



Race Track Industry Program

**33rd ANNUAL
SYMPOSIUM ON RACING & GAMING**

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**TURF PUBLICISTS OF AMERICA
MARK KAUFMAN WORKSHOP
"COMMUNICATING THE STORY OF AN EQUINE INJURY"**

Moderator/Speaker:

John Lee, Director of Broadcasting, New York Racing Association

Speakers:

Mike Gathagan, Vice President, Communications, Maryland Jockey Club

Dr. Celeste Kunz, On-Call Veterinarian, American Association of Equine Practitioners

Randy Moss, ABC/ESPN Racing Analyst and Host "Wire to Wire"

MS. WENDY DAVIS: When people — people come into class and they sit in the back, we make them come up in front. Everybody there in the back row come on up, nobody bites up here, I promise.

Just a couple of housekeeping announcements. We'd like to thank InCompass for our refreshments at the break. I also want to let you know there's going to be an important announcement in this room as soon as this panel session is done. When we are finished up here please don't leave, it will be immediately afterwards. The Maryland Jockey Club and Magna and Joe DeFrancis have an announcement to make. So it will be here in this room. Please, again, stay put.

Right now I'm really pleased to introduce the TPA's Mark Kaufman workshop. It's really an honor that the Race Track Industry Program is the site of this workshop every year. And we really thank the TPA for putting this on. You always tackle really good topics, sometimes the tough topics. I imagine today's is not that easy to talk about, so thank you for jumping in.

Communicating the story of an equine injury is what we're going to be talking about here today. And our moderator and speaker is John Lee, director of broadcasting for the New York Racing Association. So I'd like to turn it over to

John's capable hands and again thank you, TPA and all the members, for choosing us for your venue to hold this workshop.

MR. JOHN LEE: Thank you, Wendy. We're very happy to be back here at the racing symposium. It's called the Mark Kaufman Workshop; we named it for a long-time turf publicist and past president of the Turf Publicists of America Mark Kaufman, a beloved individual in horse racing and a man behind many of the accomplishments of this organization. Mark passed away during Kentucky Derby week of 1995 and we're very happy to continue his memory and honor him by every year naming this workshop for him.

I am the president of the Turf Publicists of America for about another hour and a quarter when I hand over the reins to a new slate of officers. I want to thank Eric Wing, Mac McBride, Mike Gathagan, the outgoing board of the TPA and welcome in Eric Wing as the new president of the TPA. He is the senior director of relations for the NTRA.

John Englehart joins as the vice-president for the central region, director of publicity and public relations at River Downs. Bill Knauf will have a busy year as director of marketing at Monmouth Park in Meadowlands, he is vice president for the eastern region, Joan Lawrence the senior manager of communications for the NTRA is vice president at large and Julie Sarno a marketing consultant and freelance writer is a former TPA president and she comes back aboard and our thanks to David Zenner of Arlington Park for picking up the toughest job on the TPA, the job of secretary and treasurer.

We also held elections for the "Big Sport of Turfdom," and this year's honoree is significant for what we're going to discuss here today. Every year we honor an individual who not only has terrific accomplishments in horse racing but in the way they dealt with the media and the way they cooperated with turf publicists really helped put a special shine on thoroughbred racing to the general public.

We always have a great slate of nominees but we had a nominee this year that ran away with the field and that would be Dr. Dean Richardson of the New Bolton Center. He is the Chief of Large Animal Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania's George D. Widener Hospital at the New Bolton Center, but what everyone here and everyone around the country knows him, as is Barbaro's doctor. We're happy to celebrate him at our awards luncheon on January 22nd, just a couple of hours and just a couple of blocks before the Eclipse awards. We'll have some press releases here both on the officers and Dr. Dean Richardson. We hope to see you out there; it's a great lunch.

And I mention it's appropriate that Dean Richardson is our Big Sport because he was such a central character in one of the big sports stories of the year, of course the story of Barbaro and it is a focal point of our discussion today about equine injury and it is a story that really grabbed people. It is a story that riveted the nation. And we want to give you a brief look at how the media looked at Barbaro's story.

(A video was played)

MR. LEE: You know, in horse racing we really have something going for us, people love horses, kids love horses, girls love horses, women love horses, men love horses, people in the city love horses, people in the country love horses. Nationalities from the Irish to the Hungarians, to the Singaporeans, Mongolians. Venezuelans, Australians, they all love horses, they love to watch them, they love to watch them in action, they love to watch them run, they love to watch them race, they love to watch horses win, but they really hate to see horses hurt. In many cases it affects people more to see a horse hurt than even to see a jockey hurt.

And I don't know if people out there are Soprano's fans, you don't see Tony Soprano breaking down in tears very often in episodes of the Sopranos, but he did break down when his horse Pie-o-My in an episode a few years ago lost his life in the story in a barn fire. If Pie-o-My had met his fate on a racetrack, what Tony Soprano would have seen the next day was a lot of replays on ESPN, headline news on the local TV, and when he picked up the Newark Star Ledger that morning if he might have seen some disturbing images.

We have a very difficult story to tell in communicating the story of equine injury, but I think what the Barbaro story showed us, we have a tremendous reservoir of good will, interest and sympathy for the horse, maybe it's a foundation horse racing can draw on.

We have a good panel lined up today to discuss this topic. I'll introduce briefly.

