



## BREEDERS' CUP FOCUS: TURF

BY CLAIRE NOVAK

### English Channel

Owner	James T. Scatuorchio
Breeder	Keene Ridge Farm
Trainer	Todd A. Pletcher

If any horse loves the Monmouth Park turf course, it's Jim Scatuorchio's English Channel, who won back-

resulted in victories, culminating with his first graded win in the Virginia Derby (gr. IIIT). He got his first grade I win the next year in the Woodford Reserve (gr. IT) on Derby day at Churchill Downs.

And the wins just kept coming. In 22 starts, he's recorded a record of 12-4-1.

"He's a very unique horse in a lot of ways," Scatuorchio said. "His conformation, knock on wood, is absolutely perfect. His competitive nature is above that of any other horse I've ever owned. For pure tenacity and the ability to give you 100% every time, he has it all."

English Channel has tackled the Breeders' Cup Turf twice – in 2005, when he finished fifth behind Shirocco,

and last year, when he was third behind Red Rocks. This year, he may get his turn to shine. Next weekend, we'll know.

to-back runnings of the track's United Nations Stakes (gr. IT) and twice set the course record in doing so. Oct. 27, the 5-year-old son of Smart Strike will take his third shot at the John Deere Breeders' Cup Turf (gr. IT) and a purse of \$3 million. Not bad for a horse that cost just \$50,000 as a yearling.

English Channel, bred in Kentucky by Keene Ridge Farm and consigned to the Keeneland September yearling sale by Eaton Sales Agency in 2003, was a selection of master horseman J.J. Pletcher.

"J.J. called and said, 'I bought you a Smart Strike for \$50,000,' and I said, 'What's wrong with him?'" recalled Jim Scatuorchio. "He said, 'Nothing; he's perfect.' When you hear the price, you kind of scratch your head. At that point Smart Strike didn't get particularly great-looking foals; he was kind of plain."

But Pletcher has a horseman's eye, and he saw the balance, conformation and outstanding pedigree of the potential racehorse.

"If he'd been two inches taller and 300 pounds heavier, I think he'd have brought a lot more," said Scatuorchio. "But we all know that what you pay for these wonderful athletes may not have any correlation to their victories."

English Channel kicked off his career with a debut win over the turf at Saratoga in his 2-year-old year, but was then sidelined with a hairline fracture for the rest of the season. He returned to racing in a Gulfstream Park allowance, finishing fourth. It was the only time he'd finish off the board that season – his next four starts



English Channel

COADY PHOTOGRAPHY

SMART STRIKE, b, 1992	Mr. Prospector, 1970	Raise a Native, 1961	Native Dancer Raise You
	Classy 'n Smart, 1981	Gold Digger, 1962	Nashua Sequence
ENGLISH CHANNEL, ch h, April 10, 2002		Smarten, 1976	Cyane Smartaire
	Theatrical (IRE), 1982	No Class, 1974	Nodouble Classy Quillo
BELVA, b, 1998		Nureyev, 1977	Northern Dancer Special
	Committed, 1980	Tree of Knowledge (IRE), 1977	Sassafras (FR) Sensibility
		Hagley, 1967	Olden Times Teo Pepi
		Minstinguette, 1975	Boldnesian Royal Warrant



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