



# Fit for a king

**Unleashed on dirt for first time,  
Animal Kingdom reigns in 137th Kentucky Derby**

BY JEFF LOWE

**B**ARRY IRWIN uses a broad map for his Team Valor International partnership, and his grand plan for the spring of 2011 was characteristically ambitious.

Team Valor had pulled off one of its biggest feats on November 6 when a homebred, Pluck, defied rational limits for trouble in a race and soared home to win the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G2) at Churchill Downs. Emboldened by that performance and an agreement around the same time that placed Team Valor's entire U.S. roster in the hands of trainer Graham Motion,

Irwin decided to aim Pluck at either the Poule d'Essai des Poulains (Fr-G1) (French Two Thousand Guineas) or Abu Dhabi Irish Two Thousand Guineas (Ire-G1).

The twist came when Motion worked Pluck with another Team Valor homebred, Animal Kingdom, at Palm Meadows Training Center in South Florida this winter.

Motion liked what he saw from Pluck, but he noticed something extra in Animal Kingdom, who won one of his two starts as a two-year-old.

"This one is special," Motion told Irwin.

Only extraordinary talent could explain what Animal

Kingdom turned out to be: the kind of colt to satisfy the zest to make history.

In one explosive stretch burst under John Velazquez, Animal Kingdom filled in the sizable void that developed throughout the winter and spring buildup to the 137th Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1) on May 7 at Churchill Downs. He did so in unprecedented fashion, succeeding on American racing's greatest stage in his first start on dirt.

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# 137 KENTUCKY DERBY



Patricia McQueen photo

## KENTUCKY DERBY from page 11

Animal Kingdom's journey was anything but a straight line, beginning with Irwin's choice to retire the German-bred mare Dalicia (Ger) in early 2007 and book her to Kingmambo, one of North America's top sires.

By the time Dalicia was ready to be bred, Kingmambo had been pulled from stud duty because of a deteriorating neck condition. Irwin owned breeding rights to Leroidesanimaux (Brz), the champion turf male of 2005, so he made an impromptu switch to send the Acatenango mare to the unproven second-year stallion at Stonewall Farm in Lexington.

After Dalicia foaled Animal Kingdom on March 20, 2008, at Craig

**Working relationship forged three years ago and solidified late last year between Team Valor's Barry Irwin (right) and trainer Graham Motion (left) leads to Kentucky Derby victory**



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Animal Kingdom explodes in the stretch to win by 2¾ lengths

and Holly Bandoroff's Denali Stud in Paris, Kentucky, the colt was hardly an obvious candidate to deliver on the lifetime dream that

painfully eluded Irwin in 1997 when Team Valor's Captain Bodgit finished a narrow second to Silver Charm as the favorite in the Kentucky Derby.

Team Valor's two other Derby starters, The Deputy (Ire) in 2000 and Visionaire in 2008, were soundly beaten.

"It kind of defies logic that a horse with a pedigree like this would actually be a dirt horse," Irwin said. "When I breed these things, I'm breeding to race, period. When you breed a German mare, you're not expecting a dirt horse."

### Average field size by decade (1950-2011)

A look at average field sizes by decade since the 1950s:

| Years     | Average field size |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 1950-1959 | 14.5               |
| 1960-1969 | 12.6               |
| 1970-1979 | 14.9               |
| 1980-1989 | 17.1               |
| 1990-1999 | 16.7               |
| 2000-2009 | 18.7               |
| 2010-2011 | 19.5               |

# Right place at right time, FINALLY

## John Velazquez wins his first Derby after unexpected circumstances

BY TOM LAW

**T**HE OFTEN high-pressure world for a leading jockey is all about timing.

Timing is key on the racetrack. The rider who can combine natural horsemanship with a precise and accurate internal clock does not have to scrounge around long for business.

Timing off the racetrack is also vital. It is often about being put on the right horse in the right spot or being available to ride other horses when your peers cannot.

John Velazquez has always seemed to have timing on his side both on and off the track. Blessed with supreme talent in the saddle and an equally balanced work ethic, Velazquez has seen his career skyrocket since coming to the U.S. after starting his riding career in 1989 in his native Puerto Rico. He has made one well-timed career move after another.

Velazquez, now 39, caught the attention of Angel Cordero Jr. early in his career and would benefit from the mentoring of the Racing Hall of Fame jockey when he came to New York in 1990. Cordero retired in 1992, but serves to this day as both Velazquez's mentor and agent.

A few years into his stint in New York, Ve-

lazquez became associated with Todd Pletcher, first when that trainer was an assistant for D. Wayne Lukas and later when he went out on his own in the mid-1990s. The working relationship between Pletcher and Velazquez is one of the most successful in racing history and the two teamed to win the 2007 Belmont Stakes (G1) with Rags to Riches.

Velazquez was not Rags to Riches' regular rider leading up to the 2007 Triple Crown and wound up on the filly when Garrett Gomez could not get out of a commitment to ride Hard Spun. A similar series of events led to Velazquez landing what turned into the winning mount in the 2011 Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1) on Animal Kingdom.

Originally named to ride Uncle Mo, Velazquez was dealt a tough setback in America's most prestigious race for the third consecutive year when last year's champion two-year-old male came out of the race the day before the event when Pletcher and owner Mike Repole determined he was not physically ready for the demands of the Derby. Velazquez was the rider of two other highly regarded colts, Quality Road and Eskendereya, who were withdrawn from the Derby in 2009 and 2010, respectively, late in the process.

Velazquez did not fret over losing those opportunities and he wound up in the right place at the right time when the owners of Animal Kingdom opted to replace Robby Albarado when that jockey was unable to ride the day

**Date of birth:** November 24, 1971  
**Birthplace:** Carolina, Puerto Rico  
**Residence:** West Hempstead, New York  
**Family:** Wife Leona; children Lerina and Michael Patrick  
**Career highlights:** Finalist for induction into Racing Hall of Fame, 2011; Eclipse Awards as outstanding jockey, 2004 and 2005; George Woolf Memorial Jockey Award, 2009; inducted into Puerto Rico Horse Racing Hall of Fame, 2006; Bill Shoemaker Award for performance by a jockey in the Breeders' Cup, 2004; winner of 21 meet titles in New York, including four at Saratoga Race Course; winner of nine Breeders' Cup races; chairman, Jockeys' Guild; leading active jockey by total purse earnings, with more than \$240-million through 2010, putting him fourth on the all-time list  
**Derby mounts (finish):** 1996 Built for Pleasure (19th), 1998 Basic Trainee (15th), 1999 Three Ring (19th), 2000 More Than Ready (fourth), 2001 Invisible Ink (second), 2002 Saarland (tenth), 2004 Pollard's Vision (17th), 2005 Bandini (19th), 2007 Circular Quay (sixth), 2008 Cowboy Cal (ninth), 2009 Mr. Hot Stuff (15th), 2010 Devil May Care (tenth), 2011 Animal Kingdom (1st)

### John Velazquez



Matt Goins photo

Picks up the winning Derby mount the day before the race

before the Derby after suffering serious facial injuries in a post-parade incident on May 4. The players in his drama chalk it up to being part of the business.

"I guess it was meant to be," Velazquez said. "It had to happen the way it happened today."

"In this business, it's a roller coaster. Basically I've been on the other end as well. I've

been hurt and I've seen the horses I've been riding [winning with other jockeys]. I've seen a lot. But I told Robby, 'Don't worry, if we win this race I'm going to take care of you.' "

Tom Law is managing editor of THOROUGHBREDTIMES.



The group of clients who bred Animal Kingdom under the Team Valor banner elected to sell him at the 2009 Keeneland September yearling sale, and Irwin signed the ticket himself. He formed another partnership to race the colt, and Randy Bradshaw performed the breaking and early training of Animal Kingdom at the Adena Springs South training facility in Williston, Florida. Bradshaw was surprised by what he saw on dirt from Animal Kingdom and another Team Valor homebred by Leroidesanimaux named Badleroibrown.

"If they were by A.P. Indy, you'd feel more confident about it, but they both looked like they handled the dirt great," Bradshaw said. "It was not what you would expect just looking at the pedigree."

