

PAULICK REPORT

TEAM VALOR TAKES ROAD LESS TRAVELED

by [Ray Paulick](#) | 10.20.2011 | 11:40am



With two Grade 1 winners in the United States, including Kentucky Derby winner Animal Kingdom, you'd think Team Valor International is having an extraordinary year. But the operation's CEO, Barry Irwin, called it "normal" with the exception of Animal Kingdom's Kentucky Derby victory. "It's on par with previous years," Irwin said, somewhat matter of factly.

To back that up, Irwin sent three charts tracking global stakes wins, stakes winners, Graded/Group stakes wins and Graded/Group stakes winners for leading U.S.-based partnerships and syndications for 2009, 2010, and 2011. Team Valor has clearly outperformed its competition in those categories all three years. (Charts are located at bottom of this article.)

As things stand, Team Valor will have to rally to best its 2009 and 2010 numbers. Currently, Team Valor's tracking shows 15 stakes wins by 11 different horses, with nine Graded/Group wins by six different horses. That's just short of a couple of the marks set in 2009 (19-15-9-6) and 2010 (17-12-10-6). But there are some big races remaining including the Breeders' Cup championships, where three Team Valor horses are currently being pointed.

Four of Team Valor's Graded/Group winners have won in the U.S. In addition to Animal Kingdom, there is G1 winner Summer Soiree and G2 winners Daveron (above) and State of Play. All are trained by H. Graham Motion.



This is from an operation that is based at the Fair Hill training center in Maryland, where it keeps 30 stalls filled. According to Irwin, another six to eight horses are in various stages of rehab and a group of 18 yearlings are gearing up to begin their racing careers

as early as 2012. Team Valor has two horses based in England, one in Germany, one in France and about 10 in South Africa, Irwin added.

The move to Fair Hill last April has benefited some horses more than others, Irwin said. "Some of the results have been spectacular," he said. "Daveron didn't like training at the track, and her Beyer numbers have been improving with each start. She's run four times this year and has won three (including the G3 Beaugay and G2 Ballston Spa). Fair Hill is a great place for fillies. They can be turned out in paddocks, and we've got some therapy equipment – a salt water therapy machine and a vibrating floor – that has helped."



Unlike some partnerships, Team Valor doesn't operate with a timetable or specific game plan to roll out its offerings at a certain time of year. "We sit back and wait," Irwin said. "We've gone more than four months without buying a horse, or we might buy several in a single week. There's no set plan going into a sale."

More of today's Team Valor horses are homebreds than in previous years. "Initially, our people just wanted to race," Irwin said. "One horse we thought was really good got hurt, so we decided to keep that one and keep its first foal, who turned out to be a Graded stakes winner. So we were able to make some money. We had sold all of our good horses at public auction, but the last few years have decided to keep more. A third or more of our current stable consists of horses we bred."

As a buyer, Irwin often zigs when others zag. Or, much like the Hall of Fame baseball player "Wee Willie" Keeler, he likes to "hit 'em where they ain't." In other words, Irwin buys horses at sales where other leading stables may be absent.

"I try to find places where I can get the best horse available," he said. "By going to some places I find stuff the big buyers won't even look at, getting good horses for a fraction of the cost. I'm not pedigree driven, so the only thing I have to worry about is whether these horses can run."

Charts of Syndicate Stakes wins for 2009-2011 follow:

Public Syndicate Groups - Stakes Stats for 2009

	Stakes Wins	Stakes Winners	Graded Stakes wins	Individual Gr Winners
TEAM VALOR	19	15	9	6
WEST POINT	10	8	6	4
I E A H	10	7	6	5
PEACHTREE	4	4	2	2
WOODFORD RACING	4	4		
STARLIGHT	4	3	3	2
SOVEREIGN	3	2	1	1
VICTORY TBS	3	2	1	1
CLASS	1	1	1	1
DOGWOOD	1	1		
CENTENNIAL	1	1		
ELITE RACING	1	1		
KARAKORUM	1	1		
HORIZON				
BLINKERS ON				
PEWTER				
SACKATOGA STABLE				
BONGO				
PARTING GLASS				
TEAM VICTORY				
LEGENDS RACING				
STARVIEW				
HIBISCUS				

Public Syndicate Groups - Stakes Stats for 2010

	Stakes Wins	Stakes Winners	Graded Stakes wins	Individual Gr Winners
TEAM VALOR				
INTERNATIONAL	17	12	10	6
STARLIGHT	6	5	4	4
WEST POINT	6	5	1	1
I E A H	5	4	4	3
THREE CHIMNEYS	3	2	2	2
PEACHTREE	3	3	2	2
FUNKY MONKEY STABLE	3	2		
THOROUGHbred LEGENDS	2	2	2	2
DOGWOOD	2	2	1	1
BLINKERS ON	2	1	1	1
WOODFORD RACING	2	2		
FANTASY LANE	2	2		
CLASS	2	1		
TEAM STALLION	1	1	1	1
VICTORY THOROUGHbreds	1	1		
CENTENNIAL	1	1		
PINNACLE RACING	1	1		
SOVEREIGN				
ELITE RACING				
PEWTER				
SACKATOGA STABLE				
BONGO				
PARTING GLASS				
TEAM VICTORY				
STARVIEW				

Public Syndicate Groups - Stakes Stats for 2011

	Stakes Wins	Stakes Winners	Graded Stakes Wins	Individual Gr Winners
TEAM VALOR INTERNATIONAL	15	11	9	6
CLASS RACING	7	4		
WEST POINT	4	3	2	1
PEACHTREE	5	2	4	2
STARLIGHT	5	2	4	1
PINNACLE RACING	5	2	2	2
BLINKERS ON	3	1	3	1
DOGWOOD	2	1	2	1
FANTASY LANE	2	1		
THREE CHIMNEYS	1	1	1	1
MAGDALENA RACING	1	1	1	1
MAJESTIC RACING	1	1	1	1
THOROUGHBRED LEGENDS	1	1	1	1
CENTENNIAL	1	1		
VICTORY THOROUGHBREDS	1	1		
WINNERS CIRCLE PARTNERS	1	1		
FUNKY MONKEY STABLE	1	1		
BONGO				
ELITE RACING				
I E A H				
PARTING GLASS				
PEWTER				
SACKATOGA STABLE				
SOVEREIGN				
STARVIEW				
TEAM STALLION				
TEAM VICTORY				
THOROUGHBRED FUTURES				
WOODFORD RACING				