment that it had just about run its course by the end.

“I was sweating at home in the bath, then in the car on the way to the races, and again in the sauna at the track, and the effect was shocking. I remember being extremely aggressive at times. I wasn’t in a super healthy place mentally if I’m honest.”

Weaver stopped in the nick of time by the sounds of it, and now, 16 years on, he is in a much happier place. We will see less of him through the jumps season, but he will remain a Friday night fixture with Luke Harvey on ‘Get In’.

Weaver believes the format’s light-hearted irreverence provides a release for both guests and viewers at the end of what has often been a difficult week. One suspects it might be a release too for the hosts.

Not that Weaver needs one now like he once did. After all, life is good.

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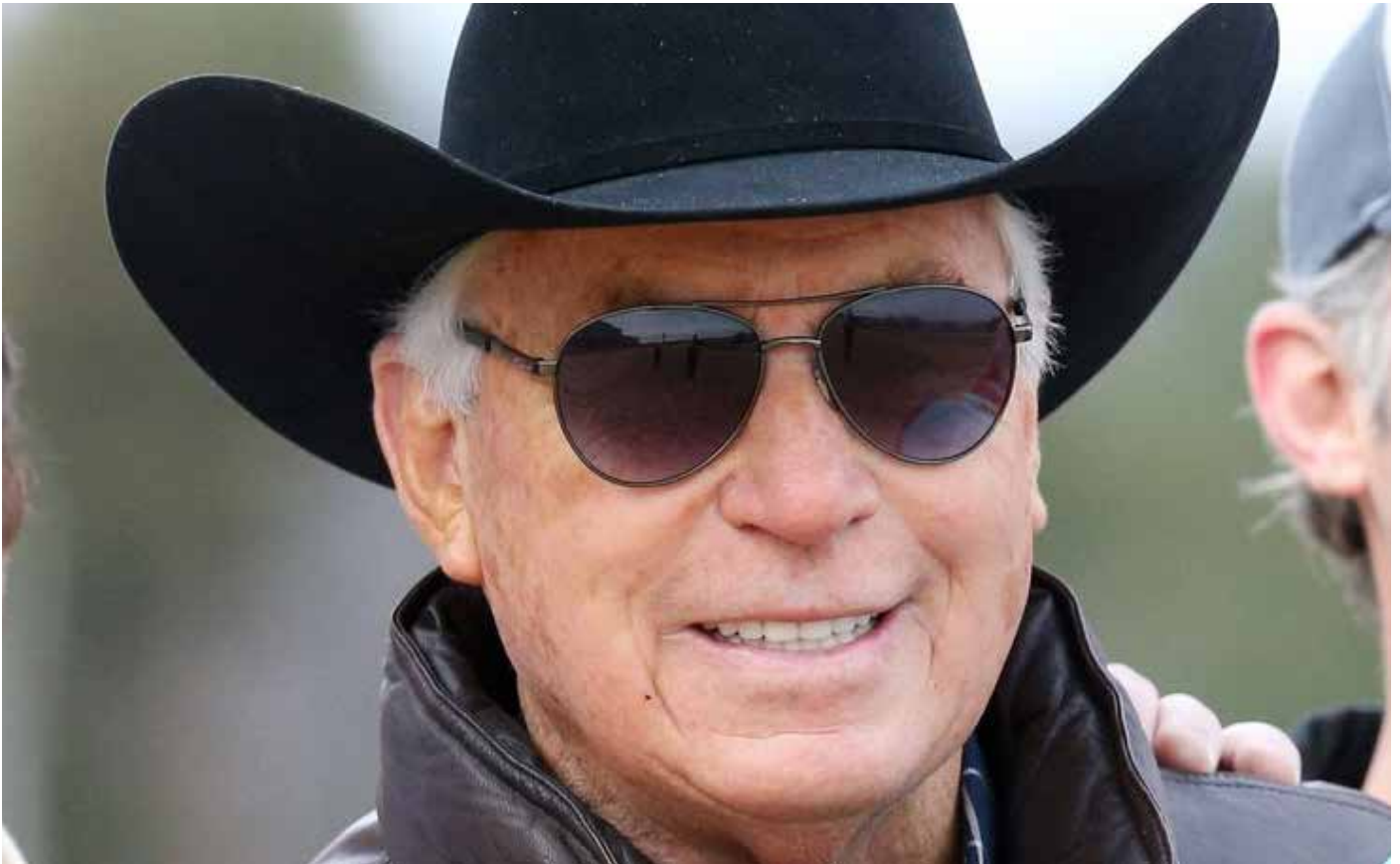
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**IRISH THOROUGHBRED
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D. Wayne Lukas: why racing should be run the same way as the NFL

Daniel Ross | November 27, 2018



D. Wayne Lukas: "There's no doubt we need to have uniform medication," he says. Photo: Coady Photography

From Farma Way to Charismatic, Tabasco Cat to Serena's Song, Spain to Will Take Charge, the horses D. Wayne Lukas has trained over a career spanning nearly 45 years have taken him into virtually every winner's circle of note at every U.S. racetrack worth mention. And he's not done yet, as is clear from this short Q&A with Daniel Ross in TRC's fortnightly What They're Thinking series. The following has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Who do you believe is the most important figure in the history of racing around the world?

I would say the Maktoum family. They've been instrumental in so many areas and in so many ways. I would also put John Magnier and his associates in that category. Economics drive the industry. There's no question about that. The activity in the sales ring, stud syndications, and the stud fees generated from a prominent sire, all are things that fuel and drive the industry.

