



Steve Asmussen

Born: Nov. 18, 1965 in Gettysburg, S.D.

Resident: Arlington, Texas

Family: Julie (wife), Keith, Darren and Eric (sons).

Steve Asmussen's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 71

Stakes Wins (4)

- Set a record for victories in a single year in 2004 with 555. Also leading trainer by wins in 2005 (with 474) and in 2002 (with 407).
- Eclipse Award finalist for leading trainer in 2004 and 2005.
- Has ranked third by earnings four times including a career high \$14 million in 2004.
- Won the 3,000th race of his career on Aug. 5, 2005, at Saratoga when Forest Music won the Honorable Miss Handicap (G2).
- Won training titles at the spring and fall Keeneland (tied in the fall) and Churchill Downs meets in 2004. Also leading trainer at Churchill in fall of 2001.
- Leading trainer at Fair Grounds five straight years, including a tie with Tom Amoss in 2000-01.
- All-time leading trainer at Lone Star Park. Has also won training titles at Ellis Park (2005), Remington, Retama and Sam Houston.
- Won his first Grade 1 race with Dreams Gallore in the 1999 Acorn.
- Brother Cash was an Eclipse Award-winning jockey who also was a champion rider in Europe.
- Hit with a six-month suspension for drug positives that he began serving July 10, 2006.

For trainer Steve Asmussen, 2004 was his best year yet. He broke Jack Van Berg's record for number of wins in a year (496, set in 1976) and his stable earned a personal-best \$14,004,202. Even with a staggering number of starters, 2,293, he won at a 24 percent clip. From his stable of some 150 horses were 32 stakes winners who won at 17 racetracks. They included Grade 1 winner Lady Tak (Ballerina), Grade 2 winners Bwana Charlie (Amsterdam) and Quintons Gold Rush (Coolmore Lexington), and Grade 3 winners Private Emblem, Spanish Empire, Academic Angel, Lunarpal, Primal Storm, Dazzle Me, Sister Swank and Megascap.

He won two additional training titles at Churchill in 2004 and his first two at Keeneland, finishing in a tie with Nick Zito in the fall. He also repeated at Lone Star Park and at Fair Grounds.

In 2005, he was an Eclipse Award finalist again and saddled the 3,000th winner of his career on Aug. 5 at Saratoga. His 474 victories topped all North American trainers and his earnings of \$13.3 million ranked third. He repeated as leading trainer at Fair Grounds and Lone Star Park and won the title at Ellis Park. He won more than 55 stakes with 35 different horses at 17 racetracks.

Kentucky Oaks (G1) winner Summerly and dual Grade 2 winner Private Vow were the stars of his stable, which also included other graded winners Forest Music, Savor-thetmy, Effectual, Santana Strings, Real Dandy and He's Got Grit.

Last year, Asmussen was forced to the sidelines as the result of positive drug tests, and assistant Scott Blasi took over on July 10. Asmussen won 241 races prior to that date and Blasi won 198 afterward. Between them, the stable earned more than \$14.4 million.

Graded stakes winners were Gaff, Dattrick, Anew and Richwoman in Asmussen's name, and Chace City, Appealing Zophie (Spinaway [G1]), Reigning Court, Tiz Wonderful and Successful Outlook in Blasi's.

According to Equineline.com, Asmussen had saddled the winners of 3,429 races and the earners of \$84,205,254 through Jan. 9, 2007. He is credited with 193 stakes winners.

Born in Gettysburg, South Dakota, his family moved to Texas when he was two. His father, Keith, a former rider and now a trainer, and mother, Marilyn, a trainer who saddles quite a few horses for Steve, have operated El Primero Training Center in Laredo, Texas, for more than 20 years. Among the horses who received their early conditioning there were Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe winner Suave Dancer, Eclipse Award winner Tight Spot plus Olympio and Sea Cadet.

His brother Cash is an Eclipse Award-winning jockey who went to Europe and became a champion rider there as well.

Steve worked on the farm while he was growing up and started out as a jockey at age 16, riding for a year and a half. "No one would believe me if I didn't have the pictures to prove it," he told *Daily Racing Form*. "My parents were 5-5 and 5-2. I don't know what happened." He grew to be more than six-feet tall.

He returned to the family's training center to break yearlings and in 1986 began training on his own in New Mexico with some of his family's horses. He won his first race that year at Ruidoso Downs and his first added-money race at Birmingham in the 1987 Bessemer Stakes with Scout Command. He had his first graded stakes success in 1996 when Valid Expectations won the Derby Trial at Churchill.

"I've always been involved in racehorses," he said. "Cash won the Eclipse Award when I was like 13. To witness that is pretty addicting."

Asmussen is the all-time leading trainer at Lone Star Park in Texas. "I've had a lot of success at Lone Star," he said. "It's convenient for my family to help there. My parents are very active in the Texas racing industry. The quality of racing there means a lot to them."

"My parents had a large stable and that was a great help in preparing me for the numbers I have. This is what it's evolved into. My mom oversees some and saddles some for me. They're very involved in my stable."

Asmussen, who won his first Grade 1 race in 1999, captured his second when Cashier's Dream won the 2001 Spinaway at Saratoga. He also secured his first training title at a Kentucky track, when winning the 2001 fall Churchill crown.

In the year-end rankings, he finished second nationally by races won, with 294, and fourth in earnings as his stable amassed \$8,068,409. Another highlight was Fifty Stars winning the Louisiana Derby (G2).

"I'm very appreciative and proud of the horses and the help," he said after wrapping up his first Churchill title. "They've worked so hard and the horses have consistently run good races-and run good races off of good races, which is probably the hardest thing to do. You keep asking for more from the people that work for you and the horses and when they respond, I'm glad to see them rewarded. I'm very proud of them."

In 2002, he led the nation with 407 victories and ranked third by earnings with \$10.2 million. Graded stakes winners were Private Emblem, Windward Passage, Cashier's Dream and Posse.

"It was a very productive year," he said. "You try to do as good a job as you can while you have them because you don't have them forever. Going into this year, our plan was to go after bigger pots and win bigger races and we've done that."

Looking at the numbers for 2003, Asmussen finished just two behind Scott Lake in wins (452 vs. 454), and third in earnings, with \$11,725,782. From 31 individual stakes winners, the races won included the Futurity (G1) with Cuvee, the Test (G1) with Lady Tak and the Riva Ridge Breeders' Cup (G2) with Posse.

Snuck In was his first Preakness starter in 2000 and Fifty Stars his first Derby starter in 2001. "I was excited about Fifty Stars," he said. "We have to figure out how we can get there again."

He made it back to the Derby a couple of times before saddling Storm Treasure and Private Vow last year. He undoubtedly has his sights set on the first Saturday in May this year with graded stakes winner Chace City.