#### Kentucky Derby winners 1970-2011

| Year | Winner              | Final time     | Track  |
|------|---------------------|----------------|--------|
| 2011 | Animal Kingdom      | 2:02.04        | fast   |
| 2010 | Super Saver         | 2:04.45        | sloppy |
| 2009 | Mine That Bird      | 2:02.66        | sloppy |
| 2008 | Big Brown           | 2:01.82        | fast   |
| 2007 | Street Sense        | 2:02.17        | fast   |
| 2006 | Barbaro             | 2:01.36        | fast   |
| 2005 | Giacomo             | 2:02.75        | fast   |
| 2004 | Smarty Jones        | 2:04.06        | sloppy |
| 2003 | Funny Cide          | 2:01.19        | fast   |
| 2002 | War Emblem          | 2:01.13        | fast   |
| 2001 | Monarchos           | 1:59.97        | fast   |
| 2000 | Fusaichi Pegasus    | 2:01.12        | fast   |
| 1999 | Charismatic         | 2:03.29        | fast   |
| 1998 | Real Quiet          | 2:02.38        | fast   |
| 1997 | Silver Charm        | 2:02.44        | fast   |
| 1996 | Grindstone          | 2:01.06        | fast   |
| 1995 | Thunder Gulch       | 2:01.27        | fast   |
| 1994 | Go for Gin          | 2:03.72        | sloppy |
| 1993 | Sea Hero            | 2:02.42        | fast   |
| 1992 | Lil E. Tee          | 2:03.04        | fast   |
| 1991 | Strike the Gold     | 2:03.08        | fast   |
| 1990 | Unbridled           | 2:02           | good   |
| 1989 | Sunday Silence      | 2:05           | muddy  |
| 1988 | Winning Colors      | 2:02%          | fast   |
| 1987 | Alysheba            | 2:03%          | fast   |
| 1986 | Ferdinand           | 2:02%          | fast   |
| 1985 | Spend a Buck        | 2:00%          | fast   |
| 1984 | Swale               | 2:02%          | fast   |
| 1983 | Sunny's Halo        | 2:02%          | fast   |
| 1982 | Gato Del Sol        | 2:02%          | fast   |
| 1981 | Pleasant Colony     | 2:02           | fast   |
| 1980 | Genuine Risk        | 2:02           | fast   |
| 1979 | Spectacular Bid     | 2:02%          | fast   |
| 1978 | <b>AFFIRMED</b>     | 2:01%          | fast   |
| 1977 | <b>SEATTLE SLEW</b> | 2:02%          | fast   |
| 1976 | Bold Forbes         | 2:01%          | fast   |
| 1975 | Foolish Pleasure    | 2:02           | fast   |
| 1974 | Cannonade           | 2:04           | fast   |
| 1973 | <b>SECRETARIAT</b>  | <b>1:59%</b> † | fast   |
| 1972 | Riva Ridge          | 2:01%          | fast   |
| 1971 | Canonero II         | 2:03%          | fast   |
| 1970 | Dust Commander      | 2:03%          | good   |

Triple Crown winners denoted in bold  
† Track Record

Irwin sent Animal Kingdom to trainer Wayne Catalano at Arlington Park last summer, and the colt was entered on turf for his first start on September 18, but rain forced the race to the main track, which is Polytrack, in the first of what turned out to be a string of fortuitous twists leading to the Derby.

Going 1 $\frac{1}{16}$  miles, Animal Kingdom finished a strong second to Willcox Inn, who went on to finish third in both the Dixiana Breeders' Futurity (G1) at Keeneland Race Course and the Juvenile Turf.

The big effort on Polytrack at Arlington led to a second maiden attempt on Polytrack at Keeneland on October 23, and Animal Kingdom responded with an au-

The victorious team and their families celebrate Animal Kingdom's victory



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# 137 KENTUCKY DERBY



John Velazquez guides Animal Kingdom (second from left) well to the outside and takes aim at Nehro, Comma to the Top, and Shackelford with a quarter-mile to run

## KENTUCKY DERBY

from page 13  
 thoritative victory under Robby Albarado. Immediately, Irwin began charting a course to bring the colt back to Keeneland for the

Toyota Blue Grass Stakes (G1) on April 16.

### Classics preparations

Animal Kingdom returned to Bradshaw in early November for

about a month of downtime, while Irwin pulled the trigger on the move to a single trainer for Team Valor's 30 horses in the U.S. He had approached Motion about the role in early 2010, but was turned down. When he made the pitch again shortly before the Breeders' Cup, Motion accepted, with the stipulation that he could continue to train for other clients.

Other than Animal Kingdom's obvious proclivity for distances beyond a mile, Motion was not sure what kind of horse he would be as a three-year-old. The trainer breezed the colt most in company with Pluck and exclusively on turf at Palm Meadows, the venue where he made the strong first impression.

Motion and Irwin picked a one-mile optional claiming race on grass

### Winning Derby post positions

Winning Derby post positions since 1900:

| Post | Winners | Post | Winners |
|------|---------|------|---------|
| 1    | 12      | 11   | 3       |
| 2    | 9       | 12   | 3       |
| 3    | 8       | 13   | 4       |
| 4    | 11      | 14   | 2       |
| 5    | 12      | 15   | 3       |
| 6    | 6       | 16   | 4       |
| 7    | 8       | 17   | 0       |
| 8    | 10      | 18   | 1       |
| 9    | 4       | 19   | 0       |
| 10   | 10      | 20   | 2       |

on March 3 at Gulfstream Park for Animal Kingdom's return, and he kicked in with a wide rally to finish second by a head to Powhatan County, who got loose on the lead on a speed-friendly course.

The plan called for two preps for

the Blue Grass, with the Gulfstream race as a bridge to the listed Rushaway Stakes on March 26 on Polytrack at Turfway Park, but a flip-flop became necessary when another Team Valor three-year-old, Crimson China, lacked enough earnings to crack the full field for the Vinery Racing Spiral Stakes (G3) on the same card.

Animal Kingdom had enough earnings and more than enough ability for the \$500,000 Spiral. He produced a strong rally from last under Alan Garcia and opened up in the stretch to win by 2 3/4 lengths.

The performance quickly prompted Motion and Irwin to upgrade their primary target to the Kentucky Derby rather than the Blue Grass, and the conservative trainer successfully lobbied for the

### ELEVENTH RACE

1 1/2 MILES. (159<sup>th</sup>) 137<sup>TH</sup> RUNNING OF THE KENTUCKY DERBY. Grade I. Purse \$2,000,000 FOR THREE-YEAR-OLDS WITH AN ENTRY FEE OF \$25,000 EACH AND A STARTING FEE OF \$25,000 EACH. Weight: 126 lbs.

Churchill MAY 7, 2011

Value of Race: \$2,171,800 Winner \$1,411,800; second \$400,000; third \$200,000; fourth \$100,000; fifth \$60,000. Mutuel Pool \$46,126,231.00 Exacta Pool \$20,544,202.00 Trifecta Pool \$24,961,318.00 Superfecta Pool \$9,937,386.00 Super High Five Pool \$272,178.00

| Last Raced     | Horse              | M/Equ. | A. | Wt. | PP  | 1/4              | 1/2              | 3/4              | 1                | Str              | Fin              | Jockey            | Odds \$1       |       |
|----------------|--------------------|--------|----|-----|-----|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|
| 26Mar11 10TP1  | Animal Kingdom     | L      | b  | 3   | 126 | 16               | 12 <sup>2</sup>  | 12 <sup>nd</sup> | 10 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 12 <sup>3/4</sup> | Velazquez J R  | 20.90 |
| 16Apr11 110P2  | Nehro              | L      | 3  | 126 | 18  | 61               | 61               | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 2 <sup>1/2</sup> | 2 <sup>1/2</sup> | Nakatani C S      | 8.50           |       |
| 26Mar11 10FG3  | Mucho Macho Man    | L      | 3  | 126 | 13  | 7 1/2            | 8 1/2            | 8 1/2            | 6 1/2            | 4 <sup>3</sup>   | 3 <sup>3</sup>   | Maragh R          | 9.30           |       |
| 3Apr11 10GP2   | Shackelford        | L      | 3  | 126 | 14  | 11               | 11 1/2           | 11               | 1 1/2            | 11               | 4 1/2            | Castanon J L      | 23.10          |       |
| 26Mar11 4Mey2  | Master of Hounds   | L      | 3  | 126 | 11  | 131              | 154              | 155              | 12 <sup>nd</sup> | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Gomez G K         | 16.80          |       |
| 16Apr11 9Kee9  | Santiva            | L      | 3  | 126 | 12  | 11 <sup>nd</sup> | 11 1/2           | 11 1/2           | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 8 1/2            | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Bridgmohan S X    | 34.70          |       |
| 16Apr11 9Kee1  | Brilliant Speed    | L      | 3  | 126 | 2   | 16 <sup>th</sup> | 14 <sup>th</sup> | 14 <sup>th</sup> | 10 <sup>2</sup>  | 9 1/2            | 7 <sup>2</sup>   | Rosario J         | 27.90          |       |
| 3Apr11 10GP7   | Dialed In          | L      | 3  | 126 | 8   | 19               | 19               | 19               | 15 <sup>th</sup> | 13 1/2           | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Leparoux J R      | 5.20           |       |
| 26Mar11 10FG1  | Pants On Fire      | L      | 3  | 126 | 7   | 4 1/2            | 5 1/2            | 41               | 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 51               | 92 3/4           | Napravnik R       | 8.10           |       |
| 27Mar11 12Sun1 | Twice the Appeal   | L      | b  | 3   | 126 | 3                | 151              | 161              | 183              | 19               | 17 1/2           | 10 <sup>th</sup>  | Borel C H      | 11.90 |
| 3Apr11 10GP5   | Soldat             | L      | 3  | 126 | 17  | 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 9 1/2            | 10 1/2           | 11 1/2           | Garcia Alan       | 11.90          |       |
| 3Apr11 10GP7   | Stay Thirsty       | L      | 3  | 126 | 4   | 10 1/2           | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 111              | 12 1/2           | 12 3/4           | Dominguez R A     | 17.20          |       |
| 23Apr11 9Kee1  | Derby Kitten       | L      | b  | 3   | 126 | 9                | 18 1/2           | 18 3/4           | 16 <sup>th</sup> | 17 <sup>th</sup> | 13 1/2           | Castellano J J    | 36.30          |       |
| 26Mar11 10TP2  | Decisive Moment    | L      | 3  | 126 | 5   | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 3 1/2            | 3 1/2            | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 11               | 141              | Clark K D         | 39.30          |       |
| 16Apr11 110P1  | Archarcharch       | L      | b  | 3   | 126 | 1                | 17 1/2           | 17 1/2           | 17 1/2           | 181              | 183              | 151               | Court J K      | 12.50 |
| 9Apr11 10SA1   | Midnight Interlude | L      | b  | 3   | 126 | 15               | 9 <sup>th</sup>  | 9 1/2            | 9 <sup>th</sup>  | 132              | 15 <sup>th</sup> | 16 1/2            | Espinoza V     | 9.60  |
| 16Apr11 9Kee2  | Twinspired         | L      | 3  | 126 | 10  | 14 1/2           | 131              | 122              | 142              | 14 <sup>th</sup> | 17 3/4           | Smith M E         | 32.90          |       |
| 9Apr11 7Haw6   | Watch Me Go        | L      | b  | 3   | 126 | 19               | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 10 1/2           | 13 <sup>th</sup> | 16 1/2           | 19               | 18 1/2            | Bejarano R     | 33.60 |
| 9Apr11 10SA2   | Comma to the Top   | L      | b  | f   | 3   | 126              | 6                | 21               | 2 1/2            | 32               | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 19                | Valenzuela P A | 35.80 |

