

= American Pharoah =

American Pharoah (foaled February 2 , 2012) is an American Thoroughbred racehorse who won the American Triple Crown and the Breeders ' Cup Classic in 2015 . In winning all four races , he became the first horse to win the " Grand Slam " of American horse racing . He won the 2015 Eclipse Award for Horse of the Year and 2015 Champion three @-@ year @-@ old . He was bred and owned throughout his racing career by Ahmed Zayat of Zayat Stables , trained by Bob Baffert , and ridden in most of his races by Victor Espinoza . He now stands at stud at Ashford Stud in Kentucky .

After finishing fifth in his track debut as a two @-@ year @-@ old , American Pharoah won his next races , the Grade I Del Mar Futurity and FrontRunner Stakes , each by several lengths . An injury kept him out of the Breeders ' Cup Juvenile , but the strength of his two wins nonetheless resulted in his being voted American Champion Two @-@ Year @-@ Old Male Horse at the 2014 Eclipse Awards . Before the 2015 season began , Zayat had sold breeding rights to the colt to the Ashford Stud , a division of Ireland 's Coolmore Stud . He retained control over the colt and his racing career , as well as an undisclosed dividend on stud fees .

American Pharoah began his 2015 campaign with wins in the Rebel Stakes and Arkansas Derby and went on to win the 2015 Kentucky Derby and 2015 Preakness Stakes . He won the Triple Crown in a wire @-@ to @-@ wire victory at the 2015 Belmont Stakes , becoming the first American Triple Crown winner since Affirmed in 1978 and the 12th in history . His winning time was the second @-@ fastest for a Triple Crown winner , and his closing quarter @-@ mile time of 24 @.@ 32 was faster than Secretariat 's . He next shipped to Monmouth Park and easily won the Haskell Invitational on August 2 , prompting Baffert to say , " He just keeps bringing it ; he 's a great horse . " Three weeks later , he finished a close second in a hard @-@ fought Travers Stakes at Saratoga Race Course on August 29 , 2015 , snapping a winning streak of eight races . After a layoff of two months , he shipped to Keeneland for the 2015 Breeders ' Cup and ran in the Breeders ' Cup Classic , where he challenged older horses for the first time and won by 6 1 ? 2 lengths , breaking the track record . Pursuant to the agreement between Zayat and Ashford , American Pharoah was retired to stud at the conclusion of his 2015 racing year .

= = Background = =

American Pharoah is a bay colt with a faint star on his forehead and no other white markings . He is from the second crop of foals sired by Pioneerof the Nile , who finished second in the 2009 Kentucky Derby . The stallion 's first crop included Holy Bull Stakes winner Cairo Prince , and Social Inclusion , who finished third in the 2014 Preakness Stakes . American Pharoah 's dam , Littleprincessemma , was purchased by Zayat in 2007 for \$ 250 @,@ 000 . She raced but did not win either of her two starts in 2008 . American Pharoah was her second foal , following allowance race winner Xixixi . Since his birth , she had produced two more full siblings to American Pharoah : a filly born in 2014 , and a colt , foaled in 2015 after she sold ? in foal to Pioneerof the Nile ? in November 2014 for \$ 2 @.@ 1 million .

American Pharoah was bred in Kentucky by his owner , Ahmed Zayat , CEO of Zayat Stables , LLC , and was born at 11 p.m. on Groundhog Day , February 2 , 2012 , at Tom VanMeter 's Stockplace Farm in Lexington , Kentucky . When he was a few days old , he and Littleprincessemma went to nearby Pretty Run Farm , also owned by VanMeter , where they remained for a few months . Later , the mare and foal were moved to Vinery , another Lexington farm where Pioneerof the Nile was stabled . There , American Pharoah was weaned at five months of age , and stood out from the other weanlings due to his conformation and good temperament .

In January 2013 as a yearling , he went to Taylor Made Farm near Nicholasville , Kentucky , and began to be prepared for possible sale . In August 2013 , American Pharoah was consigned by the Taylor Made Sales Agency to the Fasig @-@ Tipton Saratoga Yearling sale . A few weeks before the auction , American Pharoah bumped his leg and had a small lump that was visible to potential buyers at the sale , which may have discouraged bidders . He was officially purchased for the

posted minimum of \$ 300 @, @ 000 by Ingordo Bloodstock , acting as an agent for Zayat , who in effect bought back his own horse . Zayat had pledged that he would not sell the promising but untested colt for less than \$ 1 million . Zayat similarly bought back Pioneerof the Nile , American Pharoah 's sire , for \$ 290 @, @ 000 in a 2007 yearling auction .

