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KING OF THE ROXY WINS DON BERNHARDT STAKES OFF 15-MONTH LAYOFF, 5-YEAR-OLD EMERGES FROM RETIREMENT EXUDING CLASS FOR TRIUMPH, WARRIOR-LIKE VICTORY PROVES ‘ROXY STILL HAS APPETITE FOR BATTLE



King of the Roxy made a dramatic return to the races on Saturday, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind that the multiple Graded winner not only had life left in his legs, but that he still had a strong desire to go out and compete on the racetrack. The

5 year-old, who was retired in April of last year with what was originally thought to be a career-ending cannon bone injury, mustered up an awe-inspiring performance off a daunting 15-month hiatus from racing to prove victorious in the \$50,000 Don Bernhardt Stakes at Ellis Park.

King of the Roxy broke alertly from post 5 of 6 and immediately took a strong hold of the bit. It was clear from the get-go that he had his mind on running. After dueling through reasonable early fractions of :22 4/5 and carving out a half in :45 3/5, King of the Roxy appeared to be in deep water as the field curved into the home stretch. He was racing in a claustrophobic spot inside and looked as if the field was going to swallow him up at the eighth pole. After getting headed, perhaps even getting passed by better than a half-length in deep stretch, King of the Roxy had to call upon all his class and courage to re-rally along the pine. With an "I'll show you" attitude, the classy older horse fended off all challengers and actually spurted away to secure a stylish 1 ½-length win, his first in 27 months.

"He's just all heart and class," said Todd Pletcher assistant Michael McCarthy, who has overseen King of the Roxy's training since he returned to Churchill Downs in May. "We knew going into the race that he was probably a work or 2 short, but when that other horse came up to him down the lane and 'Roxy got a glimpse of him out of his blinker, you could just tell that he was not going down without a fight. Since we brought him back into training, we have basically allowed him to dictate what we did and when we did it. Each and every week he continued to show us that he really wanted to be a racehorse again. He was willing in his training and really happy to be back in the mix.

"This is an incredibly gratifying victory," McCarthy acknowledged. "Obviously, the days are past when he could knock heads with the best in the division, but if we manage him properly, he can grind out a nice little living here on the back-end of his career. We'll keep at it with him and just keep letting him tell us how he's feeling. So far, he's come out of the race well. We'll keep our fingers crossed."

King of the Roxy earned \$30,000 for the comeback score and boosted his lifetime earnings to better than \$560,000. He now has Grade 2 wins at age 2 and 3 and a Listed win to his credit at age 5. King of the Roxy is under consideration to wheel back on short rest in the \$110,000 Harvey Arneault Memorial Breeders' Cup Stakes on August 1 at Mountaineer Racetrack in West Virginia.