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HULL WILL LINE UP FOR THE PREAKNESS STAKES IN A CHANGE OF PLANS, DERBY RESULT AND A LACK OF TOP NEW SHOOTERS PROMPTS THE MOVE, MIGUEL MENA RIDES UNBEATEN COLT IN SECOND LEG OF TRIPLE CROWN



Hull scores facile victory in Grade 3 Derby Trial S.

Hull, unbeaten in 3 starts by a total of 16 lengths this season for trainer Dale Romans, will line up for the Preakness. Owned by Heiligbrodt Racing Stables, Team Valor International and Gary Barber, the Kentucky-bred son of Holy Bull won the Derby Trial on opening day at Churchill Downs by 4 lengths.

After having won his Fair Grounds debut by 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ lengths and taken a Turfway Park allowance dash by 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ lengths, Hull was an intended starter for the Grade 2 Coolmore Lexington Stakes at Keeneland, but he drew the outside post position and he was withdrawn when his connections did not want him to make his first start around 2 turns from a bad draw.

Hull was rerouted to the Grade 3 Derby Trial run over 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ furlongs around one turn. Following that easy victory, Hull was under consideration for the Grade 1 Metropolitan Mile or the Grade 2 Woody Stephens Stakes, both around a single turn.

However, based on the result of the Kentucky Derby and the known new players available to contest the Preakness Stakes, the connections have become emboldened enough to want to try their colt in the second leg of the Triple Crown.

Romans plans to breeze the colt on Saturday at Churchill Downs and have him flown from Kentucky to Maryland the Wednesday before the May 16 Preakness. "I won't do too much with him," said the Louisville-based trainer. "He's fit."

Barry Irwin, owner of Team Valor International, said "The Kentucky Derby under normal circumstances takes a lot out of a horse. I liken it to a heavyweight boxing match. It can be brutal. So one can only imagine what the strain has been on the horses that ran last Saturday given the underfoot conditions. It seems logical to think the Derby will have taken at least some toll on them."

Irwin and partners Gary Barber and Bill and Corrine Heiligbrodt are not totally comfortable with sending their colt around 2 turns for the first time in a race with the import of the Preakness. They do, however, have a lot of faith in their colt, in great part due to the confidence in Hull that has been shown by both his trainer and his rider.

"He has always acted like the real deal to me," said Romans. "He ran green in the Derby Trial, won it by 4 lengths, and I really think there is a lot more to this colt than he has shown us in the afternoon."

After the Derby Trial, jockey Miguel Mena said to the owners "Did you see the way he re-broke when I straightened him out in the stretch? Only a top colt can do this. I cannot tell you what a great feel I get from being on this horse. I think he is very special. And he will run on."