" We felt that he had brilliance in him , " said Zayat of American Pharoah , " his demeanor , his aura , his conformation , the way he moved . " Following the auction , the horse first went to Florida and was started under saddle at the McKathan Brothers Training Center near Citra , where trainer J.B. McKathan said , " He just did everything right . " Once he was ready to begin race conditioning , he went into training with Hall of Fame inductee Bob Baffert in the spring of 2014 .

He was described in 2014 as a ridgling , rather than a colt , meaning that he had an undescended testicle . The 2013 catalogue for his yearling Fasig @-@ Tipton sale listed him as a " colt " , and he was described that way again in 2015 . Zayat maintained the " ridgling " designation was an error : " he was always a colt . "

The horse is set apart from other race horses by his smooth and distinctively long stride . Baffert has stated , " I 've never had a horse that moves or travels over the ground like he does . " The most unusual characteristic of American Pharoah during his two- and three @-@ year @-@ old seasons is his short tail ? it was apparently chewed off by another horse . It is theorized that Mr. Z , a fellow competitor and Zayat @-@ bred colt , may have been the culprit ; the pair were kept together in Florida as younger horses . Trainer Baffert had a more colorful theory : " I think he was in the pasture one day and there was a mountain lion chasing him ? that was the closest he could get ... "

American Pharoah 's gentle demeanor is also distinctive , in that he is fond of people and , particularly for a young racehorse , surprisingly calm around them . As Baffert explained , " Horses of his caliber are not that nice and sweet . They 're just sort of tough . If I brought Bayern out here , you can 't get near him , he 's too aggressive . [American Pharoah] ' s just so different than any horse I 've ever had . " He was not always so calm , described initially as " a little bit of a headcase , " but Baffert explained that after his anxiety @-@ ridden first race , people worked with him , schooling him in the track paddock for about two weeks , when " all the sudden he got really sweet and really mellow . "

= = = Name = = =

American Pharoah 's name is inspired by that of his sire , Pioneerof the Nile , and his dam 's sire , Yankee Gentleman . The horse 's name also acknowledges Zayat 's own Egyptian @-@ American background . The misspelling of " Pharaoh " is permanent , but inadvertent . Zayat originally claimed that the spelling was the result of an error by The Jockey Club , but the organization 's president stated , " The name request for the 2012 colt American Pharoah was submitted electronically on January 25 , 2014 , through The Jockey Club 's interactive registration site . Since the name met all of the criteria for naming and was available , it was granted exactly as it was spelled on the digital name application . " Zayat later retracted his statement .

Zayat 's wife , Joanne , offered another explanation for the name 's origins to a local news reporter just before the Preakness . Zayat 's son , Justin , ran a contest on social media in which fans could submit names for the horse . The winning entry had " Pharaoh " misspelled , she said . " Justin cut and pasted the name from [the winner 's] email , and sent it to the Jockey Club . " Marsha Baumgartner of Barnett , Missouri , who submitted the winning entry , told The New York Times , " I don 't want to assign blame , " but " I looked up the spelling before I entered . " Nonetheless , Baumgartner minimized the controversy , stating , " Horses can 't spell , anyway . " Ultimately , Justin Zayat accepted responsibility for the error , stating , " I didn 't happen to realize at the time that it was misspelled wrong ... Most English teachers in the world now are unhappy with me , but I 'll live with that . "

Due to the winning record of American Pharoah , The Jockey Club has now reserved both spellings so another horse cannot be similarly named . The Triple Crown blanket awarded to American Pharoah after his Belmont win inadvertently used the correct spelling of " pharaoh " , and hence misspelled his name .

= = Racing career = =

= = = 2014 : two @-@ year @-@ old season = = =

American Pharoah made his track debut in a maiden race over six and a half furlongs on the Polytrack surface at Del Mar Racetrack on August 9 . Ridden by Martin Garcia , he started as the 7 ? 5 favorite against eight opponents . He became unsettled before the race and , after running in second place until the stretch , faded to finish fifth behind Om , Iron Fist , One Lucky Dane , and Calculator , more than nine lengths behind the winner . He ran in a blinker hood , which appeared to unnerve him , as did the commotion in the saddling paddock . Baffert addressed his anxiety issues by removing the hood and stuffing cotton in the horse 's ears for subsequent races .