OFF AT 6:31 Start Good For All But WATCH ME GO. Won driving. Track fast.  
 TIME :231, :483, 1:132, 1:372, 2:02 (:23.24, :48.63, 1:13.40, 1:37.49, 2:02.04)  
 16-ANIMAL KINGDOM..... 43.80 19.60 13.00  
 19-NEHRO..... 8.80 6.40  
 13-MUCHO MACHO MAN..... 7.00

\$2 Mutuel Prices:  
 \$2 EXACTA 16-19 PAID \$329.80 \$2 TRIFECTA 16-19-13 PAID \$3,952.40  
 \$2 SUPERFACTA 16-19-13-14 PAID \$48,126.00 \$1 SUPER HIGH FIVE NO WINNING TICKETS, CARRYOVER \$220,430.00

Ch. c. (Mar), by Leroidesanimaux-Brz - Dalia-Ger, by Acatenango-Ger. Trainer Motion H Graham. Bred by Team Valor (Ky).

ANIMAL KINGDOM reserved for a half-mile, advanced four wide between rivals with three furlongs to go, came out six wide, made a good run with a furlong to go, took over in the final furlong, and slowly increased lead while drifting out late. NEHRO within striking distance four or five wide the opening half mile, moved up with three furlongs to go, challenged outside nearing the stretch, gained a short lead momentarily entering the stretch, could not keep pace with SHACKLEFORD when that one surged clear, but responded late to be up for the place. MUCHO MACHO MAN relaxed three wide the opening half-mile while racing in traffic, advanced in that path with three furlongs to go, came out five wide into the stretch, moved back in a bit in midstretch, drifted out inside the final furlong, was straightened, and finished willingly. SHACKLEFORD set the pace off the rail, repulsed bids entering the stretch, spurred to a clear lead, responded when challenged, and held on well. MASTER OF HOUNDS picked up his pace when asked with three furlongs to go, worked his way through traffic through midstretch, angled to the rail, and finished with good energy. SANTIVA gradually made progress off the rail on second turn, came out four wide, and was gaining late while unable to seriously threaten. BRILLIANT SPEED made a run five wide with less than three furlongs to go, came out eight wide into the stretch, and made a good late bid on the outside. DIALED IN squeezed back at start, was far back for seven furlongs while unhurried, swung to the outside for the drive, and made a belated bid. PANTS ON FIRE moved out to the four path on the second turn while maintaining position, held on well to the stretch, and weakened. TWICE THE APPEAL swung seven wide entering the stretch and passed tiring rivals. SOLDAT stayed on well for seven furlongs, came out five wide leaving the second turn, and tired. STAY THIRSTY brushed at start, angled out a bit for the drive, and gave way. DERBY KITTEN broke inward, lacked speed, steadied behind DECISIVE MOMENT nearing the sixteenth marker, and could not threaten thereafter. DECISIVE MOMENT stalked the pace, held on well to the final quarter, and gave way. ARCHARCHARCH steadied early, had his saddle slip entering the backstretch, never a factor, pulled up lame, vanned off. MIDNIGHT INTERLUDE failed to respond when ridden with three furlongs to go. TWINSPIRED steadied briefly with three furlongs to go and gave way. WATCH ME GO lost footing at start, faded. COMMA TO THE TOP angled out entering the first turn when in closest attendance to the pace, challenged three wide, but gave way readily in the final furlong.



Two-time Derby winner Nick Zito was confident in eventual post-time favorite Dialed In during the week leading up to the race but Mineshaft colt suffers slightly troubled trip when shuffled back to last at the start en route to eighth-place finish





Shigeki Kikkawa photo

Jockey Robby Albarado, who later tells reporters “you may be looking at a Derby winner there, boys,” breezes Animal Kingdom six furlongs in 1:13 a week before the race. Albarado suffers facial injuries in post-parade incident three days before the Derby and loses mount to John Velazquez

chestnut colt to head straight to the classic.

### Contenders drop out

The decision came in the thick of a tumultuous prep season that extended to Pluck, who was withdrawn from a European trip when sidelined with cannon bone issues after faring poorly in two starts.

Uncle Mo began the year as a potential superstar, based on his three dominant wins as a two-year-old, and he added to his imposing reputation with an easy victory in the Timely Writer Stakes on March 12 at Gulfstream.

### Longest-priced Kentucky Derby favorites

| Year | Horse                                       | Odds      | Finish |
|------|---|-----------|--------|
| 2010 | Lookin At Lucky                             | 6.30-to-1 | 6th    |
| 2002 | Harlan's Holiday                            | 6-to-1    | 7th    |
| 2006 | Sweetnorthernsaint                          | 5.50-to-1 | 7th    |
| 2011 | Dialed In                                   | 5.20-to-1 | 8th    |
| 2007 | Street Sense                                | 4.90-to-1 | 1st    |
| 1999 | Excellent Meeting-General Challenge (entry) | 4.80-to-1 | 5th    |
|      |   |           | 11th   |

The dominoes tumbled from there.

Dialed In enhanced his quick rise with a victory in the Florida Derby (G1) on April 3 in his fourth career start, but Soldat and Stay Thirsty fizzled after winning the Fasig-Tipton Fountain of Youth Stakes (G2) and Gotham Stakes (G3), respectively.

The next week, San Felipe Stakes (G2) winner Premier Pegasus and Norfolk Stakes (G1) winner Jaycito were entered in the Santa Anita Derby (G1) but both were scratched with injuries that eventually knocked them out of the Kentucky Derby.

To Honor and Serve, regarded by many as the top threat to Uncle Mo at the start of the year, joined the list of defections on April 8 with a suspensory injury.

The crucial question emerged the next day when Uncle Mo came up empty in the stretch of the Resorts World New York Casino Wood Memorial Stakes (G1) at Aqueduct, finishing

third at 1-to-10 odds.

The winner, at 8.70-to-1, was Toby's Corner, trained by Motion for another client, Dianne Cotter, who beat much greater odds in breeding the colt from her roster of only a handful of broodmares.

Dialed In and Arkansas Derby (G1) winner Archarcharch were the only horses to reach the Derby with two prep wins in stakes, and the hits continued throughout Derby week.

Animal Kingdom cleared up his status with a sharp six-furlong workout on April 30 at Churchill. He was scheduled for two dirt drills leading into the Derby, but record rainfall in the area kept him on the all-weather Polytrack surface at Keeneland until April 28.

Garcia stuck with Soldat as his Derby mount, so Motion and Irwin turned to Albarado, who rode Animal Kingdom in his only victory.

Albarado guided the colt through the final workout in 1:13 in company with stablemate Meistersinger and beamed when he dismounted back at the barn.

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# Motion weathers range of EMOTIONS

BY TERESA GENARO

**A**LITTLE more than a month ago, trainer Graham Motion was entertaining few thoughts about taking a horse to the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1). His promising dirt three-year-old Toby's Corner had lost the Gotham Stakes (G3) in early March after winning the Whirlaway Stakes in February; Animal Kingdom had only a maiden win to his credit, that coming on the Polytrack surface at Keeneland Race Course last fall.

Motion admitted on the evening of May 7 that “I was not thinking Derby with this horse.”

This horse was Animal Kingdom and it all changed on March 26 when the colt decisively won the Vinery Spiral Stakes (G3) over Turfway Park's Polytrack. Two weeks later, Toby's Corner pulled a huge upset in the Resorts World New York Casino Wood Memorial Stakes (G1), defeating early Derby favorite Uncle Mo.

Suddenly, Toby's Corner's Derby future looked especially bright, given his rebound from a bad prep race, and Motion was in the enviable position of having two horses on the Derby trail. That trail would not, however, be a smooth one.

Motion and Barry Irwin, chief executive officer of Team Valor International, which owns Animal Kingdom, cautiously began to plot out a course to the Derby. Given that the colt's only two wins had come over synthetics, they determined that he would start only if he worked well twice over the dirt at Churchill Downs.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature intervened by

walloping the Louisville area with rain in the weeks before the Derby, and Animal Kingdom was able to get in only one workout there, on April 30. Fortunately, that workout was good enough to convince them that Animal Kingdom could run on dirt. Irwin characterized it as a “real eye-opener.”

“It's what gave us the confidence to go ahead,” he said.

