

# Brothers try to make Kentucky Derby history

BY ED MCNAMARA  
NEWSDAY

The colt appeared suddenly on her television screen, surging from 16 lengths behind on a sloppy track he loved. As Exaggerator splashed to a 6-length Santa Anita Derby triumph, a 72-year-old grandmother acted like she had hit a life-changing Pick 6.

The living room celebration on Placide Road in tiny Maurice, Louisiana had nothing to do with money, although Brenda Desormeaux could not have been more heavily invested. The winning trainer was her firstborn, Keith. The rider was Kent, his brother. “I’ve seen hundreds of Kent’s races, and I was screaming and hollering like I’d never seen one before,” she told Newsday.

On Saturday, Keith, 49, and Kent, 46, will try to become the first trainer-jockey brother combination to win the world’s most coveted race, the Kentucky

Derby.

“It’s something you fantasize about but never think will become reality,” Brenda said. “It’s almost a miracle, a dream come true for the parents and the boys. There’s been a lot of excitement in our little metropolis of Maurice. NBC was here six hours doing a feature.”

The other siblings who tried to win the Derby together didn’t come close, with Nick and Jimmy Combest seventh in 1964 and the Romeros, Gerald and Randy, 12th in 1993. Hall of Famer Kent Desormeaux has won the Derby on Real Quiet (1998), Fusaichi Pegasus (2000) and Big Brown (2008). For Keith, it’s his debut.

“This is a Hollywood story for me,” he said. “It’s old hat for Kent. For me, it’s surreal ... It’s still sinking in that we’re here.”

Misfortune kept the Cajun brothers — the Meaux Breaux, as Kent tweeted — from collaborating in last year’s Derby.

Texas Red’s easy win in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile made him the winter-book favorite, but a foot abscess knocked him out of the Triple Crown.

Keith and Kent are bright, articulate and funny but have opposite personalities. Keith is measured and reserved, like their father, Harris, and Kent’s a crackling live wire liable to say anything. The source of Kent’s gift of gab is obvious. “Oh yes, he got that from his mother,” Brenda said, laughing. “Harris says I talk enough for the both of us. Keith is more like his father, a lot more serious than Kent.”

The brothers’ career arcs also are nothing alike. No jockey ever achieved so much so quickly. Starting in 1987, at 17, Kent led the nation in wins for three consecutive years, including a record 598 in 1988. “Kent was an overnight success,” Brenda said, “but not Keith.” While his kid brother became rich and famous, Keith

was vocationally vague.

“Kent knew what he wanted to do when he was 12,” Keith said. “As a kid, big-time racing on TV was a fantasy to me. Having a career in it never grabbed hold of me until my second year of college, when Kent started to be so successful.”

While Kent excelled at the elite level, Keith paid his dues in Maryland, Louisiana and Texas. Brenda has called him “kind of a nomad,” and he won only 39 races from 1988-95. He began getting high-class horses four years ago and won three seven-figure stakes in the past 18 months.

But Kent has had his struggles. He acknowledged a problem with alcohol in a 2012 interview with The New York Times. “You have to accept that the alcohol has gotten control of you,” he said, “and once you understand that, you can start moving toward other steps.”

In July 2010 Kent failed a Breathalyzer test at Wood-

bine, according to track stewards. On May 18, 2012, he failed another at Belmont Park, and on June 26, 2014, it happened again at Santa Anita, according to track stewards. Santa Anita’s stewards fined him \$2,500 last Oct. 5 for riding “under the influence of alcohol” on July 29, 2015, at Del Mar.

“Kent has a drinking problem, as everybody knows,” Brenda said. “Keith tries to get him to stop, and they get into it about that. They’ve always been close personally but there was a rift professionally, and it was all about the drinking. They have a mutual admiration society, but they are brothers.”

Kent’s been married for three years to apprentice jockey Rosie Higgins since divorcing Sonia, the mother of his sons, Joshua, 23, and Jacob, 17, in 2012. He’s on a riding roll this year (20-percent winners) and pumped. He flew Friday from California to Louisville, slept

on Keith’s couch and worked out Exaggerator 5 furlongs in 1:02 3/5 on Saturday. Then he caught a return flight so he could “mount steeds” at Los Alamitos.

Keith and Kent rented three houses for their Derby entourage of 20, including their sisters, Kristie, Kelli and Kalen, brother Kip and Keith’s son, Bailey, 24. Brenda and Harris attended Kent’s three Derby wins and are praying for number four. “It would be out of this world,” she said.

Keith isn’t predicting Exaggerator, 4-for-9 lifetime, can beat 7-for-7 favorite Nyquist. “We’ve tried him three times,” he said. “All I can hope is that my horse is maturing and becoming faster and that Nyquist is leveling off.”

