



FOREWORD

*ESPN's Jeannine Edwards*

*Greatness and Goodness:*

# BARBARO

AND HIS LEGACY

ALEX  
BROWN

*Illustrated by  
Lynden Godsoe*

AFTERWORD

*Gretchen Jackson*

# Praise for *Greatness and Goodness: Barbaro and His Legacy*

“For over eight months, people all over the world became immersed in Barbaro’s battle for survival, turning to Alex Brown’s website for the latest information, as reported to him by New Bolton Medical Center. In his new book, Brown has crafted an engrossing behind-the-scenes look at those unforgettable eight months, during which the racing world and mainstream America came together in hope and prayer, while in constant admiration of Barbaro’s courage and determination. Brown takes the reader through every touching moment of Barbaro’s plight, from the setbacks to the days of progress when it appeared the story would have a miracle ending. Brown also branches off into other aspects of Barbaro’s story, including the positive effect it had on veterinary medicine and the emergence of horse rescue organizations all over the country. And it is all displayed with beautiful, never-before-seen photos that tell the entire story, from Barbaro’s birth to his death. Even if you weren’t part of the Barbaro saga, you will relish every page of this unique and enlightening chronicle of a very special horse.”

-STEVE HASKIN, Senior Correspondent, *The Blood-Horse*

“Alex Brown’s *Greatness and Goodness: Barbaro and His Legacy* doubtless will remain the most comprehensive biography of this brilliant racehorse. For that reason, it is an important reference for racing historians and fans. What makes *Greatness and Goodness* even more than that is its careful examination how and why Barbaro inspired people around the globe to create his real legacy: the salvation of countless horses from disease and slaughter.”

-GLENYE CAIN OAKFORD, writer, *Daily Racing Form*, and author of *The Home Run Horse*

“Alex Brown brings a horseman’s inside knowledge, an intrepid journalist’s persistence and, just as important, a fine writing touch to the story of Barbaro. Nobody is more qualified to get his arms around the whole saga. In fact, nobody wrote more words about Barbaro when he was alive, or got to know all the parties involved like Alex did. He did all that while getting up before dawn to exercise horses every morning. Read the first chapter and you’ll be hooked.”

-MIKE JENSEN, writer, *Philadelphia Inquirer* and winner of an Eclipse Award for a story on Dr. Dean Richardson.

“Alex Brown, who kept Barbaro’s story going throughout his life, has done even more to heighten this amazing horse’s legacy. Through extraordinary details and interviews with virtually everyone connected with Barbaro’s remarkable life, Alex has created a non-fiction work of art that stands as a monument to everyone connected with Barbaro and everything he’s come to represent. If you thought you knew everything about this remarkable Thoroughbred, think again. Alex Brown has risen to the occasion by writing a Grade 1 tribute to the Jacksons and their amazing athlete.”

-MICHAEL BLOWEN, President, Old Friends

“Drawing many voices into a compelling chorus, Alex Brown’s work celebrates a remarkable life while welcoming us into stories that still are unfolding. Through powerful words and pictures, we feel Barbaro’s presence, revel in his triumphs, and yearn for what might have been. But this book also is devoted to what still can be. Understanding the perils that injured and unwanted horses face, and seeing how a community rallied to confront those challenges when Barbaro stirred their souls, new audiences may feel moved to join those who continue to support horse research and rescue in Barbaro’s name.”

-DOROTHY OURS, Author, *Man o’ War: A Legend Like Lightning*

“Alex Brown garnered a reputation as a true trailblazer and leading-edge thinker during his fifteen year tenure as an MBA Admissions officer at the University of Delaware and the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. He brings that same sense of adventure to his story of Barbaro. His access to the people who really knew Barbaro and the racing industry as well as the 164-photo essay sets this book apart. Barbaro has a tremendous advocate in Alex Brown.”

-JENNIFER CHIZUK, Chief Operating Officer /Senior Assistant Dean, Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley

## AN EXCERPT FROM

# *Greatness and Goodness: Barbaro and His Legacy*

Matz's logic was that he was preparing Barbaro for three races, the Triple Crown series of the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes. He wanted a fresh horse that could handle the rigors of three races, all within a short span of each other. The question of the five-week break—as if Barbaro went on vacation rather than being trained up to the Derby—persisted via media briefings each morning outside Barn 42 at Churchill Downs. While Matz justified his decision by wanting a fresh horse for the rigors of the Triple Crown, he also noted that the sample size, the number of legitimate Derby contenders that had come into the Derby off such a gap between races, was small—too small to draw conclusions. Mike Welsch of the *Daily Racing Form* determined that media were more concerned than fellow horsemen about the five-week gap.