Meanwhile, Toby's Corner was getting all the buzz, while Animal Kingdom's chances in the Derby were largely disregarded given the lightness of his racing schedule and the surface over which his wins had come. Toby's Corner stayed at Fair Hill Training Center to train, with Motion intending to ship him to Louisville the week before the race, in order to get in one workout over the track.

And two days after Animal Kingdom's impressive work, Motion's plans abruptly changed again, this time less than a week before the Derby.

### Graham Motion

**Date of birth:** May 22, 1964  
**Birthplace:** Cambridge, England  
**Residence:** Fair Hill, Maryland  
**Family:** Wife Anita; children Jane and Marcus

**Career highlights:** Saddled Better Talk Now to victory in 2004 John Deere Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) and Shared Account to victory in 2010 Emirates Airline Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf (G1); other major stakes winners trained include Film Maker, Bullsbay, Olaya, Rosinka (Ire), T. D. Vance; former assistant to Racing Hall of Famer Jonathan Sheppard

**Kentucky Derby starters (finish):** 1998 Chilito (11th), 2008 Adriano (19th), Animal Kingdom (1st)

**Wins first Kentucky Derby with his third starter in American classic**



PhotosByZ.com/THOROUGHBREDTIMES

“After I worked Toby's Corner last Sunday,” Motion said, “I felt about as good as I'd felt for a long time about anything. I walked in the barn Monday morning—I'd even had a good night's sleep, finally—and [assistant trainer] Adrian [Rolls] told me that the horse wasn't right, I about fell over. That's about as tough a blow as you can get the week of the Derby.”

Motion admitted he came to Louisville with a sense of disappointment, even though he had starters in both the Kentucky Oaks (G1) and the Derby and even though he did not consider An-

imal Kingdom his “second-tier” Derby horse.

The disappointment turned to jubilation late in the afternoon, when Motion watched Animal Kingdom charge down Churchill Downs' long stretch to win America's most famous race.

“It has,” he said, in a characteristic bit of understatement, “been an extraordinary week.”

Teresa Genaro is a New York correspondent of THOROUGHBRED TIMES.



# Connections hope to solve mystery of Uncle Mo's ailment

THE CONNECTIONS of Uncle Mo started Kentucky Derby week with dreams of winning the American classic but ended the week with deep concerns about the health of the 2010 champion two-year-old male.

Owner Mike Repole said he was highly concerned about last year's Grey Goose Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1) winner when he announced the day before the Derby that Uncle Mo would be scratched. He said expert veterinarians are baffled by the ailment that caused Uncle Mo to lose his appetite and energy level.

"That's what makes me nervous," Repole said. "There are a lot of injuries to a horse that you can figure out. And Todd Pletcher's so good at what he does, I know he's upset that we can't figure this out. We've flown experts in, we've had top vets, we've talked to people in New York and California.

"Now we're really worried about the horse—really worried. We're not worried about his racing; we're worried about the horse."

Uncle Mo won his first four career starts before finishing third in the Resorts World New York Casino Wood Memorial Stakes (G1). After the race he was diagnosed with gastrointestinal problems. While he has not raced since that April 9 start, he has been

in training. He even exercised on the Churchill main track on the morning he was scratched.

Pletcher told Repole on the evening of May 5 that he did not want to start Uncle Mo, and a team of veterinarians also advised against it. After hearing those opinions, Repole said making the decision not to run was easy.

The scratch reduced the Derby field to 19 starters—one less than the maximum—for the second time in three years. The Derby does not allow an also-eligible list, which would have cleared the way for excluded entry Sway Away to run. Churchill Downs officials said they look at the issue of an also-eligible list each year.

"The stumbling block has been the early wagering on Friday," said Churchill spokesman John Asher, noting that adding a horse to the field after a Friday scratch could be confusing. Asher also noted that the Derby draws many less-experienced bettors and also-eligible entries could confuse them.

Asher said Churchill officials look at the process every year and if they can come up with a plan to iron out some of the concerns, an also-eligible list could be added in future years.

Pletcher said Uncle Mo will stay in Kentucky for a while and



Patricia McQueen photo

Uncle Mo trains at Churchill Downs in weeks leading up to Kentucky Derby but is withdrawn the day before the race with mysterious ailment his connections say saps his energy and curbs his appetite

was taken to WinStar Farm in Versailles on May 9 for continued treatment. The plan would then be to move him to Belmont Park. Pletcher said no racing plans would be made until the ailment is fully diagnosed.

Pletcher stopped short of saying Uncle Mo is out of training, but the Preakness (G1) and Belmont (G1) Stakes seem unlikely. Repole is hoping for a campaign built toward the Travers Stakes (G1) this summer and the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) this fall.

"Right now we have no race plans, period," Pletcher said. "Until we know what's wrong with him, no race plans."—Frank Angst

## KENTUCKY DERBY

from page 17

"You may be looking at a Derby winner there, boys," Albarado said.

The Derby Festival Marathon that snarls traffic in and around Churchill on the Saturday before the Derby almost prevented Irwin and his wife, Kathleen, from seeing any of the crucial breeze. As it was, they saw only a portion.

Motion filled them in on the work in about as enthusiastic as he could be in his quiet, deliberative manner.

"I don't think it could have gone any better," Motion said.

Motion returned home that night to oversee Toby's Corner's last workout on May 1 at Fair Hill Train-

ing Center in Elkton, Maryland. Motion said he even got a good night's sleep, which had been a rarity with two colts approaching the Derby.

When Motion stepped into the barn on May 2, assistant trainer Adrian Rolls delivered the equivalent of a nightmare, informing him that Toby's Corner was lame behind. Although no injury was pinpointed, the colt did not show improvement by the next morning, so Motion withdrew him from consideration for the Derby.

### Down to one

Motion returned to Louisville that afternoon to focus on Animal Kingdom.

"That's about as tough a blow as you can get the week of the Derby," Motion said. "It was an odd feeling ... to come [to Churchill] with what I felt was a very live horse in the Derby but still to have a sense of disappointment."

The twists and turns were not finished. Albarado broke his nose in a post-parade accident on May 4 at Churchill. When he took off his mounts on May 5-6, Irwin and Motion decided they needed to find a new rider.

The timing was remarkable, concurrent with ongoing drama over the status of Uncle Mo.

The champion two-year-old male of 2010 came out of his shocking Wood Memorial defeat with a gastrointestinal tract infection and continued in full training while he underwent treatment. With the progressive withdrawal of medication, Uncle Mo's condition declined, and he was finally withdrawn the morning before the Derby after being installed as the 9-to-2 second choice behind Dialed In, the morning-line favorite at 4-to-1.

Uncle Mo's defection left Velazquez, the leading active jockey by career purse earnings and a finalist this year for induction into the Racing Hall of Fame, without a horse in the Derby, and Motion and Irwin picked him up within a few hours to replace Albarado.

Winless in 12 previous Derby tries, Velazquez had recent experience that had not been kind. He lost expected favorites Quality Road and Eskendereya to injuries the week before the race in 2009 and 2010, respectively, and went into 2011 as the rider of both Uncle Mo and To Honor and Serve.

Motion simply emphasized that Velazquez should try to keep Animal Kingdom out of trouble in the field of 19 on the first fast track for the Derby since 2008. Dismissed at 30-to-1 on Mike Battaglia's morn-

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jockeys, owners, and breeders of Triple Crown hopefuls; read previews and results of major prep races; and view a weekly poll of the leading contenders.

