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KINSELLA RETURNS TO FORM WITH POWERFUL TURF WIN AT SARATOGA, DESPITE WIDE TRIP THROUGHOUT FROM 10 HOLE CHESTNUT SCORES BIG, SARATOGA YEARLING BUY STRIPPED IN BEST CONDITION OF HIS CAREER



Saratoga yearling sale topper Kinsella shows what all of the fuss was about in a runaway victory at The Spa to improve his career record to 2 wins in 3 starts for Team Valor International, trainer Todd Pletcher and jockey Johnny Velazquez.

Kinsella made a successful return to racing last Saturday in an allowance mile at Saratoga. He won the race in style, making light of considerable ground loss as a result of having to begin from the 10 stall with a short run to the first turn on the inner turf course. It was a win full of promise for the future for this colt that topped the Saratoga yearling sale two years ago on a bid of \$2.2 million from Barry Irwin, whose record in buying sales toppers at The Spa is noteworthy. His previous sales topper, the Giant's Causeway horse Fairbanks, became a multiple Graded stakes winner across the United States and was sent to stud on a \$3-million deal that saw him cover 122 mares this year in his first season at stud.

The short, 3-race career of Kinsella has not lacked for drama, as the twists and turns of fate have led to him missing his season at 2 because of a wrenched ankle suffered on the Saratoga training track in the spring, followed by a spectacular debut victory on grass at Gulfstream Park over the winter at 3.

No sooner had the gorgeous Mr. Greeley colt pumped adrenalin into the bloodstreams of his racing partners than an antidote was administered one race later when the colt did his best to imitate a runaway freight train.

"When I saw him strip for the race on, my pride in him swelled," said Barry Irwin. "He never looked this good, even on the day I bought him. His weight was correct and his girth was prodigious. He looked like a bronze god.

"The first time he ran, he was thin and his coat was almost translucent. When he came out the next time at Churchill Downs, he was thin as a wafer and his coat had already started to turn, which is very strange for the spring time.



Racing artners Steve Karlin and Al Frassetto gaze upon their colt Kinsella with mixture of awe and pride. These veteran owners know what they're looking at and like what they see.

“But on Saturday, he showed at first glance that he was thriving. I don’t think we will ever know what sent him packing to the sidelines. We were so worried at one point, we sent him to Lexington for a complete work over at Rood & Riddle.



“Hopefully he has all of his growing spurts and anxieties behind him.”

Kinsella, ridden for the first time by Johnny Velazquez, broke well and raced wide every step of the way. “Going into that first turn, another horse bumped him,” said the jockey. “I thought he might try to run off with me, but I was surprised when he came right back to me so easily and waited for me to tell him what I wanted him to do.”

Velazquez asked Kinsella to move up around the second turn. The colt was fanned several wide at the stretch bend, lost some momentum and picked it up so fast that by the time the eighth pole had been reached, Kinsella was marginally ahead.

Kinsella was confidently ridden to the wire. With about 70 yards to go, it looked like he would win by perhaps a neck. Velazquez did not want to get caught napping, as the colt nearly was in his debut, so he rode him out and at the end, Kinsella was going away to win by daylight with speed to spare.

“The way the race was run,” said Irwin, “with no pace (:25 and :49 2/5) and him being wide, he was much the best on the day. He went his last quarter-mile in 22 seconds flat and gave the impression that he still had lots of gas in the tank.



New Jersey partners Norton and Elaine Herrick have attended races for both of Kinsella’s wins.

“I have not spoken with Todd (Pletcher) yet, but I am anxious to get him back to Kentucky, because he thrives training on the Polytrack at Keeneland. The logical next race for him is the Grade 3 Bryan Station Stakes worth \$125,000 on October 18.



“We are going to want to be extremely careful with Kinsella between races to make sure he doesn’t regress physically, so the 6 weeks between races should suit him.

“If we play our cards well with this sucker, he can be a tip-top runner for us next season, both on turf and synthetic surfaces.

“The race I really was hoping to make with him was the Breeders’ Cup Mile on the

main track at Santa Anita, however, he is simply not going to have enough races into him to rise to that level of form this season. By running him in the Bryant’s State, however, if he were to freak and run well, the BC Dirt Mile might come under some sort of consideration.

“This colt has a tremendous ability to accelerate. Running 22-second quarters seems routine to him, when similar fractions at the end of races or workouts is otherworldly to others. He has a touch of Usain Bolt to him in his ability to muster a very fast finish.”



From 3 outings now, Kinsella has two easy and eye-catching wins and one abortive finish. His win, by the way, came at the expense of a pair of seasoned older New York-bred veterans that had form in open company and top records against state-breds. Extra Zip had won 3 races in a row before placing in the West Point Stakes at Saratoga and North Country had recently run very well when second in an open-company race at Belmont Park.

Kinsella earned a 92 Beyer speed figure and a preliminary Ragozin sheet figure of 8 ½. The pace being so slow will put a damper on a big number, but Barry Irwin said that based on his experience, the race was worth about a 6 to 6 ½ and a Beyer of perhaps 97 or 98.

“It was good that the pace was slow, because the entire race was about 1 ½ seconds slow, which is good, because it means that the horse did not have to kill himself to win off the bench,” he said. “The last thing we needed was too great of an effort in his comeback.”