Despite his defeat , American Pharoah was moved up to Grade I class for the Del Mar Futurity over seven furlongs on September 3 . He was ridden by Victor Espinoza for the first time and started as the 3 @. @ 2 ? 1 second favorite behind Best Pal Stakes winner Skyway , with Calculator and Iron Fist also in the field . American Pharoah took the lead from the start and went clear in the straight to win by four and three quarter lengths from Calculator , with a gap of more than eight lengths back to Iron Fist in third . Commenting on the colt 's improvement , Baffert said , " We took the blinkers off , put cotton in his ears and schooled him a lot . He trained well , we decided he was ready and we put him in there . Today , he behaved himself and showed what he could do . He did what we thought he 'd do the first time . "

On September 27 , American Pharoah was made the 1 ? 2 favorite for the Grade I FrontRunner Stakes over eight and a half furlongs at Santa Anita Park . As in his previous race , he was immediately sent to the front by Espinoza and stayed there , pulling away from his rivals in the straight to win by three and a quarter lengths over Calculator , with Texas Red a length and a half away in third . After the race , Espinoza explained how the colt moved : " All the way he was on a high cruising speed . He has such a long stride . He moves really nice and is light on his feet . " Baffert said , " I can 't believe his demeanor , how he has changed since his first out . He 's so professional . He 's really mentally there . "

American Pharoah was scheduled to run in the Breeders ' Cup Juvenile at Santa Anita on November 1 but was scratched from the race after sustaining a " deep bruise " to his left front foot in a workout on October 27 . After this injury , he was fitted with a special horseshoe . His farrier , Wes Champagne , placed a thin sheet of aluminum alloy over a regular racing horseshoe and cut it to match the dimensions of the shoe , leaving the front two @-@ thirds of the hoof sole exposed , but creating a solid plate across the back that covered part of American Pharoah 's heels and part of his frog . Champagne varied the design slightly depending on the tracks and races American Pharoah would run , but used the same basic concept throughout the Triple Crown series .

Even though he did not run in the Breeders ' Cup , for the 2014 Eclipse Awards , American Pharoah was voted American Champion Two @-@ Year @-@ Old Male Horse , beating Breeders ' Cup Juvenile winner Texas Red by 126 votes to 111 .

= = = 2015 : three @-@ year @-@ old season = = =

Five and a half months after his last start , American Pharoah began his second season in the Grade II Rebel Stakes on a sloppy track at Oaklawn Park on March 14 . He carried top weight of 119 pounds and started as the 2 ? 5 favorite against six opponents , headed by the Todd Pletcher @-@ trained Madefromlucky . The colt led from the start and drew away in the closing stages to win by six and a quarter lengths . Espinoza called the winner " an amazing horse " , while Baffert was satisfied with the run , especially as the colt returned with a twisted shoe which would have hampered his progress . Four weeks later at the same track , American Pharoah started as the odds @-@ on favorite against seven opponents in the Grade I Arkansas Derby . After racing in second place behind outsider Bridget 's Big Luvy , he took the lead a quarter of a mile from the finish and

steadily increased his advantage to win by eight lengths from Southwest Stakes winner Far Right . Baffert noted , " He 's matured substantially . He 's a good horse and he keeps moving forward . I don 't want to get ahead of myself , but Dortmund is another one who we don 't yet know how good he is . We 've got a one @-@ two punch and that 's a good position to be in . " After the race , Ron Moquett , the trainer of runner @-@ up Far Right , described American Pharoah as " a superhorse " .

== = 2015 Kentucky Derby = = =

On May 2 , American Pharoah started as the 2 @. @ 9 ? 1 favorite in an eighteen @-@ runner field for the 141st running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs . His opponents included Dortmund , winner of the Santa Anita Derby ; Carpe Diem , who won the Breeders ' Futurity Stakes and Blue Grass Stakes ; Firing Line , winner of the Sunland Derby ; Wood Memorial winner Frosted ; Florida Derby winner Materiality ; international entry Mubtaahij , who earned his way to Kentucky with a win in the UAE Derby ; and Upstart , winner of the Holy Bull Stakes . The crowd surrounding the horse during the walk @-@ over from the barns to the paddock upset American Pharoah , and several grooms were required to keep him under control . He continued to misbehave until he was loaded into the starting gate ; his connections and supporters worried that he was using up energy he needed for the race .