| Date | Race  | Trk | Dist.    | Time    | First three finishers   |
|------|---|-----|----------|---------|---|
| 1/1  | Count Fleet S.                                      | Aqu | 1m70y    | 1:42.42 | <b>MONZON, J J's Lucky Train, Pants On Fire</b>                 |
| 1/1  | Tropical Park Derby                                 | Crc | 1/4mT    | 1:49.46 | <b>KING CONGIE, Private Prize, Swift Warrior</b>                |
| 1/8  | Spectacular Bid S.                                  | GP  | 6f       | 1:11.13 | <b>DETERMINATO, Leave of Absence, Cane Garden Baby</b>          |
| 1/14 | Jean Lafitte S.                                     | DeD | 1m       | 1:38.91 | <b>DECISIVE MOMENT, Su Casa G Casa, Expecting Cash</b>          |
| 1/15 | California Derby                                    | GG  | 1/4mAW   | 1:44.56 | <b>POSITIVE RESPONSE, Jakesam, Bluegrass Reward</b>             |
| 1/15 | Sham S. (G3)  | SA  | 1/4m     | 1:40.38 | <b>TAPIZAR, Clubhouse Ride, Anthony's Cross</b>                 |
| 1/17 | Jimmy Winkfield S.                                  | Aqu | 6f       | 1:08.33 | <b>FORT HUGHES, Royal Currier, Rift</b>                         |
| 1/17 | San Pedro S.  | SA  | 6/16     | 1:15.23 | <b>INDIAN WINTER, City Cool, Sinai</b>                          |
| 1/17 | Smarty Jones S.                                     | OP  | 1m       | 1:43.07 | <b>CALEB'S POSSE, Dreamin' the Win, Bluegrass Bull</b>          |
| 1/22 | Lecomte S. (G3)                                     | FG  | 1m40y    | 1:40.97 | <b>WILKINSON, Pants On Fire, Action Ready</b>                   |
| 1/29 | Dancing Count S.                                    | Lrl | 6f       | 1:11.76 | <b>WICKED THUNDER, Diski Dance, Afternoon Action</b>            |
| 1/30 | Holy Bull S. (G3)                                   | GP  | 1m       | 1:35.19 | <b>DIALED IN, Sweet Ducky, Gourmet Dinner</b>                   |
| 2/5  | WEBN S.   | TP  | 1mAW     | 1:41.57 | <b>TWINSPIRED, R Fast Cat, Taptowne</b>                         |
| 2/5  | Whirlaway S.  | Aqu | 1/4m     | 1:45.66 | <b>TOBY'S CORNER, J J's Lucky Train, Preachin' to the Devil</b> |
| 2/6  | Hallandale Beach S.                                 | GP  | 1/4mT    | 1:41.30 | <b>MASTER DUNKER, Brilliant Speed, King Congie</b>              |
| 2/12 | El Camino Real Derby (G3)                           | GG  | 1/4mAW   | 1:50.45 | <b>SILVER MEDALLION, Jakesam, Positive Response</b>             |
| 2/12 | Robert B. Lewis S. (G2)                             | SA  | 1/4m     | 1:48.63 | <b>ANTHONY'S CROSS, Riveting Reason, Quail Hill</b>             |
| 2/12 | Sam F. Davis S. (G3)                                | Tam | 1/4m     | 1:45.07 | <b>BRETHREN, Too Experience, Watch Me Go</b>                    |
| 2/19 | Risen Star S. (G2)                                  | FG  | 1/4m     | 1:43.98 | <b>MUCHO MACHO MAN, Santiva, Rogue Romance</b>                  |
| 2/20 | San Vicente S. (G2)                                 | SA  | 7f       | 1:20.34 | <b>THE FACTOR, Sway Away, Premier Pegasus</b>                   |
| 2/21 | Southwest S. (G3)                                   | OP  | 1m       | 1:38.23 | <b>ARCHARCHARCH, J P's Gusto, Elite Alex</b>                    |
| 2/26 | Borderland Derby                                    | Sun | 1/4m     | 1:45.06 | <b>FUSA CODE, Behold de Buy, Special Kid</b>                    |
| 2/26 | Fasig-Tipton Fountain of Youth S. (G2)              | GP  | 1/4m     | 1:50.23 | <b>SOLDAT, Gourmet Dinner, To Honor and Serve</b>               |
| 2/26 | Hutcheson S. (G2)                                   | GP  | 7f       | 1:22.03 | <b>FLASHPOINT, Travelin Man, Little Drama</b>                   |
| 2/26 | Miracle Wood S.                                     | Lrl | 7f       | 1:23.60 | <b>J J'S LUCKY TRAIN, Bandbox, Wicked Thunder</b>               |
| 2/26 | Turf Paradise Derby                                 | TuP | 1/4m     | 1:41.99 | <b>BEER MEISTER, Indian Winter, Mr Artistic M D</b>             |
| 3/5  | Fred "Cappy" Capossella S.                          | Aqu | 6f       | 1:10.61 | <b>SENSATIONAL SLAM, Diski Dance, Vengeful Wildcat</b>          |
| 3/5  | Gotham S. (G3)                                      | Aqu | 1/4m     | 1:44.78 | <b>STAY THIRSTY, Norman Asbjornson, Toby's Corner</b>           |
| 3/5  | John Battaglia Memorial S.                          | TP  | 1/4mAW   | 1:45.13 | <b>POSITIVE RESPONSE, Taptowne, Son of Posse</b>                |
| 3/5  | Mountain Valley S.                                  | OP  | 6f       | 1:11.26 | <b>SMOKE IT RIGHT, Keep On Giving, Glint</b>                    |
| 3/12 | Palm Beach S. (G3)                                  | GP  | 1/4mT    | 1:47.85 | <b>JOES BLAZING AARON, Queen'splatekitten, Newsdad</b>          |
| 3/12 | San Felipe S. (G2)                                  | SA  | 1/4m     | 1:41.23 | <b>PREMIER PEGASUS, Jaycito, Bench Points</b>                   |
| 3/12 | Tampa Bay Derby (G2)                                | Tam | 1/4m     | 1:44.25 | <b>WATCH ME GO, Crimson Knight, Brethren</b>                    |
| 3/12 | Timely Writer S.                                    | GP  | 1m       | 1:36.56 | <b>UNCLE MO, Rattlesnake Bridge, Gallant Dreams</b>             |
| 3/14 | OBS Championship S.                                 | OTC | 1/4mAW   | 1:47.40 | <b>REPRIZED HALO, Extended Family, Strike Oil</b>               |
| 3/19 | Private Terms S.                                    | Lrl | 1m       | 1:37.25 | <b>BANDBOX, Rush Now, No Easy Answer</b>                        |
| 3/19 | Rebel S. (G2)                                       | OP  | 1/4m     | 1:42.19 | <b>THE FACTOR, Caleb's Posse, Archarcharch</b>                  |
| 3/26 | Hansel S.   | TP  | 6fAW     | 1:10.78 | <b>GHOST IS CLEAR, Philippe, Getaway Guy</b>                    |
| 3/26 | Louisiana Derby (G2)                                | FG  | 1/4m     | 1:49.92 | <b>PANTS ON FIRE, Nehro, Mucho Macho Man</b>                    |
| 3/26 | Rushaway S.   | TP  | 1/4mAW   | 1:45.73 | <b>SWIFT WARRIOR, Crimson China, The Ole Gen</b>                |
| 3/26 | UAE Derby (UAE-G2)                                  | Mey | 1,900mAW | 1:58.83 | <b>=KHAWLAH (Ire), Master of Hounds, =Mahbooba (Aus)</b>        |
| 3/26 | Vinery Racing Spiral S. (G3)                        | TP  | 1/4mAW   | 1:52.32 | <b>ANIMAL KINGDOM, Decisive Moment, Twinspired</b>              |
| 3/27 | Sunland Derby (G3)                                  | Sun | 1/4m     | 1:50.91 | <b>TWICE THE APPEAL, Astrology, Ruler On Ice</b>                |
| 4/3  | Florida Derby (G1)                                  | GP  | 1/4m     | 1:50.07 | <b>DIALED IN, Shackelford, To Honor and Serve</b>               |
| 4/3  | Swale S. (G2)                                       | GP  | 7f       | 1:21.94 | <b>TRAVELIN MAN, Indiano, Little Drama</b>                      |
| 4/8  | Pennsylvania S. (G3)                                | Kee | 1/4mT    | 1:41.99 | <b>AIR SUPPORT, Great Mills, Adirondack Summer</b>              |
| 4/9  | Bay Shore S. (G3)                                   | Aqu | 7f       | 1:22.54 | <b>J J'S LUCKY TRAIN, Vengeful Wildcat, Justin Phillip</b>      |
| 4/9  | TVG Illinois Derby (G3)                             | Haw | 1/4m     | 1:51.91 | <b>JOE VANN, Zobebar, The Fed Eased</b>                         |
| 4/9  | Santa Anita Derby (G1)                              | SA  | 1/4m     | 1:48.66 | <b>MIDNIGHT INTERLUDE, Comma to the Top, Mr. Commons</b>        |
| 4/9  | Resorts World New York Casino Wood Memorial S. (G1) | Aqu | 1/4m     | 1:49.93 | <b>TOBY'S CORNER, Arthur's Tale, Uncle Mo</b>                   |
| 4/10 | La Puente S.  | SA  | 1/4mT    | 1:48.70 | <b>SURREY STAR (IRE), Major Art (GB), Jakesam</b>               |
| 4/16 | Arkansas Derby (G1)                                 | OP  | 1/4m     | 1:49.34 | <b>ARCHARCHARCH, Nehro, Dance City</b>                          |
| 4/16 | Northern Spur S.                                    | OP  | 1m       | 1:37.20 | <b>UNCLE BRENT, Albergatti, Derivative</b>                      |
| 4/16 | Toyota Blue Grass S. (G1)                           | Kee | 1/4mAW   | 1:50.92 | <b>BRILLIANT SPEED, Twinspired, King Congie</b>                 |
| 4/23 | Coolmore Lexington S. (G3)                          | Kee | 1/4mAW   | 1:42.03 | <b>DERBY KITTEN, Prime Cut, Casper's Touch</b>                  |
| 4/23 | Jerome S. (G2)                                      | Aqu | 1m       | 1:36.81 | <b>ADIOS CHARLIE, Astrology, Justin Phillip</b>                 |
| 4/30 | The Cliff's Edge Derby Trial S. (G3)                | CD  | 1m       | 1:35.47 | <b>MACHEN, Dominus, J J's Lucky Train</b>                       |
| 5/7  | Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1)        | CD  | 1/4m     | 2:02.04 | <b>ANIMAL KINGDOM, Nehro, Mucho Macho Man</b>                   |
| 5/21 | Preakness S. (G1)                                   | Pim | 1/4m     |         |   |
| 6/11 | Belmont S. (G1)                                     | Bel | 1/4m     |         |   |

Triple Crown nominees are listed in bold.

