



Steve Asmussen

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

Steve Asmussen's record at Keeneland
Total wins: 81
Stakes Wins (5)

- Set a record for victories in a single year in 2004 with 555. Also leading trainer by wins in 2007 (488), 2005 (474) and in 2002 (407).
- Won his first classic race and first Breeders' Cup race last year, both with Curlin.
- Trained his first two champions last year—Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old colt Curlin and Sovereign Award winner Kodiak Kowboy, champion 2-year-old colt in Canada.
- Eclipse Award finalist for leading trainer in 2004, 2005 and 2007.
- Ranked second by earnings in 2007 with nearly \$23.9 million after having finished third four times.
- Won the 3,000th race of his career on Aug. 5, 2005, at Saratoga when Forest Music won the Honorable Miss Handicap (G2).
- Won his fourth training title at Churchill Downs in the fall of 2007. Also won titles at Lone Star, Oaklawn and Remington Park last year.
- All-time leading trainer at Lone Star Park. Has also won titles at Fair Grounds (five), Keeneland (twice), Ellis Park, Retama and Sam Houston.
- 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.
- Won six races on the Dec. 22, 2007 card at Fair Grounds, including four stakes races.

For trainer Steve Asmussen, 2007 was his best year yet. He won his first Triple Crown race and first Breeders' Cup race, trained his first two champions, was an Eclipse Award finalist for top trainer for the third time and registered his highest stable earnings to date 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 for best 2-year-old colt in Canada.

Asmussen had other graded stakes winners among his more than 200-strong stable—Appealing Zophie, Gaff, Rated Feisty, Rolling Sea, Inca King, Zanjero, Lantana Mob and Student Council—who helped boost him to a career-best \$23,898,488 in earnings. They won from Finger Lakes and Woodbine to Albuquerque, Ruidoso and Sunland Park and many points in between.

The previous year, 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.

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

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 (G1) 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 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.

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 (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 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."

Asmussen, who won his first Grade 1 race in the 1999 Acorn with Dreams Gallore, 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. By year-end, he ranked second nationally by races won, with 294, and fourth in earnings as his stable amassed \$8,068,409.

"I'm very appreciative and proud of the horses and the help," he said after wrapping up his first Churchill title. "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."

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.

In 2003, Asmussen finished just two wins behind Scott Lake (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." Among his contingent for 2008 will be Pyro, Kodiak Kowboy and Z Fortune, winner of the Lecomte Stakes (G3) on Jan. 12.