Nothing could thrill Kent more than to lift the solid gold trophy with his big brother. “It’s extra special to be with Keith,” he said. “We don’t talk about it much. It’s all quite under-



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Hermion’s Deanna Phipps connects with a pitch for a home run against Old Town during their softball game at Old Town on Tuesday. Hermion won 9-1.

## Softball

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Theberge was satisfied with her outing.

“I threw well. My curve and screwball were good. I stayed on the inside and outside planes,” she said. “My defense was really key in the win today.”

The Hawks made just two errors and Theberge made one of them.

“You know she’s going to be around the plate and she mixes her pitches up very well,” said Old Town coach Jenn Plourde.

Phipps was one of four repeat hitters for the Hawks.

Theberge had a single to go with her double and Zenk and Oakes each had a pair of singles.

St. Louis had a double for the Coyotes while Caitlyn King, Olivia King and Mikayla Richards had singles.

## Hudson

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Council Class A championship.

He subsequently was named a second-team NEPSAC Class A all-star for his contributions to Williston’s 22-5 season.

Those back-to-back prep titles came after Hudson earned Bangor Daily News All-Maine third-team recognition as a high school junior, when he averaged 24 points and 16 rebounds per game to lead the Hawks to the 2014 Class D state championship.

The left-hander went on to play the following summer for a Maine Athletic Club 17-and-under AAU team coached by Carl Parker that finished 11th among 99 teams at the AAU Division I 11th-Grade National Championships in Louisville, Kentucky.

Hudson then transferred to Williston Northampton, enrolling as a high school junior under a practice commonly used by New England prep schools known as “reclassifying,” in which transferring students repeat a year of high school before embarking on their senior year in order to become better prepared for college life.

He will graduate from Williston Northampton in June.

Hudson will join a Bentley program that finished 21-9 and qualified for the NCAA Division II championship tournament last

winter with a roster that included six Maine high school products — a group led by All-American forward Tyler McFarland of Rockport and Camden Hills Regional High School, fellow Academic All American Keegan Hyland of South Portland and Andrew Furness of Wells.

McFarland concluded his career as the leading career scorer in Bentley history and along with Hyland and Furness were the team’s top three scorers this past season.

Among the Maine products expected to return to coach Jay Lawson’s club next season are the state’s 2015 Mr. Basketball Kyle Bouchard of Houlton and 2014 Gatorade Maine Player of the Year Zach Gilpin of Hampden Academy. Both will be sophomores with the Falcons.

The Maine-to-Bentley pipeline began after Charles Wootton, a 6-8 center, led Camden-Rockport High School to the 1974 Class B state championship before starting for three years at Bentley, where he was a two-time All-New England and All-American honoree. Wootton will be inducted in the Maine Basketball Hall of Fame in August.

Bentley’s more recent Maine standouts include 1997 Mr. Maine Basketball Mike Mastropaolo of Falmouth, Jeff Holmes of Cheverus of Portland, Sam Leclerc of Winthrop and Andrew Shaw of Thornton Academy in Saco.

# Red Sox’s Sandoval gone for the year

## Boston third baseman undergoes season-ending shoulder surgery

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Injured Boston Red Sox third baseman Pablo Sandoval underwent shoulder surgery on Tuesday, the club announced.

Sandoval will miss the rest of the 2016 season.

**MLB NOTEBOOK**

The surgery on his left shoulder was performed to repair a torn labrum.

Sandoval is in the second season of a five-year, \$95 million contract. He performed poorly last season with career-lows of a .245 batting average, 10 homers and 47 RBIs.

This season, he lost the starting job to Travis Shaw in spring training.

Boston also activated right-handed relief pitcher Carson Smith from the 15-day disabled list on Tuesday.

Smith had been sidelined with a right forearm injury suffered during a spring-training game. He was acquired from Seattle in the offseason deal that sent starting pitcher Wade Miley to the Mariners.

Boston recently optioned infielder Marco Hernandez to Triple-A Pawtucket to

clear a roster spot.

**Orioles shortstop Hardy goes on DL**

The Baltimore Orioles placed shortstop J.J. Hardy on the 15-day disabled list Tuesday after he suffered a hairline fracture in his left foot.

It was previously announced that Hardy will be out four to six weeks while the fracture heals. On Tuesday, he was seen in the team’s clubhouse wearing a protective boot on the foot.

The Orioles recalled infielder Ryan Flaherty, a former Deering High of Portland star, from Triple-A Norfolk to take Hardy’s place on the roster. Flaherty was at shortstop replacing Hardy for Tuesday night’s game against the New York Yankees.

The 33-year-old Hardy sustained the injury on Sunday after he hit a foul ball off the foot during the fourth inning of a game against the Chicago White Sox.