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### Largest win payoffs

| Year | Horse                     | Win price    |
|------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1913 | Donerail                  | \$184.90     |
| 2009 | Mine That Bird            | 103.20       |
| 2005 | Giacomo                   | 102.60       |
| 1940 | Gallahadion               | 72.40        |
| 1999 | Charismatic               | 64.60        |
| 1967 | Proud Clarion             | 62.20        |
| 1918 | Exterminator              | 61.20        |
| 1953 | Dark Star                 | 51.80        |
| 1995 | Thunder Gulch             | 51.00        |
| 1908 | Stone Street (\$5 mutuel) | 123.60       |
| 1982 | Gato Del Sol              | 44.40        |
| 2011 | <b>Animal Kingdom</b>     | <b>43.80</b> |
| 2002 | War Emblem                | 43.00        |
| 1936 | Bold Venture              | 43.00        |
| 1923 | Zev                       | 40.40        |
| 1986 | Ferdinand                 | 37.40        |

ing line, the colt was bet down to 20.90-to-1 after drawing morning raves all week.

Animal Kingdom answered powerfully. Starting from the 16 post, he settled into 12th place from two or three wide and launched his rally at the three-eighths pole. Angling six wide, he advanced toward game leaders Shackleford and Nehro in the stretch and surged away to cross the wire 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  lengths in front.

Animal Kingdom completed the 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles in 2:02.04, including the final quarter-mile in a razor-sharp :24.55, in front of a crowd of 164,858 that toppled the 37-year Churchill record of 163,628 from the centennial Derby in 1974.

### Birthplace of Derby winners

| State/Country | Winners |
|---------------|---------|
| Kentucky      | 104     |
| Florida       | 6       |
| Virginia      | 4       |
| California    | 3       |
| Tennessee     | 3       |
| New Jersey    | 2       |
| Pennsylvania  | 2       |
| Texas         | 2       |
| Canada        | 2       |
| Great Britain | 2       |
| Illinois      | 1       |
| Kansas        | 1       |
| Maryland      | 1       |
| Missouri      | 1       |
| Montana       | 1       |
| New York      | 1       |
| Ohio          | 1       |

Irwin, a longtime writer for *Daily Racing Form* and other industry publications before he solidified his partnership ventures in the 1980s, chided reporters for dwelling too much on what he considers to be trivial statistics, but Animal Kingdom's unusual ascent was not lost on him.

He noted that the colt was the first Derby winner without a previous start on dirt and the first horse since Needles in 1956 to win the classic off a six-week layoff.

"I like to try to make history if I can, and we made a lot of history today," Irwin said. "I've only won a couple of really big ones and when it happens, it's just surreal. That's all I can tell you. You see it and you know what happened, you're there, but it's just hard to process."

Irwin continued to fire off jokes and blunt answers, but the enormity of the triumph set in when he was

introduced at a post-race party at the Kentucky Derby Museum.

"We're going to take this horse to St. Moritz this winter and see how he does in the snow," Irwin quipped, before emotion struck as his voice cracked and he reached to wipe his eyes, struggling to get out five more words. "It's a dream come true." 🐾

Jeff Lowe is a THOROUGHBRED TIMES staff writer.

Team Valor's Barry Irwin, leading Animal Kingdom into the winner's circle, lambastes racetrack management for what he sees as mistreatment of racing partnerships and criticizes the media for not assessing his horse enough as an individual



Patricia McQueen photo

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KENTUCKY DERBY  
OWNER-BREEDER

# Writing another chapter

Team Valor's homebred Animal Kingdom is the first classic winner for the racing partnership

BY MARK SIMON

**B**ARRY IRWIN started in racing as a Turf writer. So maybe it was just natural when he went to the post-race interview as the winning owner of the 137th running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1) that the first thing out of his mouth sounded like he was writing the lead, putting the victory by Team Valor International's Animal Kingdom into historical perspective, as well.

"I like to try to make history if I can, and we made a lot of history today," said Irwin, chief executive officer of Team Valor who covered the sport for the *Daily Racing Form* in the 1970s on the West Coast before getting into the bloodstock business and racehorse syndication.

## Team Valor International

**Chief executive officer:** Barry Irwin  
**Best horses campaigned by syndicates managed by Irwin:** 1989 Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) winner Prized, 1987 Hollywood Derby (G1) winner Political Ambition, 1997 Florida Derby (G1) and Wood Memorial Stakes (G2) winner Captain Bodgit, 1993 Arlington Million Stakes (G1) winner Star of Cozzene, 2000 Santa Anita Derby (G1) winner The Deputy (Ire), 2001 Santa Anita Oaks (G1) winner Golden Ballet, 2007 Beldame Stakes (G1) winner Unbridled Belle, 2008 NetJets King's Bishop Stakes (G1) winner Visionaire, 2001 Spinaway Stakes (G1) winner Cashier's Dream

"This is the first horse that has won this race with only four previous starts, since Exterminator in 1918. The first horse to win the Derby never having raced on dirt. The first horse to win after a six-week lay-off since Needles in 1956. So that means a lot to me."

Irwin, now 68, has been managing racehorse partnerships for a

quarter-century. The business has gone through name changes and structure, but it has been one of the most successful racehorse partnership entities in this country. An operation like Cot Campbell's Dogwood Stable has been a standard-bearer for partnerships, but Team Valor, notably in the last several years, has been especially



Barry Irwin heads the Team Valor International syndicate that campaigns Animal Kingdom and races around the world

PhotosByZ.com/THOROUGHBREDTIMES

prominent. In 2010, it attained more than \$2-million in international earnings, its year highlighted by the victory of homebred Pluck, trained then by Todd Pletcher, in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G2) at Churchill Downs.

This year, Team Valor is the nation's leading owner by earnings, aided in large part by the \$1,411,800 earned by Animal Kingdom in the Derby. Earlier on Derby day, Team Valor's Daveron (Ger) won the Beaugay Handicap (G3) at Belmont Park.

## Consolidating operations

Not long after last year's Breeders' Cup, Irwin decided he wanted to have all his horses with one trainer in the U.S. and convinced Graham Motion, who is based at Fair Hill Training Center in Maryland, to be that person.

"This is my 25th year racing horses for a syndicate," said Irwin, who now resides in Versailles, Kentucky, with his wife, Kathleen. "I've reached the point where I still want to work hard, but I don't want to have 18 trainers. I don't want to hear stories from 17 trainers every day. Unless you're there and you have one guy on your team that's on your side, you're not going to get the truth. And I reached the point where I was fed up with it."

"I also wanted to have my horses trained off-site from the racetrack, because racetrack life for a horse isn't any good. And we found Fair Hill, which is, I wouldn't say it's a paradise for horses, but it's the closest thing to a European training center that we have in America."

"We have had horses with Graham for the last three years. I asked him early last year if he would train horses for us on a private basis. He didn't want to do it. So we waited about six, seven months, after he had a little more chance to work with me, and I asked him again, and he decided to do it."

"It's hard to find one guy that can train every kind of horse, but I think Graham comes pretty darned close."

Irwin, who was at times was a controversial Turf writer, could not help but make a few pointed remarks in the post-race press con-

## The breeding side of Team Valor

Operation has produced Derby winner and Breeders' Cup winner

WHILE PRIMARILY a racing syndicate, Team Valor has launched a smaller breeding operation. It typically has about 20 broodmares, 12 of which are sold and eight of which are part of its permanent band.

Barry Irwin said most racing partners are not interested in the breeding side of the business, but it is an option made available to potential syndicate members when Team Valor purchases a filly.

"We buy the fillies, we run them, we breed them, we sell them," Irwin said. "If we have a horse that didn't quite prove themselves in America, and I like it, I will either buy the horse from the partners ... or we just keep it and try to breed it."

Irwin enjoys tracking European racing to find potential racehorses and broodmares. He trusts European performance because the countries do not permit race-day medications.

"In Germany, you are not allowed to breed a mare that has ever raced on drugs, [Salix], Bute, nothing," Irwin said. "So when you buy some stock from there, you know you're getting something good."

Irwin's international ties paid off in landing Animal Kingdom's dam, Dalicia (Ger), by Acatenango. Animal Kingdom is the first Derby starter bred by Team Valor.

Dalicia caught Irwin's eye when she defeated eventual multiple German highweight male Soldier Hollow (GB) in the 2005 Preis der Sparkassen-Finanzgruppe (Ger-G3). After her next start, she was purchased by Team Valor for 400,000 euros at a Baden-Baden auction.

She then raced in the U.S. for Team Valor and Richard Haisfield's NeverTell Racing, winning just one of four starts. The decision was made to breed her to Leroidesanimaux (Brz), producing Animal Kingdom as her first foal. Dalicia was sold for \$397,316 to Shadai Farm at the 2009 Tattersalls December mixed sale.

"In this instance, we kept the mare [for breeding]—and I wanted to keep her forever—but Haisfield had some financial difficulties, so we had to sell her," Irwin said. Haisfield's racing operations went through a bankruptcy in 2010.



Frank Sorge photo

Dalicia, dam of Derby winner Animal Kingdom, was Group 3 winner in Germany and an optional claiming winner in the U.S.

Comfortable in many industry areas, Irwin through his ties to Haisfield made Leroidesanimaux an easy option as a mate to Dalicia. Team Valor had breeding rights to the young stallion following a stallion deal Irwin worked on for Haisfield.

"I got hired by [Haisfield]," Irwin said. "He wanted me to buy some stallion

[prospects] for him. I bought three of them, Leroidesanimaux, Lawyer Ron, and another horse [Medaglia d'Oro] that was already retired."

Irwin noted that Leroidesanimaux won an Eclipse Award as 2005 champion turf male and Lawyer Ron won an Eclipse Award as 2007 champion older male.

