

WE MUST DREAM

About two-and-a-half hours after American Pharoah won the 2015 Kentucky Derby, a mare we own in partnership lay down and foaled a colt.



Dan Liebman

Another dream began.

It is a scene repeated every night in foaling barns during breeding season.

On wobbly, spindly legs they stand for the first time.

As they do, breeders dream.

Ahmed Zayat and his family had a big dream, of winning the Kentucky Derby. After three seconds in the country's most storied race, they had to wonder if they would stand in the winners' circle on the first Saturday in

May.

They did just that Saturday, and they seem to know how blessed they are.

We've never had a Derby starter, most likely never will.

We know the odds.

Could this colt foaled Derby night, by Creative Cause out of the Forest Camp mare My Heavenly Sign, be the 2018 Derby winner?

Of course he could.

Just like all the other foals of 2015 could.

We have the dream.

In fact, we must have the dream, because without it, what is the point of becoming a breeder?

Derby 2015

A record crowd bet record dollars. Perhaps racing is not dead yet.

In its marquee race, it takes a good field, good favorite, good weather, good drama, and good stories.

The 2015 Derby had all of that.

But most of all the field each year carries with it the dreams of all breeders, that with every mating they plan and every foaling they witness, the next good horse may be at hand.

In fact, the next good horse is always at hand, for every crop produces them.

And, though we rarely think of it this way, we never know if a horse such as American Pharoah is actually the best of his generation.

Perhaps a better runner never made it to the races because it took a bad step or contracted a bad disease as a foal, as a yearling, as a 2-year-old. Perhaps one of those foals slipped by its dam was cut out to be a Derby winner.

Perhaps ... if ... maybe.

All that matters is that American Pharoah is the best of those who lined up in the starting gate on that day.

Just like in any other race, at any other track, on any other day. It doesn't diminish the accomplishment of American Pharoah. It only makes breeders dream more.

The Hope

There have been so many good horse names over the years. But I have always loved the name Hopespringseternal, used three times for fillies (in this country), most famously for a daughter of Buckpasser who produced Miswaki and is the granddam of Lacovia.

The name beautifully describes what every breeder feels when his mare foals, that in every foal there is the hope of the type of runner it will become.

Breeders must be dreamers, they must believe hope will spring eternally from the matings they plan and the foals those matings produce.

We don't just watch the Derby to see who is the best runner in the field. We watch the Derby to rekindle memories of champions, such as Citation and Seattle Slew. We watch the Derby to reconsider longshots, such as Lil E. Tee and Mine That Bird. We watch the Derby to ponder what would have happened had Alydar not been in the same crop as Affirmed.

We watch the specialness that is American Pharoah. We marvel in his grit, his determination, his talent.

We look at our colt foaled that night and wonder if he will be the next American Pharoah.

We have the dream.

The same one all breeders have.



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