Dr. Celeste Kunz represents the American Association of Equine Practitioners On Call Vet Program.

Mike Gathagan, director of communications for the Maryland Jockey Club was onsite at the focal point of the Barbaro incident. And Randy Moss, we'll start off with Randy. Broadcaster for ABC, ESPN, host of ESPN Wire to Wire, and a long-time sports and racing writer.

Randy, I'm going to start with you since we just saw you on the screen. And maybe I'll ask everyone the same question just to get us started. What's going on in your world as a TV broadcaster when something like this happens on the track? You have everything planned down to 30-second intervals and now all the plans go out the window. What's going on, what are some of the immediate challenges?

MR. RANDY MOSS: The most obvious most recent example was the Breeders' Cup Distaff. It's something that you prepare for, in that, I remember sending emails to our production staff a couple of weeks before the Breeders' Cup, okay guys, what are we going to do. Here's scenario A, here's scenario B involving

injuries to horses, injuries to jockeys, who are we going to send where, what are we going to do.

I remember thinking to myself before the Breeders' Cup telecast that morning what if something happens, like ultimately happened to Pine Island. That situation was an especially tough one though.

I feel some empathy for Trevor Denman, I didn't actually see the injury to Pine Island as it initially happened. I have three television monitors in front of me. One is a tight shot, one is the normal pan shot and one is the racetrack feed. I'm going back and forth watching all of them. I was watching the wrong monitor. We had an isolated camera on Pine Island. The producers in the truck are in communication to us through our ear, immediately let us know as the horses were going down the backstretch that Pine Island went down and it was a significant injury.

The first thought that goes through my mind in that situation, one of the things that made it so tough for us is one of the members of our production crew, a person we work very closely with is Daisy Phipps, who is the daughter of Dinny Phipps and the owner of Pine Island. And of course, we all knew how she felt about the filly, and immediately that's the first thing that goes through your mind.

And then you see what happened to Fleet Indian, so now you have a double-barreled thing to think about. Then as soon as Round Pond spurts through and is clearly going to win the race, then you have the story of the incredible irony of Michael Matz and Edgar Prado winning the distaff at the same time a horse goes down with a life-threatening injury.

Then of course, you have to think about the challenge that every television broadcaster faces in a situation like that. The balance of reporting happened in terms of the winner of the race, Round Pond compared with what obviously is going to be the most compelling story out of that, which is the injury that happened.

You have to be honest about it without being overly graphic. I think the pictures do enough of that. Fortunately we had a very good team in place, Jeannine Edwards and Nick Luck, and conjunction with the AAEP helped to cover that as best we could.

MR. LEE: Mike Gathagan is a former sports producer, so he brings us an interesting perspective. He worked in media relations for other sports including the Baltimore Stallions of the CFL, Canadian Football League, also the Washington Wizards of the NBA, joined the Maryland Jockey Club in 2001, and as press liaison for Laurel and Pimlico, Mike, you had a full plate in front of you, as it's post time for the Preakness, the most pressure-packed moment of your year, it's certainly going to get more pressure packed.

MR. MIKE GATHAGAN: John, when it happened initially, I thought, I need to get hold of Sally Baker who is the media relation's person with the AAEP. and Dr. Larry Bramlage who was there. He was going to be the first person we needed to talk to.

What we do after the Preakness is bring the winner to an area we call the cupola, it's only used that one race the entire year, and then we have a news conference about 20 yards from there with the winning connections, but obviously the story had changed, our race had become breaking news.

Fortunately last year I was able to attend the panel here and it was on crisis management, so I did take a lot out of it and two things were don't panic and try to provide accurate information, and obviously Dr. Bramlage was the first person to do that.

I have a lot of people working on deadline. You know, the race used to be in the 5 o'clock hour, it moved back to about 6:20, we're pushing deadlines, we decided to stay the course, to get Dr. Bramlage before the actual winners came to the news conference, and that's kind of what we did, and certainly knocked around back forth whether I should have gone to the backside where the Barbaro story was taking place. But we decided to stay the course and largely we've been told that was the right thing to do.

MR. LEE: Dr. Celeste Kunz is probably over her jetlag at this point from one of her many international speaking engagements. She was in Japan not too long ago and she is part of the New York and New Jersey equine emergency network and former chief veterinarian for the New York racing association.

She served on the Breeders' Cup and Triple Crown veterinary teams and comes to us representing the American Association of Equine Practitioners' very valuable On Call vet program.

Celeste, although your assignment wasn't the Barbaro story, you've been assigned to many other high-profile races that are the kinds of things that are happening in your world when there's an equine injury. Are you going to a playbook, do you have plans already in place?

DR. CELESTE KUNZ: First, I'd like to describe the On Call program. The On Call is a media assistance program developed to provide broadcast and print media with accurate and timely information during televised races. The goal is to help the viewer understand the injury and the care that's being given to the horse. So information is a vital component, but also for us to demonstrate the care and compassion and the respect for the horse's life. Having an On Call program helps the veterinarians at the scene focus on their most important task, helping the injured horse.

During this event, I had just finished suturing up a standard-bred at Freehold Racetrack, and I was just able to get to the television to see the warming up process. So I was one of millions of viewers that were stunned to see this tragedy unfold.