"For doing it, Haisfield—he's a real entrepreneur and as some entrepreneurs are, he's a cheap guy—he didn't want to pay me in cash, so he gave me breeding rights."

Team Valor's eight broodmares are kept at Craig and Holly Bendoroff's Denali Stud in Paris, Kentucky. In November, Team Valor's breeding operation picked up a Breeders' Cup World Championships win when the More Than Ready colt Pluck won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G2). Pluck is out of Secret Heart (SAf), a stakes-winning mare Irwin purchased for Team Valor while still racing in her native land before importing to the U.S.

—Frank Angst



ference about the underappreciated role of partnerships.

"Let me say one other thing," he remarked. "This was a big weekend for the partnerships; Peachtree Stable [owner of Kentucky Oaks (G1) winner Plum Pretty] and Cot Campbell [owner of Churchill Downs Stakes (G2) winner Aikenite] won big races. I hope these racetracks pay attention to the partnerships and treat us a little better than they have been treating us."

While he declined further comment during the press conference ("I think the people that hear that, they will know exactly what I mean; it does not require elaboration"), afterward he said, "If partnerships did not enter any horses in races for a week, they would have a hard time filling races."

Irwin knows well the importance and challenges of racing partnerships, and the demands they can make on racetracks, which have limited seating, especially for big events. The syndicate that races Animal Kingdom is composed of 20 shares, so once you start adding spouses, children, relatives, and friends, managing the social aspect of a partnership can be a demanding job.

Owners bought into Animal Kingdom at different times, with the initial investors buying in at a valuation of \$100,000, while other came in at \$150,000 and \$350,000. Irwin said someone bought an interest before the Derby at a valuation of \$2-million.

#### Homebred winner

What made Animal Kingdom's classic triumph particularly rewarding for Irwin and Team Valor is that Animal Kingdom is a homebred, and Team Valor has not been in the breeding end of the business for long. The homebreds are the result of fillies and mares that had been raced by Team Valor and retired as broodmares. (See sidebar on Team Valor's breeding operation.)

Irwin started his entrepreneurial foray into the sport first by forming Pacifica Thoroughbreds in 1978, buying and selling horses, and in 1987 formed Clover Racing with newspaper handicapper Jeff Siegel, with the object of buying racehorses in training and then syndicating them and managing their careers. The partners enjoyed some high-profile success with such horses as Prized, winner of the 1989 Breeders' Cup Turf (G1), and Political Ambition, winner of the 1987 Hollywood Derby (G1).

Clover eventually turned into Team Valor in 1992, and in 1997, Team Valor brought to the Derby Captain Bodgit, winner of the Florida Derby (G1) and Wood Memorial Stakes (G2).

"I had utter confidence in the horse," Irwin said of Captain Bodgit. "I really did not think he would lose. I knew how good [eventual winner] Silver Charm was and I knew that when you came to him, he just didn't quit.

He had an extra little punch. ... It was a tough race for me ... and it was very hard to get over it. But I was hoping I would be back again and be able to win it, and it happened."

In 2007, Irwin bought out Siegel's interests to become the sole owner of Team Valor.

The International part of Team Valor's name was added at that time, an appropriate addition, as the stable, which sometimes num-


bers close to 100 horses, races in South Africa, England, France, Germany, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil, in addition to North America. This is an outgrowth of Irwin's interest in international racing, and a necessity as the stable combs the world looking for racing prospects that can be bought and either campaigned in their home country or brought to the U.S.

"I've always liked international

racing, even when I was a Turf writer," he said. "It's more interesting. I'm the kind of guy that gets bored very easily. I need a lot of different things to do. Following international racing is a lot of fun.

"I also think that we have not done enough importing of horses and bloodlines from other places where horses don't run on drugs, and horses' legs are not manipulated, and horses, basically, are bigger and

tougher and stronger and sounder.

"We won the Breeders' Cup [Juvenile Turf] with a horse that was out of a mare that I brought from South Africa, and [Animal Kingdom is out of] a horse that I bought in Germany." 

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KENTUCKY DERBY  
PEDIGREE

# From turf to dirt

Animal Kingdom's ancestry is completely dominated by grass specialists

BY JOHN P. SPARKMAN



Leroidesanimaux, who stands for \$7,500 at Stonewall Farm Ocala in Florida, raced exclusively on turf and sires winner of America's most prestigious race when Animal Kingdom wins Kentucky Derby in his dirt debut

FOR THE last 20 years or so, American breeders have been strongly averse to foreign-raced horses and American turf horses as breeding prospects. Perhaps the success of Animal Kingdom, neither of whose parents ever won on dirt, will help correct the somewhat irrational bias against grass runners that has warped the American breeding scene for the last two decades.

In fact, the pedigree of Animal Kingdom is pretty much all turf all the time. The closest ancestor in his five-cross pedigree who won on dirt is Red God, his great-great-grand sire, a temperamental son of \*Nasrullah who began his racing career on turf in England, but won the Roseben Handicap at Belmont Park on dirt after returning to the U.S. at four.

Red God returned to Europe for his stud career to stand at Loughton Stud in Ireland, where he sired 57 stakes winners from 495 foals (11.5% stakes winners to foals), including Animal Kingdom's great-grand sire, Blushing Groom (Fr).

Blushing Groom was one of the greatest U.S.-based sires during that most international of decades, the 1980s. Champion two-year-old in France in 1976 and champion European miler at three, Blushing Groom sired 92 stakes winners from

522 foals (17.6%), including dirt champions Blushing John, Sky Beauty, Arazi, Blushing Katy, and Runaway Groom. Blushing Groom also sired top European runners Rainbow Quest (a great sire in Europe), Nashwan, Fire the Groom, Groom Dancer, and Sillery, and his progeny seemed equally effective on dirt and turf.

Blushing Groom's son Candy Stripes, out of Bubble Company (Fr), by Lyphard, clearly possessed high-class ability but was not very sound. Winner of a maiden race at 1,600 meters (7.95 furlongs) in his debut at three, he finished third in the Poule d'Essai des Poulains (Fr-G1) (French Two Thousand Guineas) in his third start but was promoted to second behind No Pass No Sale on the disqualification of River Mist.

## American sojourn

Candy Stripes ran only three more times, winning an allowance race at four, and spent most of his stud career in Argentina, where he led the sire list in 1995 and 2000. The success of his third-crop daughter Different (Arg) (out of Diferente [Arg], by Propicio) motivated his

importation to serve Northern Hemisphere seasons at Taylor Made Farm (1997-1999) and Stoneriggs Farm (2000), but the experiment was not a success.

by Artie Schiller when second in the NetJets Breeders' Cup Mile (G1), Leroidesanimaux had done enough to earn his Eclipse Award.

Animal Kingdom is from the sec-

Pokal (Ger-G3), all at around 1¼ miles, before winning the Preis der Sparkassen-Finanzgruppe (Ger-G3) at the same distance at Baden-Baden, defeating multiple Group 1 winner Soldier Hollow (GB).

Acquired by Team Valor for 400,000 euros at a Baden-Baden sale at the end of that season, Dalicia raced five times in the U.S. for Team Valor and Richard and Audrey Haisfield's NeverTell Racing, winning a 1¼-mile optional claiming race on the Hollywood Park turf and finishing fourth in the 2006 Beverly Hills Handicap (G2).

Dاليا is one of 80 stakes winners from 593 foals (13.5%) sired by Acatenango, one of the greatest racehorses and sires in German history. Acatenango led the German sire list four times, and the German broodmare sire list once. His best offspring include high-

weights Lando (Ger), Quijano (Ger), and Borgia (Ger), and his daughters have produced 37 stakes winners.

Dاليا's female line has been resident in Central and Eastern Europe since her English-bred tenth dam, Ardentive, by William the Third, was exported to Hungary about 100 years ago. The family has repeatedly produced high-class horses, including German classic winner Diacada. Dalicia's full sister, Darwinia, is the dam of Daveron (Ger), by Black Sam Bellamy, who won the Beaugay Stakes (G3) on Derby day.

Animal Kingdom is Dalicia's first foal, and she has an unraced two-year-old colt by Mr. Greeley named Thursby. Team Valor sold Dalicia to Shadai Farm for \$397,316 at the 2009 Tattersalls Ltd. December mixed sale.