“Everybody looks for a hole in the game plan,” explained Sandy McKee of the *Baltimore Sun*. “Horse racing is a very traditional sport. Certainly Michael and the Jacksons did not do that and they stuck to the game plan for what was best for the horse in the long run.”

Fellow horsemen were thinking, rather *hoping*, that Barbaro was really a terrific turf horse that was only adequate on the dirt. While he had won his last two starts on the dirt, those dirt wins were simply not as visually impressive as his turf scores. Barbaro was also considered to have the type of stride that was better suited to the turf. As mentioned previously, he had high knee-action, which is typically less effective on the dirt. Most horsemen will tell you this. But ask them why a horse with high knee-action prefers the turf and you will get as many different answers as the horsemen you ask. The reality is, very few horses can run at the very top level on all types of surfaces. Fellow horsemen were hoping this was the case for Barbaro also.

Barbaro had flourished since he arrived in Kentucky from his winter quar-

ters in Florida. He literally mesmerized everyone at Churchill Downs. Steve Haskin, John Asher, Barbara Livingston, Tom Law, Rick Bozich, and Jill Baffert—all veterans of the racehorse industry who are not easily impressed—were amazed when they saw Barbaro for the first time in the flesh.

Barbara Livingston, perhaps the most noted horse racing photographer, was “thunderstruck” when she first saw Barbaro and insisted on telling everyone who would listen that he was the horse for this Kentucky Derby. John Asher, vice president of communications at Churchill Downs, was “in awe” when he first saw Barbaro out training at Churchill Downs, specifically citing Barbaro’s commanding presence, glow, and physique.

Barbaro turned three on April 29, the day of his most impressive pre-Derby workout. Barbaro was the third youngest starter in the 2006 Kentucky Derby.

On the Saturday before the Derby, Barbaro’s workout was one for the record books. Haskin noted how strong he was going around the turn after the work in the gallop out. Barbaro worked a half mile in a little over 46 seconds, and then galloped out an additional quarter of a mile, going the three-quarters in a little over 1:12 seconds. If an ordinary horse had worked as fast as Barbaro did that morning, he would have left the race on the training track. It would simply have been too fast and taken too much out of him—further evidence that Barbaro was no ordinary horse.

As soon as the work was over, Matz’s cell phone began ringing in earnest. One clocker who had timed every Derby contender for decades remarked that Barbaro’s was the best work he had seen over the last five years. *Daily Racing Form*’s Jay Privman compared the work to the 2000 pre-Derby work of Fusa-

ichi Pegasus, who became the first Derby favorite to win since Spectacular Bid in 1979. Brette, who was riding Barbaro in the work as usual, simply noted that it felt like he took three strides down the lane after he let Barbaro lengthen his stride. Jennie Rees of the *Courier-Journal* recognized that while Barbaro did display his high knee-action that had everyone concerned, he sure got across the ground effortlessly. Like many observers, Rees moved Barbaro up on her Derby list after witnessing this work.

Mike Welsch's job for the *Daily Racing Form* during Derby week was to watch each of the horses train and make observations as they prepared for the Derby. Not only was Barbaro's pre-Derby work one that had everyone talking, but Barbaro continued to train with a lot of energy right up to the Derby. On more than one occasion during Derby week, Welsch clocked Barbaro and found him galloping faster than a "two-minute clip," which is fifteen seconds per eighth of a mile—a very fast gallop. Barbaro was simply training in a superior fashion as contrasted with his rivals. He loved his training and appeared thrilled to be in Kentucky.

On Derby morning, the Barbaro team was exuding confidence. They knew their horse, and others were just catching on. Brette, Matz, and Gretchen Jackson thought they would win the Run for the Roses because he was training so well and he had improved considerably since the Florida Derby. In Brette's words, Barbaro had become a man. He had been a boy but "the penny had dropped" and Barbaro was a different horse now. Perhaps the stretch duel in the Florida Derby triggered the change; it was the first time he had a fight on his hands, and the first time he was really asked to run. Perhaps it was the five-week break that allowed Matz to work Barbaro three times leading up to the Kentucky Derby. Perhaps it was the combination of the five weeks and the toughening stretch duel. Barbaro also went through one of his growth spurts during this time. Barbaro was, after all, a late foal and only celebrated his third birthday on April 29, one week before the Kentucky Derby. Universally, people agreed that Barbaro looked fantastic in Kentucky—both at Keeneland and Churchill Downs.