Having been an examining vet and a track veterinarian and being on the front lines of this situation, I knew exactly those veterinarians at the scene were

facing. It was apparent from the televised pictures there was a severe fracture, distortion above and below the ankle, so I knew two areas were involved. Obviously there would be comminution of the pastern. So it was going to be a lot of obstacles for this horse. It wasn't long later that I received a call from Larry Bramlage, to just tighten up the girth. You're going to be brought into this as well. And I was.

MR. LEE: Very quickly the Barbaro story went past the borders of Maryland. In New York racing we had television crews at the track doing follow-up stories, and I'm sure there's a similar scenario for many other tracks across the country. While we're on the topic of Barbaro, what's the update?

DR. KUNZ: Well, Dr. Richardson is overseas, I spoke to him yesterday.

Barbaro is doing very well. Better than expected. He has no casts on. His right hind leg is fusing very well. There's a light cotton bandage, he is walking very well on it. His left hind, where he was stricken with laminitis, is starting to grow, there's also just a light bandage on, nice support wrap.

So he is allowed to graze about 30 or 40 minutes a day. He sleeps a lot and half the time he is laying down he sleeps. His appetite is good, his weight is good. He is progressing very well, Dr. Richardson is very pleased. He is a very honest forthright person. If he is optimistic, I think we're going in the right direction for sure.

MR. LEE: Just want to mention there's a microphone here and one in the back. We'll have time at the end for questions, but if anyone wants to ask something as we proceed please join us, I'll keep my eyes open for you.

Randy, as a broadcaster, somebody on the spot, the person most people are looking at to learn of this story, what are you looking for in support from the turf publicist and On Call vet?

MR. MOSS: The On Call program has really been a Godsend to television broadcasting in situations like this, and it's done professionally.

Before telecast begins, sometimes the day before, the veterinarian whose duties are to be the On Call vet comes to the television trailer and introduces themselves. Typically, it's Jeannine Edwards she is working with, Jeannine is on the racetrack level where the On Call typically is. And the ball starts rolling with that.

And then if there is an unfortunate situation where an injury occurs, the communication is always very swift between not just the On Call vet and our people, but the On Call vet and the attending veterinarians by walkie-talkie that are on the racetrack helping take care of horse. The information has been flowing very quickly and accurately.

I think it's important though, in what we do, and I know Mike and Celeste have mentioned it as well, this has been an evolving thing, really. But from my view you don't want to sugar coat a situation. Accurate information, no matter how dire the circumstance may be, is something that's important to us as broadcasters to portray to people.

It would have been an unfortunate situation in the Distaff if we had conveyed the situation of Pine Island as being any less dire than it was. It was obvious immediately that she was very, very, longshot, longer shot than Barbaro. Accurate information communicated in a very humane way in a non-graphic non-shocking way as much as possible is the goal and it's working pretty well.

MR. LEE: I find it interesting that people see a horse injury and get very upset and they have the vet come on and tell them in scientific detail tailored for the layman, tell them what happened, and there's something reassuring about that, the horse is still injured, it's still happened, but it seems to lessen the panic level or the emotionality.

DR. KUNZ: I think that's true. I think we provide some kind of comfort zone that the horse is being protected and taken care of. This has been an opportunity for us to show the evolution of the technologies of veterinary medicine and show what we do every day.

MR. LEE: I was thinking, next spring there's going to be a made-for-TV movie on ABC television about Ruffian, and you know, that's a story that decades later still strikes a nerve at Belmont Park. But I was thinking how much things have changed both in terms of veterinary techniques for these kind of injuries and also the way we tell the story and get the word out as indicated by the On Call vets.

DR. KUNZ: I think if there's no information that's being given there's a vacuum and there's speculation, and I think it's important that we have that timely information given.

MR. LEE: I'm sure Mike saw a lot of speculation coming at him in the aftermath of the Preakness. The Preakness story, it stays with you for a long time. What are some of the ways that not only you but other racing organizations helped manage this communication crisis?

MR. GATHAGAN: Once we had the initial news conference, Dr. Bramlage, Sally Baker and I decided we were going back to where everyone else was, towards the backside, and during that 30 minutes they were able to x-ray Barbaro, they knew more information, and we had another impromptu news conference. A lot of issues that we had, we had over 1,600 credentialed media at the event and I guarantee more than half of those people cover horse racing one week out of the year.

So the speculation starts. We heard the next day, was it the track, and then it became, was it the starting gate because he broke through the starting gate prior? Then, the Maryland Racing Commission vet, because NBC just showed the

replay, did he actually check the horse after he came back before he got back to the starting gate? It was an intense situation for much longer than it normally is. And we expected that. You don't want to be on the defensive, but there's a lot of people that are neophytes when it comes to racing industry and you get news directors — the sports people are better to deal with — but you have news directors and newspapers and sports editors that want to, that's what people were talking about around the water cooler so they want copy, and minute-and-a-half packages, and that's what we got for an extended period of time even though the story had shifted to New Bolton at that time.

MR. MOSS: Obviously, Dr. Dean Richardson deserved all the plaudits. He is the superhero in this thing along with Barbaro, but I don't want to lessen the contribution of Larry Bramlage either. He has been tremendous in the circumstances. Most of the major, major races where we have him there at being able to explain things, and just be very empathetic in a situation like Pine Island where there was no good news to tell. He does it in a factual way, he does it in a way that doesn't sugar coat anything, but he also does it in a way you just look at him as he is delivering the news and you know there's a lot of empathy there. And I think that's comforting to the viewer as well.

