

Larry Collmus on Preakness, Jim McKay and Maryland horse racing

✖ This weekend, I'll be covering my first Preakness race. The stories about it are legendary and it's a little intimidating to say the least. I mean, when else am I going to meet a centaur named Kegarus? That's a huge deal. A bigger deal is that Baltimore's own Larry Collmus will call his first Preakness race for NBC. He is the voice of the Triple Crown this year and you can read a story about him in this week's Catholic Review. As we chatted a week ago, he shared with me stories of growing up and going to his first Preakness, attending Mount St. Joseph High School in Irvington and meeting broadcasting pioneers such as Jim McKay. "No matter what race he was doing, he would always get some sort of mention of Maryland in there," Collmus said of the legendary television announcer. "He was a great advocate for Maryland." Horse racing was big in Maryland when Collmus was growing up in the 1970s and early 80s. Now, the sport has been on the ropes as states like surrounding West Virginia, Delaware and Pennsylvania have offered slots and gambling options. What does Collmus see for Maryland horse racing, which inspired his love of the sport? "I hope it's a bright future," he said. "Obviously it's hard right now. Maryland tracks are trying to compete. They have to stay ahead of the curve. Maryland was way above those tracks years ago. It completely dominated the circuit. It's a shame for the state."