

## West Point grad's Belmont dream

Can Macho Again catch break, upset Big Brown?



Exercise rider Ken Borque takes Preakness entry Macho Again around the track at Pimlico Race Course, Thursday, May 15, 2008 in Baltimore.

By Justin Rodriguez

Times Herald-Record

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Terry Finley has no problem with his horse, Macho Again, being a long shot in Saturday's Belmont Stakes.

After all, every horse not named Big Brown wears the same label.

So Big Brown's trainer, Rick Dutrow, can keep telling the world he doesn't think anyone can touch his stud colt at the Belmont. Call him crazy, but Finley, a 1986 West Point graduate, thinks Macho Again could dash Big Brown's bid at the first Triple Crown in 30 years.

"That's what I love so much about the horse business," Finley said. "There are no politics, trash-talking doesn't matter. You line up and it's the first one to get to the wire.

"If Big Brown's on, nobody has a chance, but anything can happen. What if he has a bad start or gets stuck in a terrible hole? You never know."

Finley, 44, knows about long odds. After all, his career as a thoroughbred owner began in 1991 when he and his wife, Debbie, scraped together \$5,000 to buy a horse named Sun Belt at a claiming race at Philly Park. Not exactly a Triple Crown-caliber horse, but West Point Thoroughbreds was born.

Finley, a former Airborne Ranger who spent eight years in the U.S. Army, put together small ads to attract investors. He even worked for 18 months in 1994 and 1995 selling life insurance to supplement his venture.

Soon, investors bought in, and the Finleys' stable kept getting bigger and better.

Finley leaves the breeding and farming end of the operation to handlers in the barns. He focuses on building long-lasting partnerships and generating finances to turn out horses like Macho Again, a gray colt.

Today, West Point Thoroughbreds, based just outside Philadelphia in Mount Laurel, N.J., owns 85 horses and has 400 investors. The syndicate ran Flashy Bull in the 2006 Kentucky Derby and High Finance in the Belmont that same year.

Finley purchased Macho Again last February at an auction in Ocala, Fla., for \$150,000 and the colt has earned \$343,761 in nine career races.

West Point Thoroughbreds bought Grand Vow, a three-year-old colt, for \$475,000 last year.

"It's just been exciting to be around," Debbie Finley said. "Most of our dates were at the track, and Terry got me hooked. When we first started, we realized how risky it would be, so we got friends and partners.

"Our first office was in the garage in the house. But Terry and I agreed, I would hold down the fort and take care of our kids (Ryan and Erin), and he would take care of the business. Terry just loves what he does."

Macho Again went off at 40-1 odds at the Preakness in May, but finished second, 5 1/4 lengths behind Big Brown, and earned \$200,000. Only two horses faced longer odds in the race, Stevil, who finished fifth, and Tres Borrachos, who came in ninth.

"I knew he was much better than those odds and that he would run well," said Finley, who has always been intrigued by horses and began cleaning stalls at farms in New Jersey when he was 12. "I thought they were nuts when I saw those odds. I knew he was better than some of the horses in the field with lower odds."

Macho Again has won three of his nine career races, finishing second three other times. His breakout performance came on April 26, when the colt won the Derby Trial at Churchill Downs.

Macho Again, which arrived to Belmont via Churchill Downs on Tuesday, beat several solid horses. The listed included stud 2-year-old Majestic Warrior — once owned by George Steinbrenner.

"That really opened our eyes," Finley said. "He was a nice horse when we bought him. A little immature, it didn't wow you, but we figured we would take a shot. He's developed and just kept getting better and better.

"Macho Again is a very fast horse and has done just about everything right in his life."

**New York Times: The Rail (Racing Blog)**

June 3, 2008, 6:16 pm

## Getting to Know ... Terry Finley

By [Melissa Hoppert](#)

Terry Finley is the founder and president of [West Point Thoroughbreds](#), which will run the second-place Preakness finisher Macho Again in the Belmont Stakes. A graduate of West Point, Finley is a former Army Captain and Airborne Ranger. He lives in Mount Laurel, N.J., with his wife, Debbie, the operations manager for the company, and his daughter, Erin, and son, Ryan.



Terry Finley is the founder and president of West Point Thoroughbreds.

My name ... Terry Finley

Occupation ... Racehorse partnership manager

Childhood ambition ... Being involved in thoroughbred racing

Fondest memory ... Going to racetrack with my father

Wildest dream ... Owning a top-class restaurant

Proudest accomplishment ... Having two well-adjusted kids who know how to keep a conversation going and have a good handshake

Biggest challenge ... Balancing the business and sporting aspect of dealing with the majestic horses

Can't live without ... My wife

Perfect day ... Workout, spend time with kids and wife and get my picture taken in the WC

First job ... Cutting grass at a local shopping center

Indulgence ... Desserts and a cigar once in awhile

Favorite movie ... Seabiscuit

Inspiration ... My wife and how good of a mother she is and my deceased father who instilled in me so many things

My life is ... very fulfilling — health, great family and a business I'm involved in that I'm fanatically passionate about. In a word, blessed.

# Finley takes (long) shot with Macho Again in Preakness

By JOE JONES  
Bucks County Courier Times

While there were many who found every which way out of Dodge to avoid Big Brown in today's Preakness Stakes, there is still a shocking number who have brought what many believe are slingshots to battle the howitzer that is the Kentucky Derby champion.

Will it be pebbles or asteroids that are fired in Big Brown's direction from the 11 that dare to face him in the second leg of thoroughbred racing's Triple Crown series? That will be determined early this evening after 1 3/16 miles around the Pimlico Racecourse oval.

"I think the time is right," said Terry Finley, a 1982 Harry S Truman graduate.

Finley founded and runs West Point Thoroughbreds, an ownership syndicate. Macho Again is one of the 11 given almost no chance to beat Big Brown today.

But Finley thinks there is a chance.

"[Big Brown] ran so well and so big at Churchill Downs [in the Kentucky Derby]," Finley said. "I was there and anyone who saw it saw that he put in such a powerful performance. History has taught us that when a horse runs like that, sometimes they don't run as well the next time."

Finley also knows that Big Brown might be so good that he doesn't necessarily need to run his best race and still win.

"Even if he doesn't run as well [as he did in the Kentucky Derby], he still might be good enough to win," Finley said. "But if he isn't, I want to be there."

Macho Again is the son of Macho Uno, a former 2-year-old champion and winner of the 2001 Pennsylvania Derby at Philadelphia Park. To date, Macho Again has never won at two turns or at a distance greater than 7 1/2 furlongs.

He won his last start, the April 26 Derby Trial at Churchill Downs. It was a 7 1/2-furlong event and he earned a career-best 99 Beyer Speed Figure.

Macho Again is trained by Dallas Stewart. Julien Leparoux gets the mount.

"He's not a horse with crazy speed," Finley said. "He'll be mid-pack. On paper, we'll need for the big horse not to fire and get a couple breaks. On paper, we don't take a back seat to any of the other horses other than Big Brown."

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