Animal Kingdom is inbred 4x4 to Lyphard, but his pedigree is otherwise an outcross. Perhaps his Derby victory will remind American breeders that horses raced only on turf have been producing top American dirt horses for centuries. ☺

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## American classic winners from the \*Nasrullah male line

| Horse            | Year | Race(s)                   | Sire                  | Sire-line branch    |
|------------------|------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Aloma's Ruler    | 1982 | Preakness                 | Iron Ruler            | Never Bend          |
| Animal Kingdom   | 2011 | Derby                     | Leroidesanimaux (Brz) | Blushing Groom (Fr) |
| A.P. Indy        | 1992 | Belmont                   | Seattle Slew          | Bold Ruler          |
| Bernardini       | 2006 | Preakness                 | A.P. Indy             | Bold Ruler          |
| Bold Forbes      | 1976 | Derby, Belmont            | Irish Castle          | Bold Ruler          |
| Bold Ruler       | 1957 | Preakness                 | *Nasrullah            | Bold Ruler          |
| Cannonade        | 1974 | Derby                     | Bold Bidder           | Bold Ruler          |
| Caveat           | 1983 | Belmont                   | Cannonade             | Bold Ruler          |
| Dust Commander   | 1970 | Derby                     | Bold Commander        | Bold Ruler          |
| Foolish Pleasure | 1975 | Derby                     | What a Pleasure       | Bold Ruler          |
| Forward Pass     | 1968 | Derby, Preakness          | On-and-On             | On-and-On           |
| Jaipur           | 1962 | Belmont                   | *Nasrullah            | Jaipur              |
| Master Derby     | 1975 | Preakness                 | Dust Commander        | Bold Ruler          |
| Nashua           | 1955 | Preakness, Belmont        | *Nasrullah            | Nashua              |
| Rags to Riches   | 2007 | Belmont                   | A.P. Indy             | Bold Ruler          |
| Risen Star       | 1988 | Preakness, Belmont        | Secretariat           | Bold Ruler          |
| Seattle Slew     | 1977 | Derby, Preakness, Belmont | Bold Reasoning        | Bold Ruler          |
| Secretariat      | 1973 | Derby, Preakness, Belmont | Bold Ruler            | Bold Ruler          |
| Spectacular Bid  | 1979 | Derby, Preakness          | Bold Bidder           | Bold Ruler          |
| Swale            | 1984 | Derby, Belmont            | Seattle Slew          | Bold Ruler          |
| Winning Colors   | 1988 | Derby                     | Caro (Ire)            | Caro (Ire)          |

Candy Stripes continued his good work in the Southern Hemisphere, however, and in 2006 his Argentine-bred son Invasor (Arg) (Quendom, by Interprete) earned Horse of the Year honors in the U.S.

Invasor was not Candy Stripes' first American champion, though, since Animal Kingdom's sire, Leroidesanimaux (Brz) (Dissemble, by Ahonoora), had earned champion turf male honors in 2005. Leroidesanimaux (whose name means "King of the Animals" in French) had begun his racing career in his native Brazil, where he was bred by the Levy family's Haras Bage do Sul. Goncalo Borges de Torrealba's Stud TNT purchased Leroidesanimaux as a yearling for about \$16,000 at a Bage do Sul dispersal in 2001. Unplaced in his first start on dirt, he won his second start on turf and then ran second to Ay Caramba (Brz) in the Gran Premio Associacao Brasileira de Criadores e Proprietarios do Cavalo de Corrida (Brz-G1).

Imported to the U.S., Leroidesanimaux finished fourth in his first start and then won eight races in succession, including the 2004 Citation Handicap (G1) and 2005 Atto Mile Stakes (Can-G1) and Frank E. Kilroe Mile Handicap (G1). Upset

ond crop of Leroidesanimaux and he is one of only three stakes winners from 140 foals age three and older by his sire.

Animal Kingdom is the first Kentucky Derby winner and first American classic winner from the Blushing Groom male line, but the 11th Derby winner from the male line of Blushing Groom's grandsire, \*Nasrullah.

## German mare

Bred in Germany by Carlton Consultants Ltd., Animal Kingdom's dam, Dalicia (Ger), never raced on dirt in 21 starts. Unplaced in her only start as a two-year-old, she showed immediate improvement when tried at distances of around 1¼ miles and beyond as a three-year-old. Second in the listed Jean Harzheim-Rennen, she did not win until her sixth sophomore start, beating the eventual multiple group-winning colt Egerton over 2,000 meters (9.94 furlongs) at Hannover. Fourth in the Prix du Prince d'Orange (Fr-G3), she disappointed in her final German start at three.

Dاليا ran fourth in another French group race, the Prix Corrida (Fr-G2), in her second start at four, and third in the listed Grand Prix de Compiègne and the Lotto Hessen-

| Animal Kingdom, ch. c., 2008                                  |  |  |                        |  |
|---|--|--|------------------------|--|
| Leroidesanimaux (Brz) 00<br>152 fls, 3 SWs<br>SI 3.40 DI=1.67 | Candy Stripes 82<br>2 wins, \$47,357, Spl<br>1001 fls, 61 SWs<br>SI 2.31 DI=2.11             | Blushing Groom (Fr) 74<br>512 fls, 92 SWs<br>SI 4.76 DI=1.52 | Red God 54             | *Nasrullah 40<br>Spring Run 48<br>=Wild Risk (Fr) 40<br>=Aimee (GB) 57   |
|   |  | Bubble Company (Fr) 77<br>10 fls, 3 SWs<br>DI=1.88           | Lyphard 69             | Northern Dancer 61<br>Goofed 60<br>=Prominer (GB) 62<br>=Euridice (Fr) 62  |
|   | Dissemble (GB) 89<br>Unraced<br>9 fls, 3 SWs<br>DI=1.29                                      | =Ahonooora (GB) 75<br>467 fls, 45 SWs<br>SI 2.00 DI=3.00     | *Lorenzaccio 65        | *Kliron 52<br>=Phoenissa (GB) 51<br>=Martial (Ire) 57<br>=Quaker Girl (GB) 61<br>=High Hat (GB) 57<br>=Time Call (GB) 55 |
|   |  | =Kerali (GB) 84<br>10 fls, 3 SWs<br>DI=1.21                  | =Helen Nichols (GB) 66 | Roberto 69<br>Irule 68   |
| Dاليا (Ger) 01<br>2 fls, 1 SW<br>DI=0.78                      | =Acatenango (Ger) 82<br>16 wins, \$164,296<br>Champion<br>588 fls, 80 SWs<br>SI 2.52 DI=0.71 | =Surumu (Ger) 74<br>517 fls, 60 SWs<br>SI 1.64 DI=0.29       | =Literat (Ger) 65      | =Birkhahn (Ger) 45<br>=Lis (Ger) 60<br>=Reliance II (Fr) 62<br>=Suncourt (GB) 52   |
|   |  | =Aggravate (GB) 66<br>9 fls, 3 SWs<br>DI=3.00                | *Aggressor II 55       | =Combat (GB) 44<br>=Phaetonia (GB) 45<br>=Mr. Jinks (GB) 26<br>=Gentlemen's Pelish (GB) 26                               |
|   | =Dynamis (Ire) 91<br>Placed, \$5,382<br>5 fls, 1 SW<br>DI=1.91                               | Dancing Brave 83<br>412 fls, 38 SWs<br>SI 2.47 DI=2.36       | Lyphard 69             | Northern Dancer 61<br>Goofed 60<br>Drone 66<br>Olmec 66  |
|   |  | =Diasprina (Ger) 86<br>12 fls, 3 SWs<br>DI=0.00              | =Aspros (Ger) 77       | =Sparkler (GB) 68<br>=Antwerpen (Ger) 72<br>=Rheffic (Fr) 68<br>=Diu (Ger) 69  |
|   |  | =Dorle (GB) 74   |                        |  |





# 137 KENTUCKY DERBY POST-RACE



Matt Goins photo

## A celebration even in defeat

Few excuses, other than a slow pace, were offered after the race by Derby connections

BY ED DEROSA

**T**HIS YEAR'S Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1) was one of the cleanest-run editions of America's most famous race, leaving the connections of the beaten horses behind winner Animal Kingdom to ruminate on their experiences surrounding the race rather than on the "what ifs."

The wide-open nature of this year's race allowed the attention to be spread among the field. Three women had a chance to become the first woman to ride or train a Derby winner; local connections featured prominently; and the concept of what an ideal Derby prep schedule should look like continued to evolve.



Derby runner-up **Nehro** had the busiest prep schedule, racing five times in five months before the Derby, recording a pair of runner-up finishes in the Louisiana Derby (G2) and Arkansas Derby (G1) after winning a maiden race in his third career start on February 21.

"To think he was just a maiden winner seven weeks [ago], I'm very proud of what he's accomplished," said Steve Asmussen, who trains the Mineshaft colt for Ahmed Zayat's Zayat Stables. "He's done it with talent and has just shown unbelievable class."

If any element of this year's Derby caused trouble for some starters, it was the pace of the 1¼-mile race. Shackleford set the tempo through quarter-mile splits of :23.24, :25.39, :24.77, and :24.09 to a mile, and that dawdling pace may have compromised the chances of closers such as Nehro and 5.20-to-1 favorite Dialed In.

"There was way less pace than I thought there would be, and thank goodness [jockey] Corey [Nakatani] was smart enough to take advantage of that," Asmussen said.



Another changing element to the prep schedule is the amount of time between races, and trainer Kathy Ritvo



Ahmed Zayat's Nehro finishes second for third consecutive time after taking a brief lead in the stretch

thought the six weeks between **Mucho Macho Man's** third-place finish in the Louisiana Derby (G2) and the Kentucky Derby may have compromised his chances for a better performance. The Macho Uno colt was rolling late, but his rally fell a neck short of catching Nehro for second. Nehro finished second in the Louisiana Derby but ran back in the Arkansas Derby three weeks later. The Arkansas Derby is three weeks before the Kentucky Derby and in recent years has produced classic winners Smarty Jones (2004), Curlin (2007), and Super Saver (2010).

"He's only going to get better," Ritvo said. "[Jockey] Rajiv [Maragh] said he gave it his all and tried really hard."

Ritvo credited being involved with Mucho Macho Man and co-owners Reeves Thoroughbred Racing and Dream Team One Racing Stable with generating positive publicity for organ donation and heart conditions.

Patricia McQueen photo

continued on page 24