MR. LEE: That really came through on Pine Island. He was upset but professional and got the information across and also you could feel very genuine emotion.

Mike, anyone else that you see as part of the racing world that helps out in these situations.

There were a lot of heroes. You look at Edgar Prado, once he realized there was an issue, he pulled him up as quickly as possible and Michael Matz and his groom came running out. And he and the outrider, the Maryland Jockey Club outrider, shielded him from the other horses when they crossed the finish line. And we had people on our staff from our facilities department, they were two of the people out there initially with Dr. Dan Dreyfus, who is our attending vet. And they helped Barbaro get in the van, helped him out of the van into the stalls, and they were two of the three people that drove him to New Bolton, and you talk about Dr. Bramlage and Dr. Richardson and Dr. Dreyfus, and the NTRA really stepped up once the story left Baltimore and became more of a national event. Joan Lawrence a new VP on the TPA was up there seven to 10 days locked up in a hotel in Philadelphia.

In New Bolton Gail Luciani and her staff initially did a wonderful job, when I put the call in to her and left a message on her voicemail or cell phone and said look, we have a lot of press people here and they are headed your way. And initially when she called back that evening she said, "Well, we'll just do a press briefing."

And I said, "You don't understand, this is a major event. This is the Derby winner who has captured the nation with Michael Matz's story about saving kids in the plane crash, undefeated Derby champion." I said, "This is a significant story,

you might want to do a little more than just a briefing, sending a release out after the fact.”

They jumped on it. They had a briefing with Dr. Richardson before the actual surgery, where they told us there was a third injury and then had a major news conference after the long surgery. And during that time Celeste was probably on the radio, and I heard Dr. Bramlage once I left Pimlico for the afternoon. And there were a lot of heroes to the story. And obviously Barbaro and Dr. Richardson are 1 and 1A, but there are a lot of other people to thank for this turning out to be a positive story right now.

MR. LEE: And New Bolton is very good about sending out a release and then when is the next release is going to come out.

MR. GATHAGAN: Today is the day, but she beat us to the punch. So you guys all have an exclusive.

MR. MOSS: NBC did a good job with their coverage as well. And it was a good decision by the network to recognize the magnitude of the Barbaro story and choose to stay with it and preempt whatever programming they had coming up immediately after the Preakness to stick with the Barbaro thing and give people at home a little more of sense of closure of what was happening.

DR. KUNZ: With the CNN interview that was only going to air once.

MR. LEE: To set it up, Celeste did a great interview live with Anderson Cooper, at night, where she was out there with a horse, lights shining on the horse, it was a great back and forth. Anderson in the studio and you — really explaining.

DR. KUNZ: We wanted to use a horse basically to show the different anatomy and explain hands on. The segment was supposed to only run an hour. Immediately after we finished it they started getting calls from the studio saying they absolutely loved it. After it was run, they started getting more calls from the public. That thing ran all night. I was worried my mother might not see it. But there was so much interest.

And you mentioned, I was in Tokyo. It was amazing to me the international interest in this horse. It was a veterinary conference but we moved to the outer regions of Japan. Once they knew I was a veterinarian from America, they wanted to know about Barbaro. So the story is still alive and it demonstrates the widespread human/animal bond that's there.

MR. LEE: Let's talk more about that in the video put together for us. We saw signs people holding up, “get well Barbaro.” And you or anyone else on the scene at New Bolton, tell us more about the wellspring good feeling for this horse and concern. Maybe it's a positive message for racing.

DR. KUNZ: Well, they still get 50 e-mails a day. I think the top bites on the Web site was 177,000 in one day. Carrots and baskets and candies that they share with the rest of the patients in the hospital. There are cards — my favorite card is a poster from children, "grow, hoof, grow". Children are learning about the physiology of equine orthopedics. It's amazing. I think the most original gift was the \$500 gift certificate to University of Pennsylvania for their recovery pool from the Notre Dame swimming pool. That was the most original gift. They are still coming in, there's still an outpouring of emotions, the story is still alive.

MR. LEE: And the other horses at New Bolton get to share the wealth.

DR. KUNZ: They get to share the carrots.

MR. LEE: You know, you kind of touched on the children knowing the physiology of the horse. What's the biggest challenge in communicating an equine injury. Not as serious as Barbaro, but people have a hard time realizing that a hurt foot could be a career-ending injury or fracture could be a life-threatening injury in the leg. Are we getting the word out to help people understand?

DR. KUNZ: Absolutely. I was astounded at the learning curve that America has taken not just horse people but your average people that you meet on the street or even people — friend of mine — not horse people, that know he needs those four legs. It wasn't soon afterwards. This is a complicated injury. There are so many different dimensions of what could go wrong. He had so many obstacles, but a lot of things that went right. He had not a compound injury, the skin was intact. He was not very far from the, one of the best equine surgery facilities in the world. Close to an equine surgeon that was one of the elite group that could repair this.

He had very generous owners willing to share this journey with America. And they alone really helped promote this information. There's some confidentiality but they said if it can help racing, and the veterinary community, give them everything. So the Jacksons deserve some credit there.

MR. MOSS: Just as a lesson to the publicists, you can never take for granted how much or how little the public knows about a certain situation. Especially involving horses.

