

SARATOGA MEMORIES

PRESENTED BY KEENELAND

Saratoga Memories, presented by Keeneland, is an ongoing series that looks back at some of the top moments from Keeneland Sales graduates among Saratoga's best racing.

Every horse starts somewhere, even Saratoga superstars. Keeneland Sales helps The Special look back at some memorable graded stakes winners – and Keeneland graduates – at the Spa. We'll re-connect and dig up some memories. Enjoy.

Careless Jewel

Alabama 2009

BY JOE CLANCY

The buzz before the 2009 Alabama centered on Rachel Alexandra. The 3-year-old filly star – already a Kentucky Oaks, Preakness and Haskell winner while running her seasonal record to 7-0 – might have won Saratoga's signature 3-year-old filly race three weeks later by default.

Of course, trainer Steve Asmussen opted to skip the Alabama in favor of the Woodward against older horses at the end of the meet and the eventual Horse of the Year shook the rafters like a 2018 thunderstorm.

The decision left a field of eight in the Alabama, but nobody missed Rachel. Careless Jewel shipped in from Canada for Donver Stable and Jose Carroll, dropped her jockey twice on the way to the gate, broke on top and won for fun.

The gray daughter of Tapit collected her fifth consecutive victory, and made at least a few people wonder what would have happened if Super Filly showed up. The Saratoga Special headline writer went with "Rachel Who?" on the Alabama recap, which shared a black-and-white page for with ads for brisnet.com and Glenwood Manor Antiques of nearby Queensbury.

Carroll was a bit more diplomatic, but would not have been intimidated.

"We were coming anyway, and I would hope we'd have made her run," the trainer said back then. "You don't know what you have until you run in these races so we were going to run."

Friday morning, Carroll had little trouble going back to a major piece of her training career.

"My girl," she said when Careless Jewel's name came up. "It was an extraordinary moment, particularly the way she did it. She was so dominant. It meant a lot because it's one of those historic races, it's not just the grading on it. The history is there for a race like that. To win it, the



Tod Marks
Careless Jewel rocked
Saratoga in 2009.

way she won it, that's really something everybody strives for as a trainer."

Shopping for yearlings with agent Ciaran Dunne of Wavertree Stables at Keeneland September in 2007, Carroll and Donver Stable nearly didn't buy Careless Jewel. Carroll and Donver's Vern Dubinsky weren't even at the sale when Hip 3220 headed for the ring.

Then Dunne called about Gainesway's March foal out of the Hennessy mare Sweet And Careless.

"I know you're done, I know you're not here," Dunne told Carroll, "but I found this beautiful little filly by Tapit. She's not going to cost much money and you'll love her."

There was a spot on the van, and Careless Jewel joined the team for \$40,000. Unraced at 2 because of a chip in a knee, Careless Jewel made her

debut at Keeneland as a 3-year-old and finished third after getting rank early. She won her next five – a maiden and an allowance at Woodbine, the Grade 2 Delaware Oaks, the Alabama and the Grade 1 Cotillion.

Along the way, Careless Jewel developed a reputation for making life miserable for her riders.

"In the barn she was great, on the track she was incredibly difficult," said Carroll. "It's just the way she was. She just got on the track and got her back up."

At Saratoga, regular jockey Robert Landry came off twice before the race to maybe give her rivals some hope of a pre-race meltdown.

"I know one thing, she jumps higher than she used to, I was standing on the back of the saddle

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Careless Jewel —

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there for a second,” Landry said after the win in 2009. “Oh you’re just thinking, ‘Hold onto her, whatever you do hold onto her.’ ”

He did, and — as usual — Careless Jewel settled down once she got in the gate.

“The performances were always before she went in the gate,” Carroll said. “The moment she got in the gate, she was very professional. Her ears went up and it was game face on. Good horses have something about them, a character about them.”

Careless Jewel ran just once more as a 3-year-old, a distant eighth (and last) in the Breeders’ Cup Distaff at Santa Anita. Sent off the favorite, she went way too fast early, opened 9 lengths on the field and faded as Life Is Sweet rallied from last to win. The Alabama heroine went back into training in 2010, but never raced and was retired in October.

Carroll, who saddled her first runner in 1994 and became the first woman trainer to win the Queen’s Plate in 2006 (and added another in 2011) thinks about her star filly’s Alabama often.

“I have this photo by Barbara Livingston that my husband got me,” she said. “I had taken my suit jacket off and I was just grazing her back at the barn. It’s that after-the-moment time where you just go, ‘Whshew’ and just think about it. It’s a great moment I’ll remember forever.”

Bred by Gainesway and Bill Andrade, Careless Jewel has produced five foals including a 2017 filly by Pioneer of The Nile in the 2018 Keeneland September sale and a 2018 filly by American Pharoah.

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