



Steve Asmussen

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

Steve Asmussen's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 94

Stakes wins: 5

- Two-time Eclipse Award-winning trainer (2008 and 2009).
- Set a record for victories of 650 in a single year in 2009. In the process, he broke his own record of 622 established in 2008. Also leading trainer by wins in 2010 (506), 2007 (488), 2005 (474), 2004 (555) and 2002 (407).
- Twice leading trainer by earnings—in 2009 with \$21.8 million and in 2008 with \$24.2 million. Ranked second in 2007 and 2010.
- Won his 5,000th race on Sept. 11, 2009, at Woodbine; won his 4,000th on Feb. 17, 2008, at Oaklawn Park and his 3,000th on Aug. 5, 2005, at Saratoga.
- Won his second classic race, the Preakness (G1), in 2009 with Rachel Alexandra.
- Won his first classic and first Breeders' Cup race in 2007, both with Curlin. Added his first win in the Dubai World Cup (G1) in 2008, also with Curlin.
- Trained his first two champions in 2007—Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old colt Curlin and Kodiak Kowboy, champion 2-year-old colt in Canada. Curlin repeated as 2008 Horse of the Year and was champion older male. In 2009, he trained Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old filly Rachel Alexandra and champion sprinter Kodiak Kowboy.
- All-time leading trainer at Lone Star Park (11 titles), where he set a single-season record of 117 victories during 2009. Has also won titles at Fair Grounds (nine), Keeneland (two), Ellis Park, Retama Park, Sam Houston, Churchill Downs (nine), Remington Park and Oaklawn Park (2007, 2008 and 2010).
- Brother Cash was an Eclipse Award-winning jockey who also was a champion rider in Europe.
- Won six races on the Dec. 22, 2007, card at Fair Grounds, including four stakes races.

Steve Asmussen saddled the winners of 506 races and the earners of \$16.3 million in 2010, which boosted his career total to \$170 million. Haynesfield and Majesticperfection both won Grade 1 races, the Jockey Club Gold Cup and Alfred G. Vanderbilt Handicap, respectively, and other graded performers for the stable were Rachel Alexandra, Kantharos, Astrology and Riley Tucker. He added training titles at Churchill Downs (spring and fall), Fair Grounds, Oaklawn Park and Remington Park.

A year earlier, he broke his own record for number of winners with 650 and his stable earnings of \$21,876,405 were his third highest. He took over the training of Rachel Alexandra from Hal Wiggins following her electrifying win in the Kentucky Oaks (G1) and saddled her to win four Grade 1 races - the Preakness, Mother Goose, Haskell Invitational and the Woodward. She earned Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old filly honors.

Kodiak Kowboy became champion sprinter after winning the Carter (G1) for trainer Larry Jones and then the Vosburgh (G1) and Cigar Mile (G1) for Asmussen. Other graded winners were War Echo, Heart Ashley, Four Gifts, Hightap, Kensei, Soul Warrior, Hot Dixie Chick, Luna Vega, Western Smoke, Thiskyhasnolimit and Haynesfield.

He also posted career win No. 5,000 and was voted his second consecutive Eclipse Award as outstanding trainer in 2009.

His stable's 622 wins in 2008 broke his own previous record set in 2004 by more than 50 races. His stable topped the earnings list for the first time, reaching a career-best \$24.2 million (\$27.8 million

incorporating Curlin's Dubai World Cup purse). He was voted his first Eclipse Award as leading trainer.

Curlin won three additional Grade 1 races in 2008 - the Woodward, Stephen Foster and Jockey Club Gold Cup - and Student Council contributed a Grade 1 victory in the Maryland Lottery Pimlico Special Handicap. Curlin, retired at year-end with earnings of \$10.5 million as the leading money-winning American-based horse in history, repeated as Horse of the Year and also won the Eclipse for champion older male. Other graded winners were Noonmark, Pyro, J Be K, Lantana Mob, Sky Mom, Jardin, Zanjero and Magna Graduate as the stable won more than 75 added-money races.

In 2007, Asmussen won his first Triple Crown and first Breeders' Cup races, trained his first two champions, was an Eclipse Award finalist for top trainer for the third time and registered his highest stable earnings to that point of \$23,898,844.

Curlin not only won the Preakness (G1) and Breeders' Cup Classic (G1), but also the Jockey Club Gold Cup (G1), Arkansas Derby (G2) and Rebel Stakes (G3) en route to earning Eclipse Awards as Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old colt. Kodiak Kowboy won the Victoria Stakes at Woodbine and two graded races in the U.S. and was voted a Sovereign Award as best 2-year-old colt in Canada. Other graded stakes winners among his more than 200-strong stable were Appealing Zophie, Gaff, Rated Feisty, Rolling Sea, Inca King, Zanjero, Lantana Mob and Student Council.

In 2006, Asmussen was forced to the sidelines as the result of positive drug tests, and assistant

Scott Blasi took the helm 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.

In 2005, he was an Eclipse Award finalist 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 winner Summerly and dual Grade 2 winner Private Vow were the stars of his stable, which also included other graded winners Forest Music, Savorthetime, Effectual, Santana Strings, Real Dandy and He's Got Grit.

A year earlier, he broke Jack Van Berg's record for number of wins in a year (496, set in 1976) and his stable earned a then-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) and graded winners Bwana Charlie, Quintons Gold Rush, Private Emblem, Spanish Empire, Academic Angel, Lunarpal, Primal Storm, Dazzle Me, Sister Swank and Megascape.

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.

Born in Gettysburg, South Dakota, Asmussen and 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 (G1) 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 little over two years. "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 scored 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 (G3) 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."