



West Virginia

THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

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Mean Bean: Delivering the Mail

By Jeff Gilleas

In an era where horses are retired before reaching cumulative maturity – and precociousness is disproportionately rewarded – one elder West Virginia bred has defied the odds and is performing at career best levels.

Under the watchful eye of owner/trainer Glenn Harrison, 8-year-old Mean Bean illustrates that an old warrior does not have to give up what he loves, if he discovers a human connection to reinvent himself.

The son of Garnered and the Distinctive Pro mare Distinctly Spring, bred by Jessica Loy, has spent his entire 38-race career in West Virginia, save for his debut effort.

The backbone of the modest three-horse string in Harrison's care, Mean Bean has cultivated a local following, particularly among the AARP crowd.

"I have been a United States Postal worker for the past 14 years," said Harrison, "and while on my mail route, shopping at Walmart or dining in town, I am known as the man who owns and trains Mean Bean. His competitiveness and longevity have



COADY PHOTOGRAPHY

earned him a fan club in Charles Town."

Glenn left horse racing around 2006 when he realized the game had mutated, due to purse enhancements from slot machines, thus limiting his owners' ability to survive against bigger outfits.

"I loved the horse business, yet the pressure to compete versus large-scale trainers with unlimited funds and their ability to drop down superior talent motivated me to seek a more stable financial environment for my family," he said.

West Virginia Thoroughbred Breeders Association

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While on the sidelines, Glenn could not get the temptation and allure of horse racing out of his mind.

Chronic pressure from an old friend eventually convinced him to come out of retirement and buy a half-interest in a studdish bay yearling named Mean Bean.

Glenn doesn't necessarily subscribe to any specific school of thought on training, but insists on not rushing young horses.

This conservative plan of attack prompted him and his partner to opt for a late start breaking and bringing their humble investment to the racetrack.

"This time I approached the game as more of a hobby," said Glenn. "Mean Bean was such a good feeling spirit that immediately I was thrust into the role of hot walker by desertion. I would come to the track prior to work in the morning and return after my job in the afternoon."

Mean Bean's first four races were sub-par efforts, coaxing Glenn to insist on gelding the temperamental individual.

During this period the partnership amicably dissolved, leaving Glenn sole owner and exclusive caretaker.

"As soon as the gelding process took full effect, Mean Bean became more focused and easier to handle around the barn," said Glenn.

The transformation has been miraculous. Since physically altering the barn rascal, he has become a model of consistency and virtual cash cow.

In his 34 starts since, the warhorse has 10 firsts, 12 seconds and six thirds, earning approximately \$250,000.

Glenn and his wife insist on limiting the number of races for Mean Bean and work together as a team to keep the family gem happy.

"This horse is my wife's pet, so much that if it was possible to construct a stall in our home he would have his own man cave."

At the end of last year Glenn thought maybe Bean was showing signs of aging, forcing that dreaded talk with his wife about retiring him from competition.

However, this year has seen the ageless one come out firing on all cylinders, defeating more fashionably bred and younger rivals.

Glenn calls Mean Bean a miracle and the ultimate "poor man's horse".

"When he can no longer perform against top flight company we will retire the old boy. Claiming is not a word in our vocabulary."

At the barn Glenn leans on his right hand man Anthony (Pinky) Pinkett to ensure Mean Bean is always bedded down comfortably and receives personalized attention.

His initial start this year was in the Mint Mission Overnight Stakes, where under jockey Jason Simpson he sat off a torrid pace before finishing relentlessly to seize the first-place prize.

Fans in attendance were greeted to a whopping \$93 mutuel ticket for their two-dollar investment.

The classy Clubman (6-5 favorite) and formidable Dial Operator (2-1) did not fire their best efforts and

could only watch as Mean Bean swept to victory.

Approximately five weeks after his stunning 2020 statement win Mean Bean returned in a tough West Virginia-Bred allowance contest and once again benefitted from a suicidal pace duel.

Though he broke in a tangle, the big-hearted gelding powered by rivals late, including the pugnacious runner-up North Atlantic, while finishing beyond the crown of the racetrack.

Supporters inferred that he just wanted to be closer to the track photographer to get his picture taken.

"Mean Bean's best race is as a stalker," said Glenn. "He loves something to run at. Though he is getting older, he still likes to train and enjoys relaxing at the barn sandwiched between my two fillies, Di Colas Cowgirl and Morningafterblues. He's a true character and always has that inquisitive look on his face, as if trying to analyze you."

In a perfect world Glenn and his wife would like to retire to Texas, where their daughter is in her second year of law school.

"I could see myself with a couple of horses testing the Lone Star, Sam Houston and Retama Park circuit."

For now, the words, neither rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds, effectively describes both Glenn Harrison and Mean Bean.

NOTES TO MEMBERS

- ◆ **The 10-10-10 program** is now called the **Supplemental Purse Award Claim**, for which there are new forms. All claims must be submitted to the WV Racing Commission within 15 days from the date the purse is awarded. Claim forms are available on the WV Racing Commission website, racing.wv.gov.
- ◆ If you are selling or planning to sell your accredited WV-bred and/or sired horse, please contact the WVTBA. The WVTBA has started supplying sellers of **accredited WV-bred and/or sired horses with hip stickers and stall-card stickers** to make it easier for buyers to identify these horses. Contact the WVTBA office at (304) 728-6868 or by e-mail at wvbreeders@gmail.com.
- ◆ **WV Certificates** will be issued seven to 10 days after the WVTBA receives the original registration form application, all required paperwork and payment.
- ◆ The new WVTBA office is located at 110 South George Street, Suite 4, Charles Town, WV 25414. Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. More information may be found at www.wvtba.net.

