

## GOT STORMY, RUSHING FALL KICK OFF BELMONT GRADED ACTION IN BEAUGAY



Got Stormy | Chelsea Durand

by Joe Bianca

It won't take long for the stars to come out at the abbreviated Belmont spring/summer meet, as multiple Grade I winners **Got Stormy** (Get Stormy) and **Rushing Fall** (More Than Ready) headline a stout six-horse field in Wednesday's opening-day feature at Big Sandy, the GIII Beaugay S. Third at 21-1 behind Rushing Fall in the GI Coolmore Jenny Wiley S. last spring at Keeneland, Gary Barber's Got Stormy developed into a turf terror over the summer, capturing the De La Rose S. Aug. 3 at Saratoga and famously coming back on just seven days' rest to soundly beat the boys in the GI Fourstardave H. Runner-up against males again in the GI Ricoh Woodbine Mile S., she filled the same slot behind champion Uni (GB) (More Than Ready) in an all-female exacta in the GI TVG Breeders' Cup Mile, and capped her scintillating 4-year-old campaign with a score in the GI Matriarch S. Dec. 1 at Del Mar. The chestnut will look to bounce back from a pair of defeats to kick off her 2020 campaign, as she was an uncharacteristically dull fourth at 1-5 in the GIII Endeavour S. Feb. 8 at Tampa before finishing second by a neck last out at 11-10 in the GI Frank E. Kilroe Mile S. Mar. 7 at Santa Anita.

The Five Racing Thoroughbreds' Rushing Fall also will try to rebound from a pair of losses as the heavy favorite in her first start since October. Beaten just a neck in her first seven outings, a stretch that included victories in the GI Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf and GI Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup S., she picked up where she left off last spring with a pair of triumphs in the Jenny Wiley and GI Longines Just A Game S. Not quite able to stay with powerhouse barnmate Sistercharlie (Ire) (Myboycharlie {Ire}) when second in the GI Diana S. July 13 at Saratoga, the bay was last seen running fourth behind Uni as a 13-10 chalk in the GI First Lady S. Oct. 5 at Keeneland.

R Unicorn Stable's **Call Me Love (GB)** (Sea The Stars {Ire}) adds international intrigue as she makes her first North American start for the Christophe Clement stable after spending her first two seasons in Italy for Alessandro Botti. Starting her career with three dominant victories, the chestnut was third in the G2 Derby Italiano, G2 Oaks d'Italia and Pietro Bessero S. Back on track with an easy conquest of the G3 Verziere Memorial Aldo Cirila Oct. 12 at San Siro, she earned her most significant win to date in the G2 Premio Lydia Tesio last out Nov. 3 at Capannelle.

Rounding out the field are millionaire **Fifty Five** (Get Stormy), **Xenobia (Ire)** (Falco), an impressive winner of the course-and-distance GIII Athenia S. last fall, and **Passing Out** (Orb), an improving longshot for the Shug McGaughey barn.

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## E-TRAKKA ARRIVES IN AMERICA--AND WITH IT, AN ENTHUSIASTIC DISCIPLE OF DATA



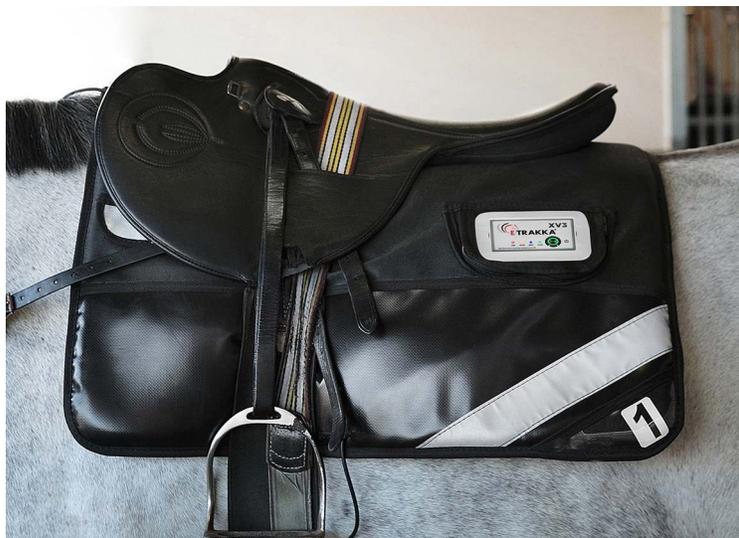
Greg Fox | E-Trakka

by T.D. Thornton

Greg Fox, a Kentucky-based veterinarian who was also a MGSW Thoroughbred trainer for a stint in the mid-2000s, can trace his fascination with the science behind fitness to his days as a kid growing up near Boston, when he first figured out he was not genetically or physically destined to become the great basketball player he envisioned he would be.

