



Robby Albarado

Born: Sept. 11, 1973 in Lafayette, La.

Resident: Louisville, Ky.

Family: Kimber (wife), Kaden and Kash (sons).

Robby Albarado's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 294

Stakes Wins: (34)

- Ranked 11th by earnings in 2005 with \$10.7 million.
- Voted the 2004 George Woolf Memorial Jockey Award.
- Won his 3,000th race on Dec. 9, 2004, at Fair Grounds on Isle of Silver, and his 2,000th at Keeneland on April 20, 2000.
- Won the Keeneland 2002 and 2003 spring riding titles.
- Has won six riding crowns at Fair Grounds.
- Won riding titles at Arlington (1996) and Oaklawn (1996 and 1997).
- Won his first Grade 1 race aboard Banshee Breeze in the 1998 Three Chimneys Spinster Stakes.
- Won four Grade 1 races with Horse of the Year Mineshaft in 2003.
- Ranks fourth by career stakes wins at Keeneland with 34 and by total wins with 294.
- Elected to the Jockeys' Guild Senate last year.

Robby Albarado won 30 stakes races in 2006, 11 of them graded. Included were victories aboard Strong Contender in the Super Derby (G2) and Brilliant in the Jefferson Cup (G2). Another highlight came with a third-place finish on Steppenwolfner in the Kentucky Derby. He ranked 13th by earnings for the year with \$9,858,290.

The previous year, he won more than 30 stakes, including Grade 1 victories on America Alive (Woodford Reserve Turf Classic) and Shadow Cast (Personal Ensign). He won 14 other graded races during the year, including three at Keeneland, and earned his sixth riding title at Fair Grounds. At year-end he ranked 11th by earnings with \$10.7 million.

"It's been a great year," Albarado said in November 2005. "The Derby Day win (Woodford Reserve Turf Classic) was pretty special on America Alive."

He did lose a house in Louisiana to the hurricanes. "A lot of people were hurt worse than I was," he said.

In 2004, he ranked 13th by earnings with \$10.37 million and 25th by victories with 213. Grade 1 wins came on Stellar Jayne (Mother Goose and Gazelle) and Nothing to Lose (Shadwell Turf Mile). Other highlights included a fifth riding crown at Fair Grounds, graded wins in the Pennsylvania Derby (Love of Money) and Ben Ali Handicap (Midway Road), plus his best finish to date in a Breeders' Cup race—a third with Stellar Jayne in the Distaff.

"I've been very lucky that my career has gone so well," Albarado has said. "I think it does help to a certain extent to receive recognition nationally by winning races. Then people want you. It has helped dramatically."

He once told *Daily Racing Form*: "I was raised on the farm of a neighbor of ours, S.J. LeBlanc, who started a lot of boys out riding. I was nine years old then, and for the first few years, Mr. LeBlanc had me hot walking, mucking stalls and then galloping horses."

In another *Racing Form* interview, he said: "When I was 10 years old, I was small. It was always my goal to ride. Shelton LeBlanc (was) a powerful trainer in south Louisiana. He started to put me on horses when I was 10. He helped me with all the basics, and really got me started."

At 12, he started riding in match races at Abbeville, La., and by 16, he began riding at Evangeline Downs where such well-known riders as Eddie Delahoussaye, Calvin Borel, Larry Melancon and Kent Desourmeaux started out. His father also had been a racer-ider at the bush tracks.

Albarado rode his first winner in 1990 at Evangeline Downs aboard One Little Point. "I'd been riding for three or four years prior to that at the bush tracks. I got the basics down. I thought I knew everything, but I'm still learning."

He continued riding at Evangeline and Delta Downs before moving to Louisiana Downs and Fair Grounds in 1993. He finished third in the 1993-'94 Fair Grounds standings and second in the 1994-'95 Fair Grounds meet as his mounts earned more than \$1 million. He was on his way.

"I can't say that I modeled my style after other riders," he said, "but I learned a lot by watching guys like Curt Bourque and Calvin Borel. I like the way they sat on horses, how they used a long cross on the reins and sat still, getting their horses to relax before finishing strong."

When several of the top Louisiana trainers began venturing to Kentucky, Albarado decided he needed to do likewise.

He told *Daily Racing Form*: "I have a lot of business in Kentucky—Dave Vance, Carl Bowman, Bernie Flint, Tom Amoss, Albert Stall. If I can get lucky in Kentucky, I'll get on some big-name horses and make a good living. Kentucky is the racing capital of the world. Eventually, I'd like to make that my home base."

After relocating to Louisville, he finished second in the standings at the 1998 Keeneland spring meet, just one behind Shane Sellers. His four stakes wins included the Coolmore Lexington (G2) with Classic Cat. In the fall, he finished second to Pat Day, adding three more stakes victories to his record, including the Spinster with Banshee Breeze.

In 1999, he ranked eighth in purses won with nearly \$10.8 million, and the following year, though he missed more than two months because of serious injuries, his mounts still earned more than \$8.3 million to rank him in the top 15 riders. His first child, son Kaden, also arrived in 2000, brightening his spirits.

In 2001, he finished ninth nationally in purses won and 14th in races won, with \$10,631,669 and 272, respectively. In 2002, Albarado won his first riding title in Kentucky, at Keeneland's spring meet. By year-end, he ranked 12th by money won (\$10.1 million) and 11th by races won (270).

The following year, he was the regular rider of multiple Grade 1 winner Mineshaft, owned by former British Ambassador Will Farish and partners. "He was absolutely the best horse I've ever ridden," Albarado said of Mineshaft. "If you rated him, he'd be a perfect 10 in every way possible. I was really fortunate to get to ride him. And to ride for Mr. (Will) Farish is an honor."

Not only did he have the good fortune of riding the nation's Horse of the Year that year, but he and his wife Kimber added a second son to their family, Kash, who was born on Nov. 16. "Little ones are the most important things of all," the proud father said.

By year-end, he had won 185 races and his mounts had earned a collective \$11,061,314 to rank 11th nationally. In addition to Mineshaft, Albarado won graded races with Elloluv, Royal Spy, Senior Swinger, Tenpins, Badge of Silver, Limehouse and Awesome Humor and won a second riding title at Keeneland in the spring.

He also was voted the 2004 George Woolf Memorial Jockey Award. "I'm overwhelmed," he said. "It's a goal for every jockey to win this award. It's special because the guys you ride against do the voting."

He has partially reached one of his goals, which was "trying to win a Keeneland title and a Churchill title, to get the Kentucky titles." Another goal, he said with a laugh, is: "I'm going to try to surpass Pat Day someday. I aim high so I have something to motivate me. Pat needs to retire soon." That wish has been granted.

"I just try to work hard every single day to get better," he continued. "That's the way I came up and that's the way I'm going to keep going."