



Todd Pletcher

Born: June 26, 1967 in Dallas, Texas

Resident: Garden City, N.Y.

Family: Tracy (wife), Payton and Kyle (sons) and Hannah (daughter).

Todd Pletcher's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 78

Stakes Wins (17)

- Won his third straight Eclipse Award in 2006 for outstanding trainer.
- Set records in 2006 for earnings by a trainer (\$26.8 million), graded stakes wins (57) in a year and stakes wins in a year (100). He also was the leading trainer by earnings in 2004 and 2005.
- Won his first two Breeders' Cup races in 2004 with Ashado in the Distaff and Speightstown in the Sprint.
- Trainer of Canadian champion Archer's Bay (1998), and Eclipse winners Left Bank (2002), Ashado (2004-2005), Speightstown (2004) and Fleet Indian and Wait a While (2006).
- Won training titles in 2006 at Gulfstream, Belmont (fall) and Saratoga (for the sixth time).

The Todd Pletcher juggernaut continues unabated. For the last three years, he has won the Eclipse Award for outstanding trainer and led all trainers by earnings. In 2006, in fact, he set a record for earnings of \$26,820,243 and broke D. Wayne Lukas's longstanding records for numbers of stakes wins (92) and graded stakes wins (53) in a single season.

His stable won 294 races in 2006 to rank second. Of these victories, 100 came in stakes with 57 different horses, including Eclipse Award winners Fleet Indian and Wait a While. Of the 100 stakes wins, 57 came in graded events, 17 of which were Grade 1 races. Among the highlights were the Grade 1 victories by Bluegrass Cat (Haskell Invitational), Circular Quay (Hopeful), Pool Land (Ruffian), Wait a While (American Oaks Invitational and Yellow Ribbon), English Channel (Joe Hirsch Turf Classic, Woodford Reserve Turf Classic and the United Nations), Scat Daddy (Champagne), Spun Sugar (Apple Blossom and Go for Wand), Honey Ryder (Flower Bowl), Magnificent Song (Garden City Breeders' Cup), Go Deputy (Sword Dancer), Fleet Indian (Personal Ensign and Beldame) and Bishop Court Hill (Carter).

He told Leslie Deckard of *The Blood-Horse*: "No matter how good you are doing, there is always room for improvement. We have a simple philosophy around our barn and that is to try to do the best with each horse that we get. If the horse turns out to be a graded stakes winner that is great, or if he or she finds their forte at a lesser level, that is great, too."

He says breaking Lukas's record of stakes wins in a year was the accomplishment he was most proud of last year.

In 2005, he had become the first trainer to earn more than \$20 million in a year and captured Grade 1 races with Forest Danger (Carter), Bandini (Blue Grass), champion older mare Ashado (Ogden Phipps, Go for Wand and Beldame), Flower Alley (Travers), Host (Chi) (Shadwell Turf Mile), Adieu (Frizette) and Purge (Cigar Mile).

Pletcher won his first training title at Keeneland in the spring of 2005 and repeated at Saratoga, Gulfstream Park and Belmont (in the fall). He had 47 individual stakes winners in 2005.

The previous year his trainees earned \$17.5 million and he won his first two Breeders' Cup races with horses who both earned championships in their divisions—Ashado and Speightstown. Ashado's five stakes wins included the Distaff (G1) and Kentucky Oaks (G1). Also winning at the Grade 1 level were Speightstown (B.C. Sprint) Proud Accolade (Champagne) and Lion Tamer (Cigar Mile). In all, he had 35 stakes winners in his barn.

As he accepted his first Eclipse award, Pletcher thanked his staff and "his knowledgeable and patient owners" and said that winning his first two Breeders' Cup races "in my home state was a real joy."

In 2003, his stable won 199 races and earned \$12,356,924, second only to Bobby Frankel. He conditioned Grade 1 winners Balto Star, Marylebone, Ashado, Harmony Lodge and Harlan's Holiday. A year earlier, his stable won 147 races and earned \$8.7 million to rank fourth. He won the Whitney Handicap (G1) with Left Bank, and Grade 2 or 3 races with 10 other horses.

In 2001, his stable earned \$7,731,203, for a sixth-place ranking. He won Grade 1 races with Left Bank and Tweedside.

His stable cracked the top 5 for the first time in 2000 with earnings of more than \$6.8 million and he saddled four Kentucky Derby starters—More Than Ready, Trippi, Graeme Hall and Impeachment. (Impeachment and More Than Ready ran third and fourth, respectively.)

Cot Campbell, president of Dogwood Stable that campaigned Trippi and Impeachment, said: "I like him because one, he's a good guy. Two, he's a marvelous horseman. Three, he is a straight shooter with information. ... And he's a terrific detail man. He's a star."

In '98, he won two legs of the Canadian Triple Crown with Sovereign Award winner Archer's Bay, and Jersey Girl was runner-up in balloting for the Eclipse Award for champion 3-year-old filly.

Pletcher grew up around racing as his father, J.J. Pletcher, trained Quarter Horses and Thoroughbreds throughout the West, Southwest and Midwest. He credits his father with taking him along to look at horses at sales while teaching him how to look at a horse. His father encouraged him to become a trainer.

During the summers while attending the University of Arizona, he worked for Southern California trainers such as Henry Moreno, Charlie Whittingham and D. Wayne Lukas. He kept in touch with Lukas and after graduating with an animal science degree in 1989, he went to work for him in New York under Lukas's son, Jeff. By 1992, he had risen through the ranks to become Lukas's main East Coast assistant.

"He's smart and innovative and he's going to make adjustments," Lukas told Jennie Rees of *The Courier-Journal* about Pletcher. "He's creative enough to know that he can take a little from me, a little from his father, a little from other people he's come in contact with—and he becomes his own person."

Pletcher went out on his own in December 1995 after six and a half years with Lukas and saddled his first winner two months later at Gulfstream Park with Majestic Number. He admitted he was nervous about starting out on his own with a small string of horses. He told Maryjean Wall in the *Lexington Herald-Leader*: "I had no idea what to expect. I had seven horses and none had past performances to speak of. "You really throw yourself out there and just hope with your reputation and people knowing you'll work hard, that will be enough. It's scary not knowing what lies ahead."

Pletcher's father runs a training center in Ocala named Payton Training Center. "Most of my lay-ups and yearlings are prepared there," Todd said.

The first year, from an organizational standpoint, Pletcher said: "We wanted the horses to earn over \$1 million and we wanted to double that the next year. We were able to do that the first three years and then we leveled off. But we were in the Top 10 by then. We want to maintain that position and to develop and maintain Grade 1-type horses. This is a difficult game to set goals, because we're dealing with living animals. You can't program them. You have to let nature take its course."

He recognizes the importance of having good owners. "A number of people have been instrumental in our success," he said. "We've been fortunate to have clients who've backed me—(Ann and Stuart Subotnik's) Anstu Stable helped. Dogwood has supported me from early on. Eugene Melnyk has gotten stronger. These are just a few of the many. You need good owners and good horses."

Through Jan. 9, 2007, Equineline.com had Pletcher with 178 stakes winners, 1,699 races won and earnings of \$116,690,279.