Pro basketball's loss just might end up being horse racing's gain, because for the past three decades Fox has committed himself to a better understanding of the Thoroughbred athlete through a combination of horsemanship, veterinary medicine, and a disciplined application of on-track exercise testing.

Based out of Lexington but with clients in other major United States racing jurisdictions, Fox runs Thoroughbred Performance Diagnostics LLC, which offers pre-purchase cardiac analytics at major auctions and dynamic exercise physiology testing at training centers and racetracks.



**E-Trakka saddle pad | E-Trakka**

His on-track diagnostics are derived from data gleaned by the E-Trakka fitness monitoring system pioneered in Australia in 2006. It records a horse's heart rate, speed, stride length, and sectional times, then automatically uploads that information to a cloud-based data storage and viewing program.

Fox's initial involvement with E-Trakka was as a user of its specially designed saddle blanket that records and transmits the data. But after a visit to Australia last December to learn more about the system, he was impressed enough to want to become the firm's first North American representative for the product.

"Have you ever been snorkeling? For me, this process was like the first time you look under the water with a diving mask on," Fox told *TDN*. "You see things that are magnificent and important that are not evident from the surface. And when you start analyzing the dynamic information associated with horses in training, the differences between horses, and the changes that an individual horse goes through during its career, that's empowering."

Fox's respect for what can be done with previously hard-to-come-by data also goes back to his childhood. The son of a biology and genetics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he studied human exercise physiology as an undergrad before attending the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. He eventually practiced on the Maryland and New York racing circuits, then took out his own training license in 2004. Between 2005 and 2010, Fox and his wife, Jamie, operated Fox Stables LLC, with an emphasis on trying to find out "if monitoring a horse's fitness could have an impact on the way horses were managed on a practical level."

Putting some of his theories to the test yielded not only a wealth of data, but Fox's approaches helped the stable's trainees produce \$2.5 million in earnings and seven graded stakes winners, including Tizdejavu, Slew's Tizzy, and Battle of

Hastings (GB).

Fox then returned to veterinary practice, working for six years at Payson Park in Florida where his clients included Shug McGuaghey, Bill Mott, and Christophe Clement.

Now back in Kentucky after his E-Trakka revelation, Fox said, "My goal is not just to be the guy who sells it, but to help analyze the data for the connections. Because I really believe that is part of the reason this type of data has not been embraced in horse racing--a lot of people are not really in a position to commit the time to learn how to analyze the data."

Each E-Trakka saddle pad contains two electrodes, one on the girth and another on the right side of the horse under the girth. Once it's fitted to a horse prior to a workout and the horse's name is selected from a drop-down menu, it automatically starts monitoring the heart rate and connects via GPS to record a training session that gets transmitted via cellular signal to a cloud storage device.

"Basically, all you have to do as a trainer is use the pad," Fox explained. "You tack the horse up with this very well-made, military-standard, very reliable system that distinguishes it from other systems that are out there. It then provides an incredible amount of detailed information of the work."

Fox added that an owner or trainer watching from somewhere else can see a video representation of the horse going around the track as it goes through a workout, complete with all of the stats as they are collected in real time.

"Once you understand the typical heart rate response of a horse that's in training, you're looking for positive changes and you're hoping to avoid negative changes," Fox said. "For example, if you work an evenly-paced half-mile in :50 with a maximum heart rate of 210, you might expect recovery to be 120 beats per minute. And as the horse gets fitter, it might go faster with the same recovery. Or it might do the same workout with a much faster recovery."



**Yes Yes Yes wearing an E-Trakka saddle pad | E-Trakka**

Each E-Trakka blanket unit costs in the ballpark of \$3,000. Fox said there are ongoing costs after the first year to pay for cellular signal usage (about \$35 monthly).

“What I do is I offer a month of unlimited analysis when you get involved,” Fox explained. “So if after a month, you want to keep me on to analyze the data, we figure out a fair way of building that relationship Or you can go it alone, and there’s lots of educational information on the E-Trakka website to learn how to analyze and follow your horses’ progress.”

A larger racing stable would probably want more than one unit. Asked how many saddle blankets a 20-horse outfit might need, Fox explained it this way:

“In Australia, Chris Waller, the leading trainer, has used the system for many years. And he has 15 of these in use at several different racetracks. If you have a 20-horse stable, you’d like to have four blankets, probably, so that on work days you can have one set tacked up while the other’s on the track.”

That explanation brings Fox to another point--practicality. He said that, as a former trainer, he knows it can be a hard sell if a data-gathering system is too much trouble to implement seamlessly.

