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TEAM VALOR BUYING KENTUCKY DERBY PROSPECT TOBOGGAN SLIDE, IRWIN SAYS HE'S "BEST TRIPLE CROWN HOPE SINCE CAPTAIN BODGIT," UNBEATEN DOUBLE STAKES WINNER BLISTERED A 5 RAGOZIN NUMBER

A 2-year-old colt that Barry Irwin says is the stable's best hope for a Kentucky Derby win since he bought Captain Bodgit a dozen years ago passed Dr. Steve Allday's vet exam and Irwin's physical inspection and is now being syndicated by Team Valor International.

Unbeaten in 3 races, 2 of them stakes, Toboggan Slide ran a remarkable 5 on the Ragozin Sheets and a 94 Beyer in winning the 6-furlong Maryland Million Nursery by 4 ½ lengths in a flashy 1:09 1/5. The margin to third was another 8 lengths ([Chart](#)).



"The speed figures are legit," said Irwin, "because he blasted home his final furlong in :11 4/5, which was faster than Maryland's top older sprinters required on the same card. Two-year-olds just don't do stuff like that.

"This is not your standard Maryland-bred. Although distances for the Nursery have alternated at either 6 or 7 furlongs over the last quarter century, anyway you look at the results over that time span this guy is a full 2 seconds faster than anything the stakes has ever seen. He is an absolute freak."

What is a 5 Ragozin for a colt in September at 2? "Let's just put it this way," Irwin said. "He becomes the fastest of his age ever to be in our stable. He ran as fast at 2 as Hull ran at 3. Captain Bodgit didn't run this fast until he won the Wood Memorial, when he just shaded the mark to run a 4 ¾."



Captain Bodgit being lead in after his Wood Memorial win by Barry Irwin.

The last horse of this quality to come out of the Mid-Atlantic region was Captain Bodgit, who lost his debut, then ran off 5 successive victories. He only bettered 12 on the Ragozin Sheets once prior to stretching out in his last start, when he ran a 6. Toboggan Slide is considerably more advanced than The Captain was at this same stage.

"For a colt that has run only 3 times, he has been fully tested on the racetrack and not found to be wanting ([Past Performances](#)). He broke his maiden for a \$45,000 tag by 2 lengths, running greenly and very wide at Delaware Park. He came right back on a sloppy track, again over 5 furlongs, in the First State Dash Stakes. He was stuck inside the entire way, setting the pace, alternating on the lead while a challenger raced alongside and pressed him virtually every step of the way. To his full credit, Toboggan Slide was able to peg back the winner at the wire after twice losing the lead in the stretch to finish in a dead heat win.

“Like Captain Bodgit, this horse acts like he would run over hot coals and through a wall if it meant winning,” Irwin said. “And like Captain Bodgit, he is improving by leaps and bounds. In the Nursery, moving up from 5 to 6 furlongs, he rated like a seasoned pro, willingly followed his rider’s instructions and exploded like the monster he is in the final eighth of a mile for an enthralling victory. It was every bit as breathtaking as Captain Bodgit’s final win of the season at 2 over the same Laurel racetrack.



In case one missed the phenomenon that was Captain Bodgit, he built upon his season at 2 when he was bought and syndicated by Barry Irwin. Captain Bodgit beat Kentucky Derby winter book favorite Pulpit in the \$1-million, Grade 1 Florida Derby and added the \$750,000 Wood Memorial for the stable. He started favorite for both the Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes, losing by a head in the former and a neck in the latter.

Captain Bodgit was developed and trained in Maryland by an unknown named Gary Capuano. In an odd twist of fate, Daniel O’Ryan—the even more obscure owner-trainer of Toboggan Slide—worked as a groom for Capuano when Captain Bodgit was in his stable off the beaten path at defunct Bowie racetrack.

“The only thing this colt has not yet done is route,” said Irwin. “Based on his conformation, his style and his pedigree, this is a gimme as far as I am concerned.”