Espinoza positioned the colt in third place early in the race as Dortmund took the lead , followed closely by Firing Line . The three remained ahead of the pack throughout the race , and broke clear of their rivals entering the straightaway with American Pharoah making a forward move on the outside . The favorite took the lead entering the final furlong and won by a length from Firing Line and Dortmund in 2 : 03 @. @ 02 , with Frosted finishing strongly in fourth . Espinoza , who won the race for the third time , said , " I feel like the luckiest Mexican on earth . He has been a special horse since the first time I rode him . He has a lot of talent and is an unbelievable horse . Turning for home I started riding a little bit harder . At the eighth pole I just couldn 't put that other horse away , but he got it done . " Espinoza 's performance attracted some scrutiny as he appeared to have struck the winner 32 times with his whip during the race . In post @-@ race analysis , one of the stewards at Churchill Downs said , " we watched [the race replay] many , many times prior to making it official , and that wasn 't anything that got our attention . " Baffert said , " He was hitting him on the saddle towel . He doesn 't hit that hard . " Gary Stevens , rider of second @-@ place Firing Line , commented that he had used his whip heavily as well , stating that the race was " as tough a race as I 've been in in 20 years the last eighth of a mile . " The Blood @-@ Horse writer Steve Haskin , while condemning whip overuse in general , offered analysis that Espinoza " did a lot of waving with the whip " and may not have actually hit the horse as many times as it seemed . Reflecting on the race , Baffert said that the colt did not bring his " super A @-@ game " to the Derby and that it was the first time American Pharoah had really been tested by other aggressive horses .

== = 2015 Preakness Stakes = = =

Two weeks after winning the Kentucky Derby , American Pharoah entered the second leg of the Triple Crown , the 2015 Preakness Stakes , run over nine and a half furlongs at Pimlico Race Course . Despite an unfavorable inside draw of the number one post position , he was installed as the morning line favorite ahead of Firing Line and Dortmund . No horse had won the Preakness starting from the rail since 1994 . Immediately before post time , the weather changed to a heavy downpour with thunder . The last time the Preakness had been run on a sloppy track was in 1983 , and American Pharoah was the only horse in the field to have previously faced similar conditions , having won the Rebel Stakes running in rain and mud .

American Pharoah had the lead within the first quarter @-@ mile and was challenged by Mr. Z early on , but held the lead on the inside throughout the race . He was challenged by Dortmund and then Divining Rod , but American Pharoah broke from the pack in the homestretch and won by seven lengths , as Tale of Verve made a strong rally to overtake Divining Rod to place . Firing Line

slipped badly at the start and was eased in the stretch . The winning time was 1 : 58 @. @ 45 . Espinoza did not use his whip at all in the Preakness , and stated , " I couldn 't see how far I was in front because there was so much water in my eyes . " The margin of victory was tied for the sixth @- @ largest in Preakness history . The win by American Pharoah set up an attempt for the Triple Crown for the second straight year . It was also the second straight year that Espinoza had won both the Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes and the jockey 's third time winning both races . For Baffert , it was the fourth time in 19 years that he won the first two Triple Crown races . Of the colt , Baffert said , " He brought his A @- @ game today . "

= = = = 2015 Belmont Stakes and Triple Crown = = = =

In the week following the Preakness , the Leverage Agency was named as the exclusive marketing , sponsorship and licensing agents for the horse . They had performed similar duties for the 2014 Derby and Preakness winner , California Chrome . The agency secured a deal with Monster Energy for an undisclosed sum , rumored to be the largest single @- @ horse advertising sponsorship to date . The deal allowed the " Monster Girls " to be around the horse , and the product 's logo to be used on the horse 's horse sheets , on Espinoza 's shirt collar , as well as on caps and other gear worn by people around the horse . Ben Sturmer of Leverage explained , " The energy and excitement that American Pharoah has generated around the world syncs perfectly with the brand . "

