

March 14, 2009

## KINSELLA WINS RACING DEBUT FOR TEAM VALOR INTERNATIONAL GROUP, \$2.2-MILLION SARATOGA YEARLING SALE TOPPER OVERCOMES TROUBLE, PLETCHER PROTÉGÉ BREAKS SLOWLY, GOES WIDE, STILL WINS IN STYLE



*Syndicated Kinsella made an exciting debut on grass Saturday at Gulfstream for Team Valor International and trainer Todd Pletcher.*

Barry Irwin no longer has to answer the oft-asked question “Whatever happened to that expensive yearling you bought a couple of years ago at Saratoga, that big chestnut Mr. Greeley colt?”

Kinsella answered the question himself in emphatic fashion when in his introduction to the racing game this afternoon in a maiden special weight on the grass at Gulfstream Park, the tall, athletic sophomore turned in a breathtaking performance to win in his debut by three-quarters of a length.

In the walking ring Saturday, Barry Irwin asked trainer Todd Pletcher if he thought the colt would show any speed, because he was drawn wide in the 10 post in a field of 12 on a course that has been favoring speed.

“The way he breaks in the morning, I look for him to show quite a bit of early speed,” answered the Eclipse Award-winning conditioner.

Kinsella tossed his head in the air at the break and came out a step slow, giving the entire field a good head start, as he trailed into the first turn under Chris DeCarlo.

“I didn’t rush him,” said the rider. “I let him settle.”

DeCarlo did a masterful job getting the first-time starter to relax into and around the first turn. Once on the backstretch, DeCarlo allowed the flashy, long-striding colt to creep up. As Kinsella rounded the far turn, DeCarlo had managed to position him behind the leading group, as he impossibly looked like a coiled spring ready to explode.

When Kinsella was given the office and set sail, he moved up willingly, but came at the leaders so fast, he wound up being carried about 7 wide entering the stretch. DeCarlo asked the colt for his best once settled in the lane. Kinsella was on the left lead early in the lane. When he switched inside the furlong grounds, he looked like he was shot out of a cannon, as he bolted passed the leaders and assumed command.



*Chris DeCarlo winning Monmouth Park stakes aboard Team Valor’s Saratoga yearling buy Audacious Chloe.*

Once in front, Kinsella pulled himself up, as the inexperienced colt thought he had won the game. There was still more than 100 yards remaining in the race and DeCarlo had to school the colt to let him know the race is not finished until the wire is reached. Kinsella withstood a late challenge and, in fact, began to draw away a little in the end.

Final time for the mile and a sixteenth on the grass was 1:42 1/5 off modest fractions of :24 1/5, :49 3/5, 1:13 1/5 and 1:36 3/5.



*Barry Irwin picked out Kinsella at the Saratoga Yearling sale.*

Barry Irwin said “We have never had a young horse run like this first time out, nor have many others. It was about as exciting as it gets. He must have tossed in a 22-second quarter at some point. Only a top horse can do what he did. We are over the moon with this effort. I am so happy we had Chris on him today. He saved the day for us.”

DeCarlo said “He has an amazing turn of foot.”

Kinsella at \$2.2 million became the second Saratoga Yearling Sale topper in the last few years for Team Valor, following \$1.85 Fairbanks, who developed into a multiple Graded stakes winner of nearly \$900,000 before being syndicated and put into stud service this season at Northview PA, where he will be bred to more than 100 mares.

Both colts were syndicated into 50 shares as yearlings, as Team Valor thought both had stallion potential and wanted to form that type of partnership from the beginning.

“Naturally, we are hoping that Kinsella turns out as well as Fairbanks,” Irwin said. “At this stage, he certainly appears to have the raw talent. He did some stuff out there today that was out of the ordinary, like coming from far back on a course that has been favoring speed, and doing it behind a very tepid pace. And that burst of speed down the lane was far from ordinary.”

Kinsella missed making the races at 2 when he sprained an ankle breezing on a deep Oklahoma training track at Saratoga. He underwent surgery to have debris flushed from the ankle, rehabbed at the Kentucky Equine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Center and was legged up by Todd Quast at Goldmark Farm in Ocala.

Irwin said the colt has enough ability to win on dirt, but once Pletcher put him on the grass it was an eye-opening experience. Irwin said the colt is just as promising on a synthetic circuit.

“He had a much harder race than we would like to have seen,” Irwin said. “So we will give him plenty of time before bringing him over to the races again. He obviously has plenty of scope to improve. We will nominate him to the Mid-American Triple on grass in Chicago and take a good look at that.”



*Kinsella photographed after topping the Saratoga summer sale.*

From *Thoroughbred Daily News* comes the following:

## In Sharper Focus

by Alan Carasso

On the first Tuesday in the month of August 2007 in upstate New York, Team Valor International's Barry Irwin found what in his estimation was the "it" horse. The object of his infatuation was hip 142, a racy looking chestnut colt by Mr. Greeley with a narrow white blaze and a white stocking on his left hind.

Irwin intended to blast his potential rivals right out of the Finney Sales Pavilion with an opening bid of \$1.5 million. It didn't go exactly as planned, but, after a spirited exchange with representatives of West Point Thoroughbreds, Irwin landed the big fish at the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale for the second time in four years.



"I bought him because he had an exceedingly large amount of presence," Irwin recollected yesterday by phone following the impressive debut victory by Kinsella in the Gulfstream finale. Expecting him to be a precocious sort, Irwin sent Kinsella into training in the spring of 2008, and the colt turned in three works, one at Belmont Park and two over the Oklahoma training track at Saratoga, but was sidelined following a three-furlong move in early May. "We breezed him at Oklahoma soon after it opened and it was very deep," Irwin explained. "He pulled the suspensory off the bone a little bit. It's a common sort of injury, so we had to do surgery to remove some debris."

Kinsella did his early recuperation at the Kesmarc Rehabilitation Facility (above, pictured on the day he left), then was moved to Goldmark Farm in Ocala, where he resumed serious training in early 2009. Transferred to Todd Pletcher's barn at Palm Meadows, he recorded five works on the main track, but it was apparent he wasn't getting over it all that well. "He would work OK on the dirt and if you put a horse in front of him, he'd catch him at the wire, but really wouldn't go past," Irwin offered. "When we put him on the turf, we saw something totally different. He's never been outworked."



*Kinsella turned out as a yearling in the fall of 2007.*

Even if yesterday's outcome was not surprising, the way in which it was achieved was.

"We expected him to go right to the front and take them all the way," said Irwin. "To come from last like that was amazing. He is a very athletic horse and was dead fit today. Todd had him ready to run."

Resigned to the fact that he has a turf/synthetic horse on his hands, Irwin does not harbor any real Classic aspirations and is happy for the moment to take things one step at a time.

"I have absolutely nothing in mind," Irwin admitted. "We'll evaluate it and try to figure out what the hell to do."