On the same card that Toboggan Slide won the Nursery Stakes, his 3-year-old half-sister My Sweet Nenana was beaten a neck going a mile in the \$50,000 Maryland Million Distaff Starter Stakes. The dam of Toboggan Slide was unraced, but she is a half-sister to \$368,392-earner Twample. The next dam, bred to speed influence Icecapade, produced the multiple French and United Stakes stakes winner Icehot, a \$295,303 best in the track record time of 1:40 for a mile and a sixteenth at Del Mar.

Toboggan Slide’s sire, \$442,292-earner Rock Slide, was effective up to 9.5 furlongs on dirt and firm or soft turf, running a 110 Beyer number going a mile at Churchill Downs and a 1 on the Ragozin Sheets. He is an A. P. Indy full brother to Horse of the Year Mineshaft and Personal Ensign heroine Tomisue’s Delight, both of whom were Grade 1 winners over the Kentucky Derby distance of a mile and a quarter. His dam won the Grade 1 Ashland Stakes going long on dirt at Keeneland and was voted Broodmare of the Year after producing 5 stakes winners.



Rock Slide, by A. P. Indy, is a brother to a Horse of the Year.

Rock Slide is the leading third-crop sire standing in Maryland.

Toboggan Slide’s broodmare sire, \$554,291-earner Norquestor, won 4 stakes around two turns and was quite effective as far as a mile and an eighth. He won the Grade 1 Pegasus Handicap at the Meadowlands. His sire Conquistador Cielo won the Met Mile and Belmont Stakes in the span of 10 days and his dam, the Northern Dancer mare Linda North, was a winner of 4 stakes races, 3 of which were around two turns.

Norquestor is the broodmare sire of Grade 1 winner Declan's Moon (r), winner of the Del Mar Futurity and the Hollywood Park Futurity.

In fact, Toboggan Slide is bred on the exact same pattern as Declan's Moon, being by a son of A. P. Indy out of a mare by Norquestor. Declan's Moon was the Eclipse Award-winning Champion Colt at 2.

The third and fourth dams of Toboggan Slide are loaded with stamina. Sire of the third dam is Dahar, a millionaire trained by Charlie Whittingham, ran as far as

horses run in the United States, winning the Grade 1 San Juan Capistrano Stakes over a mile and three-quarters at Santa Anita. He was sired by the incomparable Northern Dancer stallion Lyphard and produced by Dahlia, winner internationally of 9 Grade 1 races against males and held in some circles to be the finest female racehorse of all time.

Sire of the fourth dam is Le Fabuleux, a French stallion that stood at Claiborne Farm. He was the undisputed Champion of his generation, both at 2 (Group 1 Grand Criterium de Saint-Cloud) and at 3 (French Derby). He is considered a tremendous success as a broodmare sire.

Dosage wise the colt is strongest in the middle, or Classic aptitude, and he has enough Dosage points to explain why he has as much speed as he does. His Index is 2.53 and his CDI is 0.67.



Parties interested in participating in this exciting new venture are asked to contact Amy Collingsworth (amy@teamvalor.com) or (888) 434-2677 or Megan Jones (megan@teamvalor.com) at the same number.

Toboggan Slide was sent Friday from Bowie racetrack to the Belmont Park barn of Todd Pletcher, who will train him for a while before coming up with a recommendation.

Barry Irwin said "I spoke to Todd about the future this afternoon. Tentatively, we are thinking about giving him one more start this season in the \$150,000 Grade 2 Nashua Stakes at Aqueduct in November going a one-turn mile on dirt. But since we have the Kentucky Derby in mind, getting some Graded earnings this season would take some pressure off

"So I told Todd after he has trained him for a bit, to give some consideration to the two good races at Churchill Downs, namely the one-turn Iroquois Stakes (November 1, mile, \$100,000 Grade 3) and the two-turn Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes (November 28, 1 1/16 miles, \$150,000 Grade 2).

"Both options offer opportunities to ready the colt for next season, but both plans are equally attractive. Getting the Graded earnings now, though, would make his early campaign at 3 less stressful for everybody concerned." The colt will winter in Florida at Palm Meadows training center and he is expected to be ready to begin the Triple Crown trail when it commences at Gulfstream Park in January.