In the Barbaro aftermath I was asked to do a lot of radio and some television and I was astounded at the lack of knowledge at that point. It's not like it was the first time we had been through a situation where a horse was injured, but I was still getting barraged with questions to explain why a horse can't survive on three legs whereas a dog can. I'm sure the Barbaro situation has gone a long way it to helping that, but still, going forward you can never be too in-depth in your explanations as to what's going on.

MR. LEE: Could I throw out a worst case scenario for everybody to tackle? Let's say the Barbaro incident ended more tragically that the curtain came up, the horse

was euthanized. How do you see the story as communicating a news story? Does anybody want to take a shot?

DR. KUNZ: I think it's important for people to remember that everything is done in the best interest of the horse. And that was a real major theme of the Barbaro injury. There are many indicators, of course, that show if they should proceed. Something as simple as appetite or moving around the stall, shifting weight, brightness, the color of their coat. There are important aspects to these kinds of situations, and when it becomes apparent his life will not be a meaningful life and pain-free, we need to look deep and see what's in the best interest of the horse.

I think Dr. Richardson, who is a great communicator, has relayed that, and I think people can take bad news, but they want honest news. Really, when the horse foundered, I was supposed to go to France, and I thought, I probably should not go. Because when I heard how much he lost from that foot I was not optimistic. Of course, we see he was able to go through the obstacle and hurdle and move forward and the story remains alive. It shows the survivor instincts, the class of the horse, the tolerance. He was a perfect candidate and we were so lucky a celebrity like this was able to survive these types of things. I think it brought a whole new dimension of where we can go with survival rates.

MR. MOSS: There's one thing a publicist ought to send e-mails, memos to everybody involved at the various racetracks. Strike the following words from your vocabulary forever: "It's all part of the game." That, as true as it may be, when someone in a position of authority goes on television and says that after an accident like Barbaro or Pine Island, it's one of the worst things anyone can say to the average viewer who is watching. It conveys a sense of almost apathy to the whole situation.

People want to hear not only that people are empathetic, but what's being done. They want to hear not only how it happened and why, but what's being done to prevent things like this as much as possible. Until recently there hasn't been as much done to report in this area. Because there really hasn't been as much done to help prevent situations like this as should be done.

For the Breeders' Cup we were able to talk about the move towards synthetic racing surfaces and how in future situations like this, they won't be completely eliminated but alleviated to a substantial degree.

MR. LEE: The word "game."

MR. MOSS: All part of the sport, all part of the game. Frank Stronach was guilty of that, unfortunately, after the Preakness. He wasn't the first and won't be the last. But you can't say that ever.

DR. KUNZ: I'm glad you brought it up. Part of our media training is to use proper terminology. You will never hear us say "destroyed." There's something very uncaring and graphic about that. Euthanasia is the proper term and it's disturbing

to hear the other things. I think it's a perception of a group that doesn't care about their horses and that's not true.

MR. LEE: There are handouts about the right kind of terminology to bring down the tone of equine injury crisis. We have a question from the floor.

A VOICE: I have a question about the visual showing the clips of the actual injuries. I didn't see it but I heard on sports night on ESPN the two clips they showed were the Pine Island injury and Invasor winning the classic. I'm around the racetrack and I don't like to watch it, is it just a morbid fascination or why do they need to show the actual injury again and again?

MR. MOSS: It's a good question and it's a very valid question and it's one we wrestled with a lot. As good a job that NBC did on the Breeders' Cup in the years they had it, as good a job that they continue to do on the Derby, the Triple crown and Preakness, I think if there's one moment NBC could go back and change in their history, in covering horse racing, it would be the Go For Wand situation in 1990 where there was incessant replays of Go For Wand going down in the stretch. That sort of become poster child of how not to handle a situation like that.

When Pine Island happened, television is a visual medium, as much as we hate to say it, at least once you have to show people what happened. Especially in a situation like Pine Island in which people might not have seen it as it happened.

The way we felt about it, the one graphic shot where Pine Island went down. It was the isolated camera when she went down. One time and that was enough. There were people in the production truck that wanted to keep coming back to it and there were some arguments in the production truck. Ultimately what won was the side of "let's don't go there anymore." We can show the horse on the racetrack to a limited extent as well. We basically showed her in the ambulance, a couple of shots of her standing on the track, a shot of the ambulance going off. At Sportscenter it's out of our hands but it's a situation where a couple of the biggest stories were there. And they were trying to cover that.

MR. LEE: You see this at Pimlico, not just for the Preakness. When you are getting requests for a graphic video or there's a photograph you would love to not see in the newspaper. How do you handle the situation? Do you have a cut-and-dried policy?

MR. GATHAGAN: You take it on a race-by-race basis. Certainly there are situations that in the six years I've been doing this, I've told TV stations no. But there are times that I've, we've dubbed it over. But there's good and bad, the local TV people don't get a lot of time anymore. And so a lot of them aren't going to use a horse being euthanized or a jock being tossed if it's not life-threatening, when they get three, three-and-a-half minutes on the nightly news So that has helped us.

So we don't get a lot of requests, but you have to do them on a case-by-case basis and depending on the relationship with that sports producer or that sports anchor. For the TV people, you have to go with your gut and be decisive.

MR. MOSS: It's a tough situation, the Louisville Courier Journal covers horse racing as well or perhaps better than any newspaper in America. They are horse racing savvy, they have the Kentucky Derby there every year.

