

## Kentucky Derby Winner Barbaro Euthanized

**Kentucky Derby winner Barbaro, who battled to overcome injuries suffered in the Preakness Stakes, was euthanized on Jan. 29, 2007 at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center.**

*By Mike Curry and Pete Denk*

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Barbaro, winner of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands whose battle to overcome injuries suffered in the Preakness Stakes attracted worldwide attention and a legion of fans, was euthanized on Monday morning at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center.

Gretchen Jackson, who owned and bred the Dynaformer colt along with her husband, Roy, said that Barbaro's front feet were beginning to become affected by the limited ability of both his laminitic left hind foot and his fused right limb that was shattered in the Preakness Stakes to bear weight.

The decision was made early Monday, Jan. 29 after consulting with Dean Richardson, D.V.M., chief surgeon at the University of Pennsylvania's veterinary school.

"There was not a foot that was not affected," Gretchen Jackson said. "He just would not lie down. He had not layed down for two days now. That can't be good for him. He's got to get the weight off of his feet. They were bringing him in and out of the sling, but his front feet were showing signs of laminitic changes and we just thought rather than put him through any more else. He had been good up to the beginning of this month, and then everything went.

"Dean wanted to think about the options, you know you can always go on," Gretchen Jackson continued. "But it's when to get out that's hard, and it was agreed upon to let him go."

Gretchen Jackson said she was very pleased with the care Barbaro got while at the New Bolton Center and was especially thankful to Richardson for all he did to try and help save Barbaro. She also said she believed every option available was exhausted to try and save Barbaro's life.

"We feel like we did," Gretchen Jackson said of exploring every possible way to save Barbaro. "That is certainly what we were trying to do as well as consider the quality of his life. You could go on forever, but we didn't want to see him on life support, we wanted to be sure he would have a quality life, too."

Even in his final moments Barbaro displayed the grittiness that he demonstrated throughout his recovery from a shattered hind limb in the Preakness Stakes (G1) on May 20 at Pimlico Race Course.

"I don't know if things were catching up with him or not, but he was biting at people today," Gretchen said. "He bit Dean's hand I believe today. I don't think going forward it would have been good to allow him to stay. It would have just been selfish on our part.

"I almost feel a sense of relief in some ways, I certainly cried more than I have in years," Gretchen Jackson said. "It's not easy to ever put an animal down and make that decision. It's very hard. And he's given us so much joy, and you still envision the Kentucky Derby winner every time you see him. That's what is so hard. It wasn't easy, we just tried to do the best we can by him."

Barbaro won his first three starts on turf by a combined 20 1/4 lengths, including resounding wins in the Laurel Futurity at Laurel Park to close his juvenile campaign and the Tropical Park Derby (G3) at Calder Race Course in his three-year-old debut.

After a victory in the slop in the Holy Bull Stakes (G3) on February 4 at Gulfstream Park, Barbaro cemented his status as a leading Derby contender with a score in the Florida Derby (G1) April 1. He broke from the outside post with a short run into the first turn and wore down Sharp Humor in the stretch, after which regular jockey Edgar Prado commented that he believed Barbaro was toying with his rival.

Barbaro's connections exuded confidence leading up to the May 6 Kentucky Derby.

"Why shouldn't we have felt that way? Every time he had run before, he never let us down," trainer Michael Matz said. "His will to win was obvious in whatever he did."

Barbaro delivered emphatically with a 6 1/2-length romp in the 1 1/4-mile classic, the largest margin of victory since Assault's eight-length win in 1946.

"I don't think we ever really knew how good he was, that was the most exciting thing about him," said Barbaro's exercise rider and Matz's assistant, Peter Brette. "I could never get to the bottom of him, and I don't think Edgar [Prado] ever got to the bottom of him. I think that was the most exciting thing about Barbaro, what the future held. I've said before that he was the type of horse, I've been in racing 24 years and he was going to make all of my dreams come true. He was the one. In 24 years he was the first horse I sat on and said, 'There's nothing this horse can't accomplish.'"

"A horse like that, you weren't going to be afraid of anybody," Brette said. "You could have taken him anywhere in the world, and for me, he would have beaten any three-year-old in the world. He would have belonged in any Group 1 in the world, and I still think he could have won an [Epsom] Derby (Eng-G1) as well. That's how good he was. He won a Kentucky Derby, and I think he probably would have won the English Derby as well, he was just that good."

The Jacksons, Philadelphia natives who own a 190-acre farm in West Grove, Pennsylvania, have a broodmare band of 27 mares. They had never even come close to breeding a classic contender until Barbaro won the Derby and George Washington won the Stan James Two Thousand Guineas (Eng-G1) on the same day.

"We were really lucky, really lucky," Gretchen Jackson said. "I just appreciate the heck out of him, and I think he knew it. He was well loved. Such luck; at least he's out of his damn stall, and running around with Secretariat, I hope."

Mike Curry is a Thoroughbred Times daily news editor

Pete Denk is a Thoroughbred Times staff writer