Baffert created some controversy prior to the Belmont by choosing to work the horse at Churchill Downs and ship late to Belmont Park without a timed workout at the New York track . While several prominent trainers questioned his decision , Baffert believed that it was more important to keep American Pharoah " happy " on a track he liked , having used a similar strategy with his 2001 Belmont Stakes winner , Point Given . Rival trainers Kiaran McLaughlin and D. Wayne Lukas backed Baffert 's strategy , with McLaughlin making the remark , " I don 't think it matters for American Pharoah . He could probably run down a street over broken glass . " Appearing unperturbed but curious about a small crowd of well @- @ wishers , American Pharoah arrived at Long Island MacArthur Airport on June 2 , having traveled from Louisville , Kentucky on a customized Boeing 727 dubbed " Air Horse One " .

American Pharoah 's connections drew the number five post position for the Belmont on June 3 . Pundits immediately noted it was the same slot from which Seattle Slew had won the 1977 Belmont and the Triple Crown , and that 14 other Belmont winners had started from the position . American Pharoah was the 3 ? 5 morning line favorite in an eight @- @ horse field that included Tale of Verve , as well as five rivals from the Kentucky Derby who had skipped the Preakness , and one horse , Madefromlucky , who had not run either of the previous Triple Crown races , but , like Tonalist the year prior , had instead won the Peter Pan Stakes at Belmont Park . American Pharoah had previously defeated every horse entered , but he was also the only horse to contest all three legs of the Triple Crown and had run four races in the preceding eight weeks .

American Pharoah won the Belmont Stakes on June 6 , becoming the 12th Triple Crown winner and the first since 1978 , ending a " drought " of 37 years . The horse was leaning back in the starting gate when it opened and was a touch late at the start , but he soon pulled out to an early lead , which he maintained for a gate @- @ to @- @ wire win . He steadily increased his lead throughout the race . He was challenged by Materiality until the top of the stretch when Materiality faded , ultimately finishing last , and Frosted held second although starting to fade at the sixteenth pole . Keen Ice ran in the middle of the pack until a late rally brought him into third over Mubtaahij , who was fourth . American Pharoah crossed the finish line leading by 5 1 ? 2 lengths , with a winning time of 2 : 26 @. @ 65 for the 1 1 ? 2 @- @ mile (2 @, @ 400 m) race . His margin of victory was the fourth @- @ largest ever for a Triple Crown winner at the Belmont .

Of the victory , Baffert said , " this little horse deserves it . There 's something about this horse that he just brought it every time . He 's a joy to be around . " In a post @- @ race interview , Zayat said that the colt 's racing schedule for the remainder of the year would be decided by Baffert , and that the needs of the horse would come first . He also acknowledged the need for horse racing to have "

stars " and for them to race as long as they could . Though American Pharoah 's stud rights had been sold with plans to retire the horse at the end of 2015 , Zayat expressed hope that the horse would continue racing as long as he was healthy and " has it in him " . His winning time of 2 : 26 @. @ 65 was the sixth @- @ fastest in Belmont history , the second @- @ fastest for a Triple Crown winner , and his closing quarter @- @ mile was run in 24 @. @ 32 seconds , which was over a half @- @ second faster than Secretariat 's final quarter @- @ mile time of 25 @. @ 00 when the 1973 winner set a world record and won by 31 lengths .

The following morning , the colt came out of the race tired but in good shape . When Baffert brought American Pharoah out of the Belmont Park barn , he invited the assembled media to come over and pet the horse . " I wanted to share him with everybody and show everybody how kind and sweet he is , " said Baffert , while the group of about 30 people touched and even kissed the horse . The horse then posed quietly with Baffert and Espinoza to tape a segment for The Today Show , standing between the two men who were seated in folding director 's chairs .

An estimated 22 million U.S. television viewers watched the live Belmont race broadcast . Of 94 @. @ 237 winning \$ 2 tickets sold at Belmont Park , each with a yield of \$ 3 @. @ 50 for American Pharoah 's first @- @ place finish , some 90 @. @ 128 remained unredeemed several days after the race , most likely kept as race @- @ day souvenirs or to be offered for sale at a premium by their purchasers .