The morning after the Breeders' Cup, you wake up and see on the front page of the sports section this very graphic picture of Pine Island on her back in the instant after the spill occurred that was horrible to look at and another one on the inside as well. It's something, and they took a lot of grief about that. I went on the Web site where there were e-mails and there was internal debate about it and ultimately they took the stand that it was news and they had the photograph and as unfortunate as it is, they felt compelled to run it. It's not taken lightly, the media wrestles with that every time it happens.

DR. KUNZ: Sensationalism. If there's going to be that many photographers somebody is going to get that picture and it's going to be desirable to some groups. From that standpoint it's very disturbing. They need to know there's a certain respect be to be paid to the horse and the connections of the horse. Hopefully that message will get across to someone out there.

MR. LEE: Mike, you mentioned a case of a jockey being injured, you made a successful bid to get something not run. Maybe it was a photograph.

MR. GATHAGAN: No, it was the live video, two stations in Baltimore have decoders they can record races as they please, and one station records every race, every day and it was a rider, Rick Wilson, who has about 5,000 career wins and it was a career-ending injury for him, and out of respect for his kids and his family I asked the station not to air it and was successful and I made sure that nobody else got hold of it, even contacting HRTV, our national broadcaster, in case somebody tried to backdoor me, because this was a guy who at the time that night was fighting for his life and now he is successful, he is trying to become a steward, he is retired from racing and is doing quite well.

MR. LEE: You have a question?

A VOICE: Yeah. I work with John and do the simulcasting for Randy, I have questions for people about the wisdom or going to try to talk to Shug, or Dinny after Pine Island broke down, what's the decision-making process on that and you know, if a trainer or owner is going through that, what do you guys think about talking to them or trying not to talk to them?

I know you have to find out if the jockey is okay, especially if the horse goes down, but how do you guys decide?

MR. MOSS: I'll be candid with you. When we do a telecast they have what's called a cough button on the set. And I can press the button, which turns my microphone off. I can communicate, cough if I need to or communicate to the people in the truck who are producing the show. When it came time, they told us Jeannine was sent to the backstretch to talk to Shug, and well after the Pine Island incident happened, and I pressed the button and said, why do we want to do that? In my opinion it was overkill.

Having said that, Shug, according to Jeannine, was initially willing to do the interview and actually wanted to do the interview but ultimately he was a little too emotional and felt like he would break down doing it. I think it was a good thing that we didn't go there, but unfortunately, the effort was made.

A VOICE: What can we do as an industry about fatal injuries to your average racehorses, your cheap claimers? I see the potential of animal rights groups attacking the racing industry for these unfortunate injuries. For example, this summer Del Mar and Arlington had a rash of fatal breakdowns, and both tracks suffered from the perceptions of those injuries.

MR. LEE: That's a very big question, it's a tough one. Anyone want to take a crack, it's not just high-profile horses that are hurt.

Mike, Celeste?

DR. KUNZ: Well, that's multifactorial. There are many mechanisms in place right now from examining horses pre-race physically, and jogging for soundness. The jockeys have courses they are taking, apprentice jockeys with journeymen to show that there's certain things they should and shouldn't do in a race. They bring the veterinarians in so we can discuss with them if you are faced with a catastrophic injury how to manage yourself in a race, get to the outside, avoid other horses, not pull up horses too quickly. There are some mechanisms in place.

The track surface is always looked at. I think there's been a big wave of interest in the Polytrack, and I think the more technology we have in that direction, the better it is. Whatever is in the best interest of the horses and that can eliminate or decrease racing injuries, we're going in that direction.

We had some discussion with Andy Beyer about how the handicappers are going to deal with the different surfaces and he says, "Whatever is in the best interest of the horse. We learn how to handicap the races."

That's in our mind, we can reduce the injuries, we brainstorm all the time, and I think the industry is very aware and trying to move forward.

MR. LEE: There's handout here from the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit, Jockey Club Grayson Foundation. They are looking at everything from horseshoes to track surfaces to breeding and bloodlines to see what can be done to move the problem ahead.

MR. MOSS: From a media perspective, the status quo is absolutely unacceptable.

Totally unacceptable. Horse racing is not in a position in today's American sports psyche where viewers can continue, where the sport can tolerate viewers tuning in and seeing situations like Barbaro and Pine Island. I know there's no way to eliminate it, but when the four most watched horse races of the year, Derby, Preakness, Belmont and Breeders' Cup, two of those people tune in and see catastrophic injuries to racehorses, that's something the industry can't afford to take lightly.

So the handicappers will have to suck it up where it comes to artificial racing surfaces, and in my opinion at this point there's no excuse for every racing jurisdiction not to follow the lead of the California Horse Racing Board and insist on artificial surfaces.

MR. LEE: I want to get a question and then get back to artificial surfaces.

A VOICE: Thank you. Most of the attention has been on the premiere events, obviously, the best of the media coverage, tracks, everyone involved. What recommendations do you have for the smaller venues, lesser racetracks, even though they may be prime events for that particular track but it would not have the A team, so to speak, in media or even track officials? What recommendations do you give for the smaller tracks that might suffer the same kind of catastrophes, both in media and PR, everything? Thank you.

MR. LEE: Mike. Can you try it?