"I was very comfortable after he won his races on the dirt, and I could tell he still had room to improve," said Prado. "I was very confident he was training

so well coming up to the Derby, he was handling the racetrack so well, and his pre-Derby breeze (under Brette) was exceptional."

Brette took Barbaro out for a gallop Derby morning. Barbaro and his lead pony Messaging were accompanied to the track by Hyland, riding one of Matz's fillies. Hyland jogged around the track with Brette and Barbaro. While it is not always typical to gallop the morning of a race, the start time for the Derby is very late in the day. It would be a long day, so a little early exercise would help Barbaro mentally settle in for the afternoon. Barbaro was keen in his gallop. In fact, Brette struggled for a few strides to keep Barbaro keyed down, as there was a horse galloping right behind them. Brette tried to slow Barbaro down to let the other horse by. The rider on the other horse, realizing who was in front of him, also tried to slow down to get out of the way. Fortunately, all worked out in the end. Barbaro was sharp. He was ready. Thirty minutes later, he was out grazing, in front of his barn, looking majestic.

And the morning could not have started better for Barbaro's owners. From their hotel room, the Jacksons watched another horse they bred—George Washington—win the biggest race of his budding career. He won the first leg of the English Triple Crown, the 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket. A good omen for the rest of the day, perhaps?

This was not supposed to be an easy Derby win for Barbaro. He was not even the betting public's favorite—that honor went to Illinois Derby winner Sweetnorthernstain. Barclay Tagg, trainer of the undefeated and Jackson-owned Showing Up, figured this was one of the toughest Derby fields assembled in a long time. And Tagg should know—he won the race with the popular Funny Cide in 2003. Brother Derek had looked awesome preparing for the Derby with easy wins in California. But perhaps his front-running style would expose him (it turned out it was a bad trip and a lost shoe that hindered him). Lawyer Ron looked very good after winning the Arkansas Derby and would go on to become Champion Older Male in 2007, but he looked very average in Barbaro's Derby. Bluegrass Cat would go on to win the Haskell Stakes.

And if nothing else, Barbaro's Derby was a twenty horse field. It would



be the only time these horses would face nineteen other runners. This provides a lot of opportunity for things to go wrong, unless you have the tactical speed to avoid anxious moments. Team Barbaro was confident.

Jack Ireland of the *News Journal* was given the rare opportunity to walk over from the backstretch to the paddock area with the Derby runners prior to the race. He walked immediately behind Barbaro and Gretchen Jackson, an experience he later described as “the thrill of a lifetime.” While Barbaro had not yet won the Derby, Ireland felt that something was going to happen that day—something extra special.

Trainer Bob Baffert had three runners in the Derby, including Wood Memorial winner Bob and John. When Barbaro entered the paddock for the Kentucky Derby, Bob’s wife Jill turned to him, in awe of Barbaro. This was the first time she had seen Barbaro up close. Jill noted that he was by far the standout that day—head and shoulders above the rest. He was big, muscular, and there was grandness about his presence. After Jill expressed her opinion of Barbaro to her husband, he suggested that Barbaro was a turf horse. Jill responded, “You’d better hope so.”

Rick Bozich, who also covered the Derby for the *Courier-Journal*, was in the paddock that day. “I have covered the Derby since 1979. I have heard people say that a horse looks the part, that a horse looks great, but sometimes they just don’t run well,” said Bozich. “In the paddock that day it was chaotic with too many people and horses moving around. I took one look at Barbaro; I had never seen a horse look like that. He was much more athletic, his coat was magnificent—he just looked like he was going to dominate. It was weird, it had never happened to me before. I had not picked him to win, I had no affinity for the horse, but when I looked at Barbaro, he just blew me away. Not before, nor since, had that happened to me. I told a few people around me.”

*Thoroughbred Times’s* managing editor Tom Law shared Jill’s and Rick’s assessments.

“I was standing underneath the grandstand, inside the tunnel, with Jeff Lowe just before Barbaro’s Derby,” Law said. “I turned and said to Jeff, ‘Let’s hurry up and get down to the rail, we’re about to see something really awesome.’” Law was referring to Barbaro.

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