= = = The Haskell = = =

Following the Belmont , he was returned to Churchill Downs to rest , beginning to jog on the track the following Friday . On June 13 , the day of the Stephen Foster Handicap , American Pharoah was paraded on the track between races . A crowd of 30 @. @ 000 people showed up to see him as he was hand @- @ walked for about 45 minutes in front of the grandstand and in the paddock . Zayat , Baffert and Espinoza were also given their permanent keepsake Kentucky Derby and Triple Crown trophies in a ceremony that evening . American Pharoah 's popularity was so high that his win made the cover of Sports Illustrated , he was photographed for Vogue , and during the NBA Playoffs , the coach of the Golden State Warriors , Steve Kerr , suggested that American Pharoah was the only athlete better than LeBron James .

American Pharoah 's next race was the Haskell Invitational , held August 2 at Monmouth Park , New Jersey . Zayat wanted the horse 's first race back be an " easy " race against other 3 @- @ year @- @ olds , he wanted to race the horse in Zayat 's home state of New Jersey , and he wanted to race on a Sunday to avoid a clash with the Jewish Sabbath . Zayat explained , " He can run anywhere ... as long as he 's happy and healthy ... I told [Monmouth] ... ' I want do to it for the sport and not worry about the money and stuff . " Nonetheless , Monmouth Park raised the purse money for the race from \$ 1 million to \$ 1 @. @ 75 million . Zayat had previously won the Haskell with Paynter in 2012 , and Baffert already held the record for the most Haskell wins , having seven previous victories . Over 60 @. @ 000 people showed up at Monmouth Park , which featured the Bruce Springsteen song " Born to Run " in the post parade . Viewed as being in even better physical condition than in the Belmont , American Pharoah took the lead in the far turn and easily opened up a five @- @ length lead over the six other horses in the race before Espinoza eased him back as second @- @ place finisher Keen Ice made a strong finishing push . He won the race by 2 1 ? 4 lengths with a time of 1 : 47 @. @ 95 for the 9 @- @ furlong distance . Espinoza quipped , " He was having fun , and so was I . " Baffert said , " He just keeps bringing it ; he 's a great horse . "

= = = Defeat at the Travers = = =

The colt 's next start was in the August 29 Travers Stakes at Saratoga . While Zayat wanted to enter the race , Baffert was reluctant . The race marked the second time in under a month that American Pharoah , training with Baffert in California , had flown across the country , raising concerns that the extensive air travel was taking a toll on the horse . The only previous Triple Crown winner to win the Travers was Whirlaway in 1941 , and two others , Gallant Fox and Affirmed , had

been defeated there , helping give the track its nickname " Graveyard of Champions " . Baffert had one Travers win (in 2001 with Point Given) in five previous attempts . With American Pharoah training well , he stated , " I 've been looking for an excuse not to come (to the Travers) and I can 't find one . "

American Pharoah faced a field of 10 horses , most of whom , including Keen Ice , he had previously defeated . Espinoza had concerns at the starting gate when he noticed that his mount was already sweating , even though the weather was not particularly hot . While the horse led for much of the race , he was hard @-@ pressed throughout by Frosted , a change from Frosted 's previous stalking style , attributed to a rider change less than an hour before the race , when Jose Lezcano replaced an injured Joel Rosario , altering the " complexion " of the race . The unexpected tactics of Lezcano may have been decisive . Espinoza stated that he " knew he was in trouble " by the half @-@ mile pole because American Pharoah did not pull away from his rival and lacked his usual energy . Frosted challenged American Pharoah for the lead at the far turn , and the horses bumped several times , but American Pharoah dug in and fought back when Frosted took a very brief lead . While American Pharoah fended off the challenge from Frosted , Keen Ice was coming up on the outside , also under a new jockey , Javier Castellano . They overtook American Pharoah at the sixteenth pole , going on to defeat him by three @-@ quarters of a length . Once again the Saratoga track lived up to its reputation .