So, when you look at that, and you look at what John Magnier has done with Coolmore in the United States, Australia and Ireland, the Maktoums with their stud



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farms in Kentucky and throughout the world — those are the things that fuel and drive the industry. Gambling does not drive the industry. The purse structure, although it's gotten better in this country, if we just had to depend on that, I think the industry would greatly suffer.

Which is your favourite venue and race (anywhere in the world)?

I really like Santa Anita. I was there for a long time. And I love the atmosphere at Keeneland. They're my two favorites. Saratoga would come in a close third. But nothing upstages the Kentucky Derby. The [Breeders' Cup] Classic, the Pegasus, the Dubai World Cup — it doesn't matter. You put the 144 years of tradition behind a race that's universally accepted and watched, there's no way it can be upstaged. As a trainer, owner or a jockey, you'll want that on your resume, because when you get that on your resume, you've arrived.

What is your fondest memory in racing?

I really believe winning the Derby. It would be tough to separate which one, but I

think, if I've got to really nail it down, believe it or not it was winning with Grindstone for Overbook Farm and [William T.] Young, who long ago became less of a client and more of a real, real good, close friend. That was his dream as a Kentuckian to win it. That's the only time I've been totally emotional after a win. Normally I get pretty analytical. We had a number of entries that year, but I thought he was the least likely, and darn it if he didn't jump up and win it that year.

What do you see as the biggest challenge racing faces today?

Without a doubt, it's the medication issue. There's no doubt we need to have uniform medication — the public are never going to have the confidence they need until we give them, whether the perception or the reality that everybody is getting a fair shake out on the racetrack.

In addition to that, the tracks are like islands. Santa Anita doesn't give a damn about Monmouth Park. Aqueduct couldn't care less, if you want to know the truth, about Churchill Downs. They all have their individual agendas, and we don't have the power to bring the principles of the

racetracks together to do what's best for the sport. That's our problem.

If you look at our National Football league in the United States, none of the teams can do anything that would hurt the league, or not benefit it. But in racing, every track does whatever it wants.

If you could change one thing in racing, what would it be?

The Jockey Club have to step up and declare that they will not sanction or recognize races [at tracks that don't operate in the] best interest of the sport. That's the only leverage they have. They're not going to recognize Santa Anita's races if they don't come along and do what's best for Del Mar. And Del Mar's not going to be sanctioned if they don't do what's best for Churchill Downs. Bring it all together under one umbrella, and you can do that with a governing committee or a commissioner.

The thing that makes the National Football League so strong is they lock all the owners in a room and they argue and fight, but when they come out, they're unanimous in what they're going to do that's best for the league. That's exactly what we need to do.

TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



The Thoroughbred Racing Industry's ranking system

Available at thoroughbredracing.com

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TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



25 November 2018

Jockeys

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Ryan Moore	Great Britain	1111
2	Mike E Smith	USA	1070
3	Frankie Dettori	Great Britain	1065
4	Christophe-Patrice Lemaire	Japan	1061
5	Hugh Bowman	Australia	1057
6	Mirco Demuro	Japan	1053
6	William Buick	Great Britain	1053
8	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1044
9	Joel Rosario	USA	1037
10	Javier Castellano	USA	1032
11	Joao Moreira	Hong Kong	1028
12	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1026
13	Flavien Prat	USA	1025
14	Zac Purton	Hong Kong	1024
15	Oisin Murphy	Great Britain	1023

Owners

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Coolmore Partners	Ireland	1092
2	Godolphin	Australia	1078
3	Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum	Great Britain	1045
4	Magic Bloodstock Et Al	Australia	1043
5	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	Great Britain	1038
6	WinStar Farm Et Al	USA	1024
7	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1023
8	China Horse Club Et Al	Australia	1020
9	Hajime Satomi	Japan	1013
10	Head of Plains Et Al	USA	1009
10	Patrick Kwok Et Al	Hong Kong	1009
12	H H Aga Khan	France	1006
12	Lloyd Williams Et Al	Australia	1006
14	Michael Dubb Et Al	USA	1003
15	Madaket Stables Et Al	USA	1002

Trainers

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	A P O'Brien	Great Britain	1083
2	Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	1076
3	Bob Baffert	USA	1073
4	Chad C Brown	USA	1070
5	John Gosden	Great Britain	1062
6	Darren Weir	Australia	1040
7	Saeed bin Suroor	Great Britain	1034
8	Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	1025
9	Chris Waller	Australia	1024
10	A Fabre	France	1021
11	John Moore	Hong Kong	1015
12	J Size	Hong Kong	1011
13	James Cummings	Australia	1005
14	A S Cruz	Hong Kong	1003
15	Brad H Cox	USA	1002

Sires

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Dubawi	Great Britain	1088
2	Galileo	Ireland	1078
3	Frankel	Great Britain	1053
4	Scat Daddy	USA	1051
5	I Am Invincible	Australia	1049
6	Deep Impact	Japan	1046
7	Kitten's Joy	USA	1035
7	Sea The Stars	Great Britain	1035
9	Nathaniel	Great Britain	1028
10	Candy Ride	USA	1026
11	Quality Road	USA	1025
12	Teofilo	Australia	1023
13	Lookin At Lucky	USA	1022
13	Poet's Voice	Australia	1022
13	Snitzel	Australia	1022