



Eddie Castro

Born: April 10, 1984 in Los Santos, Panama
Resident: Miramar, Fla.
Family: Single.

Eddie Castro's record at Keeneland:
Total Wins: 8
Stakes Wins: (4)

- Won his first Breeders' Cup race in 2006 with Miesque's Approval in the Mile.
- Won 2003 Eclipse Award as leading apprentice rider despite missing three months.
- Won his first Grade 1 race in 2005 when Pampered Princess won the Spinster Stakes.
- Set a national record when he won nine races on a single card on June 4, 2005, at Calder Race Course. He smashed the track's 26-year-old record by riding 218 winners during that track's summer meet.
- Won his 1,000th race on Nov. 15, 2006, at Churchill Downs.
- Won his first riding title at Calder's Tropical meeting in 2003-04 and repeated in 2004-05. He also won the title at Calder in both 2004 and 2005.
- Moved his tack to New Jersey in 2006, finishing second among Monmouth jockeys, and then on to Kentucky.
- Won the Sunshine Millions Turf last year on Miesque's Approval, defeating Hall of Famer Jerry Bailey in the last ride of his career.
- Won 2004 WinStar Galaxy (G2) on Stay Forever.

Eddie Castro made a giant splash in the jockey pool last year. Not only did he win his first Breeders' Cup race, but he posted 188 other victories as his mounts earned a career-best \$9,262,061. He ranked 15th by earnings and 31st by wins.

He won more than 40 added-money events during the year. In addition to his victory aboard Eclipse Award winner Miesque's Approval at odds of 24.30-1 in the Mile, other notable victories included the Maker's Mark Mile (G2), also on Miesque's Approval, the Falls City Handicap (G2) on Ermine, the Fayette Stakes (G3) with Eccentric (GB), the Kenny Noe Jr. Handicap (G3) on Weigelia and the Gardenia Handicap (G3) on Prospective Saint. Thirteen of his stakes victories were on horses trained by Marty Wolfson, including Miesque's Approval.

Castro obtained the mount on Ermine after Calvin Borel suffered a broken wrist in a fall earlier on the Falls City card.

Trainer Ronny Werner explained why he chose Castro to sub for Borel: "Eddie's won a lot of stakes up at Monmouth, and he won a Breeders' Cup race here. I think his confidence is up, and he seems to handle pressure well. He's a good kid, and he could do the weight. It makes a difference."

In his initial Breeders' Cup appearance, he also rode Pomeroy in the Sprint and they finished ninth.

According to the official chart of the Mile, "Miesque's Approval, reserved early and eased back four or five wide, was patiently handled, advanced five wide on the far turn, fanned out seven or eight wide when straightened into the stretch, then responded to strong right-handed urging to move well clear."

The official margin of victory was two and three-quarter lengths as they crossed the finish line in 1:34 3/5 for the distance. It was the

largest margin of victory in the Mile since the three lengths registered by Baratheia in 1994.

Wolfson said later: "I told Eddie just to duplicate the Sunshine Millions race. It was almost a duplicate of that race. Once they straighten out, he's got such a tremendous turn of foot. I didn't know if he would get there, but at the eighth pole, I did." The winner's purse was \$1,171,800.

For a short while, Castro was the youngest rider ever to win a Breeders' Cup race until later in the day on Nov. 4 when 18-year-old Fernando Jara rode Invasor (Arg) to victory in the Classic.

Castro posted career win No. 1,000 on Nov. 15, 2006, at Churchill Downs aboard a maiden claimer in his only mount of the day, 15-1 shot Jermidy.

"It's been good to stay in Kentucky to ride at Churchill Downs and Keeneland," he said in the winner's circle after the race. "It's nice after having raced at Calder to be here. I'm very happy to win my 1,000th race."

Other stakes wins last year included the Jersey Derby aboard Presious Passion, the Sorority Stakes with Our Fantene, the Politely Stakes with Brunilda (Arg) and three stakes with Revved Up.

Castro grew up on his parents' produce farm in Panama, riding saddle horses. When he was 15, he enrolled in the famed national jockey school from which legendary riders Braulio Baeza and his idol, Cornelio Velasquez, had received their early riding instruction.

He won his first race in his first mount on Dec. 6, 2002, and after winning some 36 races in his native country, he made the leap to Florida. He rode in his first race in the United States on April 16, 2003, on Storm Prospect at Gulfstream Park.

Mike Gonzalez has been his agent since Castro arrived in 2003, alone and speaking no English. "He came to me very highly

recommended," Gonzalez said. "He's done very well. He's humble, likable, very professional and mature for his age and he's handling his English better and better. He's handled everything well, his Eclipse Award, his record of nine wins in a day and his Breeders' Cup victory."

Gonzalez, himself a rider for 19 years, hopes to keep Castro from making some of the mistakes he made. "My goal is to keep him on good horses and keep him healthy."

Castro has bought a home plus two other properties in Florida and he's built a new home for his parents in Panama as well as buying more land for their produce farm and cattle.

Despite getting a late start in '03, he still won the Eclipse Award as leading apprentice rider. He won 242 races to rank 15th in the national standings and his mounts earned \$3,931,877 to rank 58th.

His numbers have improved each subsequent year. In 2004, he ranked eighth in victories with 269 as his mounts earned \$6,104,233. In 2005 he ranked third in wins with 329 (behind Russell Baze and Rodney Prescott) as his mounts bankrolled \$7,498,546.

Castro's first major stakes win came in Calder's \$100,000 Aspidistra Handicap on Sara's Success. Three times in 2003 he rode five winners: July 19, July 25 and Sept. 27. He finished his first meet at Calder in second place.

He won his first riding title at the 2003-04 Tropical at Calder meeting and then won the 2004 Calder meet, winning six stakes races, including the In Reality division of the Florida Stallion Stakes with B. B. Best.

He repeated at Tropical at Calder in 2004-05 and at Calder in the summer of 2005.

Of his 329 victories in 2005, 218 came during Calder's summer meet, which smashed the previous record of 193 established 26 years earlier by Walter Guerra as an apprentice in 1979.

His most remarkable feat was winning a national record of nine races on a single card on June 4 from 11 mounts. The previous Calder record was six wins in a day jointly held by George Gomez, Guerra, Rene Douglas and Eibar Coa.

On that amazing day, he just missed in the first race before winning the next three races. He didn't have a mount in the fifth, then won the sixth and sat out the seventh. After his mount ran fourth in the eighth race, he then won five consecutive races on the 13-race card.

Castro and Gonzalez plan to return to Kentucky for the Keeneland and Churchill meets, then go to Saratoga and back through Kentucky to Florida next winter.

"He's got a great future," Gonzalez said. "He's reached one big goal of winning a Breeders' Cup race. We're shopping for prospects for the Derby." An early one was Buffalo Man, who won the Spectacular Bid Stakes in January.