After the race , Espinoza said , " He 's OK ... Maybe it was just a little too much for him those three weeks , flying back and forth . He was running pretty comfortable there , but not like he used to . " Baffert was proud of the horse 's fighting effort , stating " It was just guts . " Though Zayat talked of retiring the horse , Baffert said , " We knew we were doing the impossible , shipping him back and forth . " The following day , Baffert said that American Pharoah was healthy and came out of the race in good shape . He said he had no regrets , stating , " I 'm glad I brought him . Racing needed something like this . He almost pulled it off . " Regarding Zayat 's talk of retiring the horse , Baffert said , " Mr. Zayat is a very emotional man . We were all pretty disappointed ... I know (Zayat) will be going back and forth ... He 's a sportsman for bringing him up here . " Five days later , Zayat announced that the horse would be kept in training with the goal to run in the Breeders ' Cup Classic , stating , " I believe there were a combination of factors that prevented American Pharoah from running his absolute best ... I have every confidence that he can run to his best again , and he deserves the chance to do so . "

= = = = Grand Slam = = = =

On October 31 , 2015 , American Pharoah became the first horse in history to complete the " Grand Slam " of American horse racing ? the Triple Crown plus the Breeders ' Cup Classic ? after winning the 2015 Breeders ' Cup Classic at Keeneland , setting a track record with a time of 2 : 00 @. @ 07 ; and breaking the old track record by more than five seconds . Challenging older horses such as Tonalist and Honor Code for the first time in his career , as well as previous rivals Keen Ice and Frosted , American Pharoah led from gate @-@ to @-@ wire , challenged only by Effinex , racing at 33 ? 1 odds , who placed 6 1 / 2 lengths behind the winner . Although American Pharoah 's decisive victory secured a \$ 2 @. @ 75 million check for his win , Zayat had long insisted his horse continued to race only for the benefit of the sport and the pleasure of fans ; " this horse owes us nothing " , his son Justin Zayat said on the eve of the race . Joe Drape of The New York Times described American Pharoah 's Keeneland win as " sealing his legacy as a horse for the ages " .

American Pharoah finished 2015 having set a single season record for race earnings , winning \$ 8 @, @ 288 @, @ 800 . He broke the previous single season record of \$ 7 @, @ 563 @, @ 535 set by Smarty Jones in 2004 , and that record had included a \$ 5 million bonus that is no longer awarded . His lifetime career earnings were \$ 8 @, @ 650 @, @ 300 . His Racing Post Rating (RPR) of 138 was the highest of any American horse since the Racing Post began the system in 1988 , topping that of previous U.S. record @-@ holders Ghostzapper and Cigar . Only two horses worldwide had ever achieved higher ratings , Frankel at 143 , and Dubai Millennium , with 139 , both doing so as more mature four @-@ year @-@ olds . He was rated the number one horse in the world in 2015 by

the World 's Best Racehorse Rankings .

= = = Awards = = =

At the conclusion of the season , American Pharoah 's accomplishments were named the top sports story of the year by the Associated Press . He or his connections also swept most of the year @-@ end achievement awards of the horse racing world . At the 2015 Eclipse Awards , he was the unanimous choice for American Horse of the Year and Champion Three @-@ Year @-@ Old Male Horse . His win marked only the second time that an American Horse of the Year had been unanimously selected , the first being John Henry in 1981 . He was named the winner of the Secretariat Vox Populi Award , and his Belmont win was declared the NTRA Moment of the Year . His connections were given the Big Sport of Turfdom Award , an honor for people who " enhance coverage of Thoroughbred racing through cooperation with media and racing publicists . " In addition , Baffert won the Eclipse Award for Outstanding Trainer and Zayat Stables took home the Eclipse awards for Outstanding Owner and Outstanding Breeder . Acknowledging owner Ahmed Zayat 's record of philanthropy to Jewish causes , the Jewish Daily Forward in November 2015 named American Pharoah its " plus one " on its annual list of 50 most influential American Jews . The major award that the horse did not win was the Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year . In spite of being the public 's overwhelming favorite , earning 47 % of the vote out of eleven candidates in online voting , topping the Kansas City Royals , Usain Bolt , and Novak Djokovic , the editors of the magazine gave the award to Serena Williams .

= = Retirement = =

On May 20 , 2015 , The New York Times reported that Zayat had sold breeding rights to the colt to the Ashford Stud , a division of Ireland 's Coolmore Stud , but retained control over the colt and his racing career . Before the announcement , offers for American Pharoah 's breeding rights reportedly exceeded \$ 20 million . After the Belmont , Forbes magazine reported that Zayat had actually sold the breeding rights to Ashford in late 2014 , long before he began his Triple Crown run , and that Zayat retained 100 % of the racing rights . Forbes went on to estimate that if American Pharoah stood for a \$ 100 @,@ 000 stud fee , he could be worth \$ 50 million . More conservative estimates placed his potential stud fee at \$ 75 @,@ 000 and his potential value at about \$ 25 to \$ 36 million . The New York Times said that breeding rights had been sold for \$ 13 @.@ 8 million : \$ 9 @.@ 8 million with an additional \$ 4 million incentive if American Pharoah won the Belmont Stakes . Zayat retained an undisclosed percentage in the colt 's breeding career , and explained that American Pharoah would retire from racing at the end of 2015 .