Hardy, a two-time All-Star, was batting .244 with two home runs and seven RBIs this season. Defen-

sively, he is one of four shortstops who has not made an error this year.

**Tigers activate C McCann, trade C Wilson**

The Detroit Tigers activated catcher James McCann from the 15-day disabled list, the team announced Tuesday.

McCann has been sidelined with an ankle injury. He will be in the starting lineup and batting seventh for Tuesday’s game against the Cleveland Indians.

To open up a roster spot for McCann, the Tigers traded catcher Bobby Wilson to the Texas Rangers for minor league left-hander Chad Bell.

Wilson was batting .154 in five games for Detroit. McCann was hitting .133 in four games prior to his injury.

Bell, 27, is 32-28 with a 3.66 ERA in parts of six minor-league seasons.

**Harper signs extension with Under Armour**

Baseball star Bryce Harper has signed a multi-year extension with Under Armour, the sports apparel company announced Tuesday.

Harper, the National League MVP last season, has been with Under Armour since April 2011. Terms of the extension weren’t revealed.

Harper, 23, expressed his happiness in an Instagram post:

“No other company I would want to be with! Can’t wait to show the world what is coming..lets have some fun! #Family #TeamUA”

Harper will have his first signature spikes — the Harper One — released in July.

He will also continue to be one of the most featured players in marketing campaigns.

“Under Armour has been one of my biggest advocates since I began my professional journey, and I can’t wait to share what’s next with the fans,” Harper said in a company press release.

Under Armour has emphasized landing young sports stars to be its signature promoters. Other athletes aligned with Under Armour include NBA MVP Stephen Curry, NFL MVP Cam Newton, PGA Tour Player of the Year Jordan Spieth and Olympic swimming icon Michael Phelps.

## Archer

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has awarded scholarships to three graduating seniors who have overcome their own challenges, purchased iPads and a sound system for his former preschool and conducted two drives to collect supplies for area schools.

“Strong communities begin with individuals who have the support to take their own courageous steps,” he said.

Archer plans to attend Husson University in Bangor this fall.

Also honored in Washington was Benjamin Levesque, 14, of Lyman, who with Archer were named Maine’s top youth volunteers in February.

Levesque, an eighth-grader at Massabesic Junior High School, has been involved for the past three years in a variety of community service projects in his community through the Boy Scouts and his school.

The Prudential Spirit of



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Old Town’s Connor Archer organized the Courageous Steps project. Archer was named one of America’s top 10 youth volunteers of 2016 on Monday by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards during the program’s 21st annual national award ceremony at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium.

Community Awards is a national youth recognition program sponsored by Prudential Financial in partner-

ship with the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

## Whitten

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you get two strikes, you shorten up your swing and go for contact,” said Dick Whitten, who also hated striking out and rarely did.

J.T. Whitten has struck out just once this season in 124 at-bats and only 30 times in 517 career at-bats.

“You can’t get on base if you don’t hit the ball. I pride myself on that,” he said.

His son’s one strikeout this season is the thing “I’m most proud of,” Dick Whitten said.

“He has a very good eye, and he has really worked on his patience and making sure he gets a good pitch to hit. He has had a heckuva’

career, especially his senior year,” he said.

J.T. Whitten took a .371 average on the year into Tuesday’s game with Colby. He leads the team in hits (46), doubles (11) and walks (17) and is second in RBIs (21).

J.T. calls his dad after games to discuss it and his performance. His dad tries to attend as many games as he can.

“I hope he’s proud of me. It’s not Division I Maine but [Division III] is exciting. It’s fun to play college baseball,” J.T. said.

Dick is proud of his son.

“And the thing I’m proudest about is he’s a good kid,” he said. “It’s great to see him succeed the way he has. He has put a lot of hard work into it. He loves to play.”

## WSYY

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first World Series in 86 years in 2004.

Russell said although it is “very pricey,” it is a money-maker for the station because they are able to attract enough sponsors for the games, which feature longtime Red Sox broadcaster Joe Castiglione.

They have several long-time sponsors in addition to new sponsors.

“But [sponsorship] isn’t sold out. We’re looking for more,” said Russell.

He said one of the challenging aspects of attracting sponsors is “there is no set time to run their ads

[because it all depends on how the game goes].”

Russell said the station has several ventures that have helped make the Red Sox an “adequate” money-maker like bus trips to Fenway Park and contests that give listeners the opportunity to win Zone Corporation owner Stephen King’s box seats for a game. The seats are located near the Red Sox dugout.

King also owns a small share of the Red Sox.

Sponsors are awarded access to season tickets owned by the station.

“And sponsors can have in-house promotions involving season tickets,” said Russell.

He wouldn’t disclose their rights fees but said it is well over \$10,000.