MR. GATHAGAN: I think what we've been hitting on during the discussion, you just have to provide accurate information and whether that's — we were talking this morning about making sure your vet, your state vet is media savvy and can handle it. If there's a horse breaking down, they know what happened more than media relations person who can't explain it. So you just try to be honest. Best thing about this, anything in media relations be honest and develop relations with people. If you do that more, often than not you are going to be successful in getting the story out the way you want it to go out.

DR. KUNZ: I'm glad you asked that question. Because not only the premiere tracks but the smaller tracks should have a crisis control program in place and the veterinarians, the regulatory veterinarian seeks out the best communicator and has their contact information. It's not just racing injuries, there's disease outbreaks there's many different things that you're going to be faced with and the veterinarian could not only give you information but also help your communications department disseminate the proper information. I think that's another take-home message for the other tracks. You may not have television coverage but there may be some interest in the public at the track or in the papers the next day, it's another way to promote the perception that we're caring for our equines, their care and their aftercare, and I'm very glad you asked that.

MR. MOSS: Mac McBride at Del Mar had a great take on that this morning. Del Mar went through an episode where they had breakdowns. They were highly publicized, maybe even overblown. The same lesson, the way Del Mar handled it, also applies to smaller tracks.

I was in the newspaper business for 20 years before I went in television. The horse racing writers at the racetrack every day, they understand situations like that and there's really not an issue with the communication between a racetrack and its horse racing writers that know the sport.

When you get in a situation where you have a rash of breakdowns at the smaller racetrack that has gotten the attention of the "news" side of the newspaper. These people know absolutely nothing, they know less than nothing about thoroughbred racing and their immediate inclination is going to be not to trust a person in racetrack publicity. They are going to think that the person is operating on an agenda that they are not going to be truthful. That's something that's difficult to overcome, ignorance and mistrust. So what Mac at Del Mar did was to take Rick Arthur, a fantastic spokesperson, one of the premiere veterinarians in America, and put Rick front and center in dealing with the media, and that turned out to be a worthwhile thing. There's more of an element of trust there when they are deal with some that they perceive doesn't have an agenda going in.

DR. KUNZ: If you don't have your veterinarian accessible, then the media will use small animal veterinarian or they will use a nurse that has a horse, they are going to use other people. So you need to have your veterinarians be spokespersons.

MR. LEE: Mike, you touched on some of this as well. The need for the right kind of spokesman and the need for a plan in place. Not to hype the seminar of last year, this is a prime example of crisis communications, so some of these things if you have on a check list you're ahead of the game. You know, who to call, notify.

A VOICE: I was going to say the discussion makes me feel disappointed that my part of the industry, the research community haven't done a good enough job of communicating. We have a group of various foundations trying to bridge that and I'd like to work with the TPA in making sure we have information available. I think the fact there's over three dozen universities in North America that do horse research, between our foundation and several other foundations we can identify 20-some million dollars in the last decade and much of that has to do with disease control as Dr. Kunz said, as well as taking care of the musculoskeletal factors of the horse. I'm sorry to say we've done a poor enough job that that hasn't been brought up even at this panel, and we'll try hard to educate the media, help the media have those weapons to talk about to show that we aren't, just as Randy said, when you say "it's part of the game," it sounds like you're very cavalier, and there's a lot going on that's done on behalf the horse and we'll try to do better at explaining that.

And I hope before this session ends Dr. Kunz I'd like to have your memory of the Charismatic case, I understand you were there and Chris Antley got a lot of praise from an emotional standpoint of jumping off and picking up that hoof, but as a veterinarian I wonder if you think it was the right thing to do.

DR. KUNZ: I'll address it now. The most important thing that Chris Antley was to skillfully pull up the horse and get him out of danger. Not necessarily picking up the horse's leg, it was very dramatic and seemed to touch a lot of the people. He had actually done it before with other horses that had injured themselves. It was a testament to his own caring.

We recommend against it as long as the jockey can hold on the reins, and that's a big thing. Often, the instability that the horse experiences when he does have an injury sometimes unseats the rider and once the horse is allowed to run free, the chance of that injury becoming a more substantial injury is great. So the single most important thing he did was hold on to the horse and the other stuff was a bit theatrical but purely his emotions. He had a deep attachment to the horse.

When I had seminars with jockeys, asking them to kind of understand the different components of an injury on the racetrack that was something I asked them not to do.

MR. MOSS: Why? I'm curious myself.

DR. KUNZ: Well, sometimes they choose the wrong leg, believe it or not. Most of the time, and this is true, most of the time when the jockey gets off he tells you it's the wrong leg. Because the horse is stabbing the one leg, but he is stabbing it because it's the good leg, the other leg. Often he tells you it's the wrong leg. Chris did raise the correct leg.

If that horse is unstable he could go down. And if he goes down it makes it even worse because you have a down horse with an injury that you have to raise if you want to save him. We're close enough, at every track, track veterinarians are close enough to the horse they can get there within a minute, certainly, or seconds. As long as jockeys hold on the reins and stop that horse from his natural instinct to run forward, that's about as much as we want to ask them to do.

MR. LEE: I think there was another challenge for the next TPA president to work up a series of talking points to fill in the moment when there's an injury on air and you are able to say, this is happening.

MR. MOSS: That would be a great thing for me to say after the Pine Island situation, definitely.

MR. LEE: It's a good challenge, and hopefully we can work together and get that information and keep updating it with advances.

