

**SPANISH MISSION MAKES THE MOST OF A GIMME WHEN WINNING STAKES
ANDREW BALDING GETS A WIN IN FIRST START WITH VALOR/BARBER COLT
JOCKEY JAMIE SPENCER CALLS RACE “JUST WHAT DOCTOR ORDERED”**



Spanish Mission, the prohibitive favorite, raced behind cover to the final quarter-mile yesterday in the Listed Chester Stakes. Reunited jockey Jamie Spencer squeezed him between horses for a clear run, the colt went to the front on his own. He veered right for a few strides before Spencer let him run for perhaps 70 yards and he won for fun by 3 lengths.

“The trainer, Gary Barber and I agonized about whether to run given the soft condition of the course,” said Barry Irwin. “So in the morning after watching the

first race from Chester, I phoned Andrew Balding and said that we wanted to run, as the kickback was not severe and the ground was fairly good down the lane, where Spanish Mission figured to do most of his running. It worked out well for all concerned and the result was just what we wanted: a confidence booster.

“Now we can go anywhere we want with him. We have reclaimed our horse and now are on the right path. Gary Barber and I are strongly considering a raid of Belmont Park in October with him as we figure we have a better chance for good ground in NY than in the UK this year. This was a pleasing experience for both the horse and the humans involved.”

Jamie Spencer, recently returned to riding after rehabbing a broken femur after an accident, said “Such a joy to ride this colt, he is such a class act. It was just what the doctor ordered. The course really woke him up mentally because he was checking everything out and it kept his interest engaged. When I went for the split he simply dashed right through there. He was sharp today. When I asked him to accelerate, I took him out to the middle of the course where the going was better, because after a couple of races the grass was getting pretty chewed up. He felt great to me. Let me know what you guys are thinking going forward and thanks for putting me back on him. It means a lot.”

Balding, who was starting Spanish Mission for the first time, was impressed and advised Irwin after the race to strongly consider the Melbourne Cup next year. Spencer echoed these sentiments, stating that “I have ridden several horses in that race and Spanish Mission is the ideal candidate.”

The trainer suggests targeting the Ascot Gold Cup next year at 2½ miles. To this end he thinks a run September 11 going 2¼ miles in the Group 2 Doncaster Cup would be an ideal test to see if the colt can get the trip.” [VIDEO](#) of the race.