

ANIMAL KINGDOM CONFIRMED AS ENTRANT FOR THE KENTUCKY DERBY TEAM VALOR'S HOME-BRED COLT WORKS SUPREMELY WELL FOR ROSES GRAHAM MOTION AND ROBBY ALBARADO BOTH IMPRESSED WITH MOVE



Robby Albarado steering Animal Kingdom through his final paces.

Animal Kingdom qualified for a stall in the starting gate for the Kentucky Derby by earning \$285,000 in the Grade 3 Spiral Stakes last month, but today he convinced his connections that he was a viable prospect, when he showed that he was able to act on a dirt track in his first breeze on a dirt surface since the spring of his juvenile season. In 4 career outings—2 last season and 2 this season—Animal Kingdom had run 3 times on an all-weather surface and once on turf. He not only has never raced on dirt, he has not even breezed on dirt since last spring, when learning his lessons from Randy Bradshaw at the Adena Springs training track near Ocala, Florida.

Bred by a Team Valor partnership, Animal Kingdom was broken and trained in Florida on a dirt track. Once he came to the racetrack, however, he never worked out on a dirt surface again until this morning, when he was tested by Graham Motion in order to discover whether he was a legitimate Derby candidate, or just another grass horse that liked all-weather surfaces.



Animal King cruises up alongside his work mate.

Animal Kingdom broke off 3 lengths behind his stable mate Meistersinger, a Gulfstream Park maiden winner that had run a 6 ½ Ragozin Sheet number and was a good work horse in the morning.

The pair came into the long Churchill Downs homestretch as a team, where after Animal Kingdom was asked by Robby Albarado to leave his workmate at the furlong grounds.

Albarado tapped the right flank of the colt a couple of times and he drew off to put 8 lengths between himself and his work mate. Animal Kingdom worked 6 furlongs, went out 7 furlongs and pulled up after a mile.

Animal Kingdom was clocked in splits of :12 2/5, :24 4/5, :37 1/5, :49 1/5, 1:01 and 1:13, out in 1:26 2/5, pulled up in 1:41 1/5. Final quarter was accomplished in :24-flat.

Graham Motion was very happy after the breeze. He said to reporters gathered back at barn 22 on the Churchill Downs backstretch that "I told Robby I wanted him (Animal Kingdom) to get something from the work because of what happened last week." A week earlier, both Animal Kingdom and

Meistersinger had gone off in 30 seconds in a Keeneland work that was much slower than Motion wanted.

“I don’t think this could have gone any better,” Motion said. “I expected as much. He is a very good work horse. In fact, I don’t think any horse has ever outworked him. And I’ve breezed him against some very good stock.”

Prior to the breeze, Barry Irwin of Team Valor International and Graham Motion were on the same page, which was that if the colt failed to show his customary dash on the main track he would not run in the Kentucky Derby and run a day earlier in the American Turf on the grass.



Irwin said “Last spring he worked several times for Randy Bradshaw in Ocala. Since we had to miss a scheduled dirt work last Saturday and this weekend was looking iffy for a time, I phoned Randy to ask what he thought about running Animal Kingdom in the Kentucky Derby. Randy gave me a lot of confidence. Fortunately, we were able to get the dirt work in today and the colt answered all questions in a positive fashion. But Randy did set the stage for us.”

Animal Kingdom now has completed his major preparation for the Kentucky Derby. Motion will now gallop Animal Kingdom up to the race at Churchill Downs.



Robby Albarado was chosen as the work rider and jockey for Animal Kingdom because he had won on the colt last season at Keeneland and was the single individual that Team Valor and Motion thought would best be able to render an opinion on whether the son of Eclipse Award-winning turf horse Leroidesanimaux went well enough over the dirt to run for the roses.

“He did everything one would want him to,” said the rider. “Obviously I had not been on him since last year and it is amazing how much he’s changed. He is so much stronger and mature than he was at 2. Hey, he could win the Kentucky Derby the way he worked today.”

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