American Pharoah shipped to Ashford Stud on November 2 , 2015 , where he was housed in the stall once occupied by Grand Slam and pastured each morning next to Thunder Gulch , who , at 23 years old , was chosen as a neighbor due to his calming influence on the young , energetic stallion . Ashford Stud set his initial stud fee for 2016 at \$ 200 @,@ 000 , the second @-@ highest stud fee in the United States , behind that of the \$ 300 @,@ 000 fee for Tapit . Sire Pioneer of the Nile 's stud fee of \$ 60 @,@ 000 in 2015 was raised to \$ 125 @,@ 000 for 2016 .

American Pharoah officially began breeding mares in the spring of 2016 , and was first bred to Untouched Talent , an 11 @-@ year @-@ old mare owned by Coolmore , dam of Zayat 's Bodemeister ; within the first two months of his breeding career , American Pharoah had " about " 80 mares in foal after approximately 100 breeding sessions . Notably , he has retained his kind disposition even as a breeding stallion .

= = Statistics = =

= = Pedigree = =

American Pharoah 's pedigree includes horses adept at classic race distances on his sire 's side and endowed with speed on his dam 's side . Sire Pioneerof the Nile won the Santa Anita Derby and ran second in the 2009 Kentucky Derby , with all of his wins at distances of 1 1/16 miles or more . Prior to American Pharoah , Pioneerof the Nile had sired five other winners of stakes races of a mile or more in his relatively new career as a stallion . Trainer Bob Baffert observed that Pioneerof the Nile also raced with " a big , long stride " and had " that same springing motion as American Pharoah , whose acceleration is pretty remarkable . " He also praised Pioneerof the Nile 's dam , Star of Goshen : " She was a freaky filly , really , really fast . " To Baffert , American Pharoah 's bloodline is a source of fascination : " Every time I work him , I go back and look at the pedigree , and I go , What is going on here ? "

Pioneerof the Nile 's sire is Empire Maker , who won the 2003 Belmont Stakes . This makes American Pharoah a great @-@ grandson of Unbridled , who won the 1990 Kentucky Derby and the Breeders ' Cup Classic . He carries lines to Grade I champions Toussaud and Fappiano , and to the top @-@ rated European two- and three @-@ year @-@ old colt of 1983 and 1984 , El Gran Senor . He is also descended from Northern Dancer , Buckpasser , and Mr. Prospector ? whose descendants have won 43 Triple Crown races , all via Empire Maker . Ultimately , via Unbridled and his ancestors , American Pharoah 's sire line traces to the Darley Arabian .

Although Littleprincessemma , American Pharoah 's dam , is the half @-@ sister to graded stakes winner Storm Wolf , and to Misty Rosette , winner of the Old Hat Stakes in 2006 , her own undistinguished racing career , combined with the modest record of her sire , Yankee Gentleman , dampened initial public expectations for her second @-@ born foal . Yet American Pharoah 's maternal bloodline includes Storm Cat , a Grade I winner retired early due to injury , Northern Dancer , a Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes winner , and Terlingua , a celebrated broodmare , through whom he is a fifth @-@ generation descendant of Secretariat . He is also descended through his dam from Flying Paster , a Grade I champion who was 1978 California Horse of the Year , and Exclusive Native (sire of Affirmed and Genuine Risk) . Through both sire and dam , American Pharoah is a fifth- and sixth @-@ generation descendant of Bold Ruler , as well as a sixth- and seventh @-@ generation descendant of Tom Fool , one of the top thoroughbreds of the last century . His tail @-@ female line traces back to The Oldfield Mare , foaled circa 1695 .

Figuring prominently and repeatedly in American Pharoah 's deep lineage is an earlier generation of champions , including Nasrullah , Native Dancer , Nearco , Princequillo , War Admiral and Man o ' War .