“That’s number one--this cannot be unreliable or time-consuming under the stress of morning training,” Fox said. “Trainers in general are under an incredible amount of time pressure. They’re very reluctant to add moving parts to what is already a very complex process in the morning.”

Fox said another advantage of E-Trakka as a diagnostic tool is

that it provides one of the few ways of measuring a horse’s athleticism when the animal is not at rest.

“The true relevance of a way a horse is going can only be truly interpreted by the stress that the horse is experiencing in movement,” Fox said.

Asked why trainers in America seem reluctant to embrace non-traditional exercise diagnostics and data as a whole, Fox paused in thought before answering.

“The value of this information has not been effectively shared with the Thoroughbred industry,” Fox said. “This kind of data is first and foremost an opportunity for a trainer to commit to a greater and more detailed understanding of their individual athletes with the goal of doing everything humanly possible to avoid overtraining a horse or training a horse that is hiding an infirmity that is clinically important.

“It’s a challenge, But once people become comfortable with the data, they are very grateful to have access to it,” Fox continued. “What I tell people is that what this information does is it either challenges your opinion or validates your opinion on how the horse is going. If it validates it, that’s great. But if it challenges it, it’s always best to take a pause and think about it.”

To sum up, Fox was asked to fire up his crystal ball and predict what E-Trakka’s market penetration in America would look like in five years.

“This will be an embraced piece of technology that trainers will use. How many? I don’t know,” Fox said. “But I hope that it becomes normal to see this type of device on horses in training.



**Cont.**

Because it's one of those efforts that absolutely can cause no harm, and it can provide valuable insights into horses' well-being and their health, and to allow their connections to understand the limitations and the potential of their horse.

"The goal of any owner or trainer is to answer the questions, 'What kind of athlete do I have, and how can I best and most ethically and effectively allow this individual to reach their potential?'" Fox said. "And that's the whole story of what we're trying to do."

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## COLLMUS TO JOIN WRONA AS KENTUCKY DOWNS ANNOUNCERS



Larry Collmus | Sarah Andrew

Larry Collmus, the voice of NBC's Triple Crown and Breeders' Cup broadcasts, will join Michael Wrona in the announcer's booth for Kentucky Downs's six-day live race meet, the track announced Tuesday.

"I'm excited about calling the races at Kentucky Downs and looking forward to getting back in action," said Collmus, who was the New York Racing Association announcer from 2015 through last fall after spending a year calling the races at Churchill Downs. "The purses at Kentucky Downs are second to none and the unique layout is a fun challenge. I'm thrilled to share the mic with Michael. We've known each other for decades, and we certainly have a lot in common."

Ted Nicholson, Kentucky Downs' senior vice president and general manager, said that Collmus and Wrona will split the races for the track's opening Labor Day card Sept. 7, with Wrona announcing on Sept. 9 and 10 and Collmus closing out the meet Sept. 12, 13 and 16.

Wrona joined Kentucky Downs's live meet team last year before becoming the full-time announcer at Los Alamitos Race Course upon the retirement of longtime race-caller Ed Burgart. Collmus will be in Kentucky to call the Kentucky Derby, which was postponed until Sept. 5. He was Churchill Downs's announcer in 2014 before replacing the iconic Tom Durkin in New York.

"This is a great coup for Kentucky Downs to get two of the best announcers in the world to call our six days of racing," said Nicholson, who met Collmus when both worked at Boston's Suffolk Downs. "For Larry to be even available is incredible, but I'm thrilled he was. I've known Larry for 30 years. It's great to get him alongside Michael. To have both of them on opening day--our first on Labor Day--is just amazing. They are two of the best announcers anywhere. We'll have fun with this."

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## CALIFORNIA NECROPSY PROGRAM RESEARCH SHOWS KNOWLEDGE & DETECTION ARE KEY

In the latest in a series of webinars hosted by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation Tuesday, Dr. Sue Stover, Professor of Surgical and Radiological Sciences at UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, spoke on what veterinarians have learned from the California Necropsy Program.

"The program was not only created to find the nature of injuries, but also to see how they are developed and prevent them," Dr. Stover said. "We are trying to reduce horse injuries as well as jockey injuries."

Dr. Stover showed evidence that most catastrophic injuries are associated with pre-existing injuries and discussed the importance of proper diagnostics and signs of early detection, such as changes in demeanor.

"[Because of the Necropsy program], We now know where to look for these issues and identify risk factors for injury," Dr. Stover said. "We know with early detection horses can be easily managed. Making diagnostic tools more readily available will help identify these injuries."

Dr. Stover went on to cover how a horse's musculoskeletal system is affected by the rigors of training.

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