I know we're getting towards the end of our time period. A gentlemen came up before the session started and wanted us to open up the discussion on synthetic surfaces as it pertains to injuries. It came up strongly in the recent significant injuries in horse racing and obviously prominent next door in the exhibition area of the various synthetic surfaces. How does this element play out in communicating the story of equine injury.

MR. MOSS: I've been outspoken. I think we have a problem with the fragility of the thoroughbred breed. Celeste may agree or not. I think thoroughbreds of today seem to be more injury prone than the thoroughbreds of the past. They are more lightly raced and most horsemen will tell you it's because they can't stand up to racing as much as the horses of even 20 or 30 years ago. That's unlikely to change.

It's going to take massive changes in the breeding of racehorses, which, even if there was a recognition of this and a desire to do it, you're talking about generations of horses in order to change it. If that fundamental part of the equation is not going to change, then something else has got to. To me, the synthetic racing surfaces are about the only thing out there right now to lessen this. Racetracks, Pimlico among other tracks, has a very safe conventional dirt surface compared to other conventional dirt surfaces, I just have the opinion that even a safest conventional dirt track doesn't seem to be as safe for the horses as a synthetic track.

MR. LEE: From the veterinary perspective?

DR. KUNZ: Well, anything technology that we have that can eliminate or lessen a catastrophic injury rate, I'm all for it. As far as bloodlines, I'm speaking beyond the scope of my knowledge. There is scientific research ongoing, and hopefully that becomes a more attractive part of the sales process, you know, maybe we'll move in that direction as well.

MR. LEE: Mike, did this question come up after Barbaro, was the track one of the instigators and artificial surface would be the solution?

MR. GATHAGAN: Absolutely, it did come up. As Randy said, we have a safe track. We had three horses that had to be vanned off during the entire meet. And that was 319 races and 2,590 horses, so the success rate of our track is pretty good. Three horses is three too many, but if you compare our tracks to other tracks around the country, it's probably one of your better rates. It's certainly a question that's not going away.

MR. LEE: Any other questions from the audience? I think we're getting towards the end of our session.

One last thing is getting the right spokesman, and we can wrap up. Unlike, as Mike mentions, other pro sports, jockeys and trainers, they are not the track's employees and those are often the people front and center on the microphone, in

print, on camera. What can we do to bring them more in the story of how the crisis communication can happen successfully?

MR. GATHAGAN: It's all about building relationships. And that's an issue we do have with the Preakness, we have a small window to get a relationship with the winning Derby trainer when they are going to come and it's certainly something we have each year, they are not our players, I worked in the NBA and other sports, they are our players and coaches, we can get them to do things that we can't do in this industry, because, you know, we get to see these high-profile trainers at our track one day or week out of the year. It's certainly something that we have to work on doing a better job whether we have an event to try to get some of the higher profile trainers into higher profile tracks to work together better.

Like Randy said, we all know, the Del Mar meet is a wonderful meet, and Saratoga, mainstream, they know about four events. And to a lesser extent the Breeders' Cup. It's clearly number four. You have these guys, and it's the time to sell our sport. You don't always get, not always getting great cooperation for trainers or jocks and that's when we need them and we don't always get it.

MR. LEE: Randy, you have to call on folks as spokesmen.

MR. MOSS: Having worked in the newspaper business and covering other sports as well as horse racing for a long time before I got into this, the people involved in horse racing are much more cooperative than your average professional athlete in another sport. It's not even, it's not even comparative at all. Having said that, within the thoroughbred business there's people you would prefer to go to as a spokesperson for the sport or a good sound bite or someone who has a thoughtful answer to something. And those are the people that we focus on. One disadvantage that horse racing has in this area, is that the NFL, Major League Baseball, NBA, you have a league with a league-mandated policy of cooperation after the game with the media. NASCAR — it's very important to the league office for their athletes, drivers, to be accessible to the media.

Horse racing doesn't really have that. It does occasionally make it a bit more of a challenge. We face it mainly in technology. When we want to ask the jockeys to do something so innocent as wear a microphone with a tiny battery pack attached to the back of their safety vest, believe it or not, those ounces don't even count in the official weight that the horse carries. It's amazing the difficulty that we have in getting things like that to happen. Sometimes the jockeys will say they will do it and the trainer will say, "No, I don't want my jockey wearing a microphone, I don't want him to be distracted I don't want anybody talks to my jockey or it's a jinx, it's bad luck. I don't want this to happen."

It's almost come to a screeching halt in horse racing because of the lack of cooperation in that particular part.

DR. KUNZ: I'd like to add one thing. Getting back to what we were discussing of artificial surfaces and other things to decrease the injury rate. I think the impact of

the Barbaro situation has shown us there's such a widespread audience that we have out there. And the human/animal bond is very, very, strong. There are a lot of decision-makers in the room. And I want you to remember the priority should be the horse, must be the horse. If we protect our product we already have the audience.

MR. LEE: Sounds like a good place to wrap it up. Any last call — I want to thank you for joining us at this workshop, and again, our thanks to the University of Arizona Race Track Industry Program for inviting us back.

Mike has a press conference coming up in a few moments. There's pretty good handouts out here from the American Association of Equine Practitioners, from the Welfare and Safety of the Horse Summit and some stuff from us as well.

TPA members, if you can hang around here for a moment, we'll find a nice place for our meeting.

(Applause)

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