

GRAHAM MOTION CHERISHING EVERY LAST MINUTE OF STELLAR 2011 TEAM VALOR TRAINER HAS PLENTY TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN JANUARY ANIMAL KINGDOM'S RETURN, UP AND COMING COLTS ON DECK FOR 2012

From David Grening of *Daily Racing Form* comes the following:

There is still one month remaining in 2011, and trainer Graham Motion plans to cherish every single remaining minute of it.



Motion's 19th year as a trainer will go down as his finest to date. Through Tuesday, he had won 109 races, making this his third-best year in that category behind 2007 (145) and 2008 (115). His horses earned \$8.5 million in purse money, a personal best that places him fifth in the national standings. He also set personal bests in stakes wins (34) and graded stakes wins (18), and, of course, he captured his first Kentucky Derby with Animal Kingdom, who had been on few people's radar screens in the month leading up to the race.

"I did not expect to accomplish what I accomplished at this stage of the game," Motion, 47, said in a recent telephone interview.

And now as he gets set to embark on his 20th year of training, Motion has the daunting task of trying to equal or better his achievements.

"I always find starting over very intimidating," Motion said. "It's hard to imagine duplicating the year I had this year. Certainly, I feel pressure to a degree to do so. You obviously want to maintain that level."

To some people, Saturday's opening of Gulfstream Park is a jump start on 2012. Gulfstream typically opens in early January, carrying with it the hopes and dreams of horsemen with a promising 3-year-old who might get them to the Kentucky Derby.

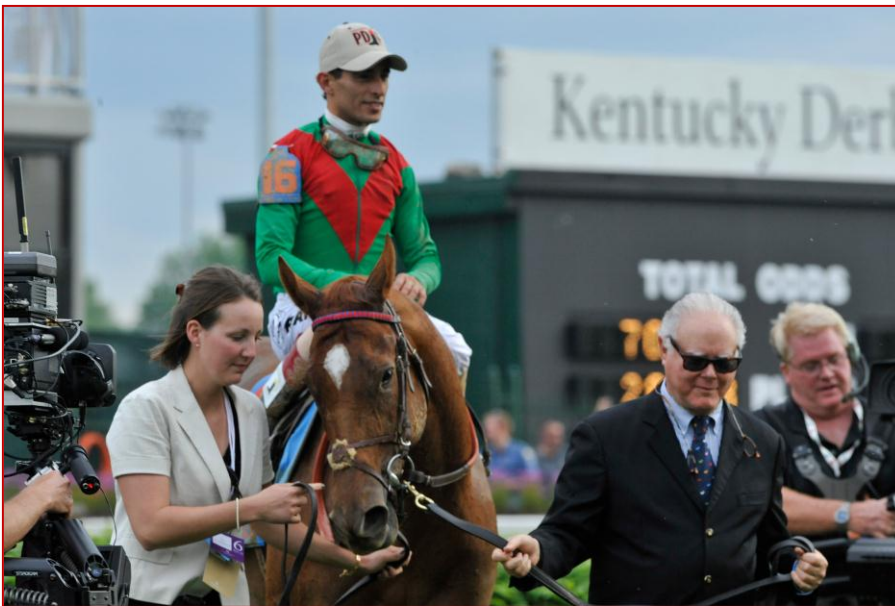
Motion didn't necessarily hold those expectations for Animal Kingdom when he finished second in a first-level turf allowance race at Gulfstream on March 3. But two months later, Animal Kingdom, a 20-1 shot, rolled to a 2 3/4-length victory under John Velazquez in the Derby, and Motion was thrust into the national spotlight.

Motion did not wilt under the bright lights. Though Animal Kingdom would finish second in the Preakness and get hurt while running sixth in the Belmont Stakes, Motion

continued his fabulous year, in large part because of his association with Team Valor International, a syndicate for whom he became the private trainer at the end of 2010.

Motion had refused the job offer from Team Valor's president, Barry Irwin, several times earlier in 2010, but by early November, he decided to accept. Motion, who retained all of his other clients, trains about 30 horses for Team Valor and a string of 100 to 120 horses overall.

"When I look back on making that decision to take those horses and how important it was," Motion said, "it's funny how things work out on a spur-of-the-moment decision."



Animal Kingdom made history as the first horse to win the Kentucky Derby in his first start on dirt.

Many of the horses Motion trained for Team Valor – including Animal Kingdom – will be returning for 2012. Animal Kingdom, who had surgery to repair a hind leg fracture, has been in training for more than a month at the Fair Hill training center in Maryland and will probably begin breezing by mid-December. His primary first-quarter goal in 2012 is the \$10 million Dubai World Cup on

March 31. Team Valor has not yet been decided if he will

have a prep race before that, though Irwin said he would not want that prep to come in the Grade 1 Donn at Gulfstream on Feb. 11.

"Graham and I are going to talk about it at some point," Irwin said. "The only time we did talk about it, I mentioned a horse – not specifically him – can win that race without a prep. I've seen some horses run great first start back, then fizzle in the World Cup."

Irwin added that he and Motion would revisit the subject after Animal Kingdom begins breezing on a regular basis.

Like Animal Kingdom, Toby's Corner, winner of the Grade 1 Wood Memorial, is coming back from a leg injury, one that prevented him from running the final eight months of the year. He is on a similar schedule as Animal Kingdom, but Motion said Toby's Corner is more likely to run at Gulfstream. Toby's Corner, owned and bred by Dianne Cotter, is a Florida-bred but Motion said the \$400,000 Sunshine Millions Classic on Jan. 28 might come up too early for him.

“They’re both big, strong horses,” Motion said. “They both changed significantly in that respect. To be honest, we thought of them as immature 3-year-olds that were going to be bigger, stronger, imposing 4-year-olds.”



Badleroibrown has been sidelined since a neck defeat at Churchill Downs last October going 1 1/16 miles in his debut.

According to Irwin, Badleroibrown was more highly regarded than Animal Kingdom when both were 2-year-olds, but Badleroibrown had a severe breathing problem that required surgery.

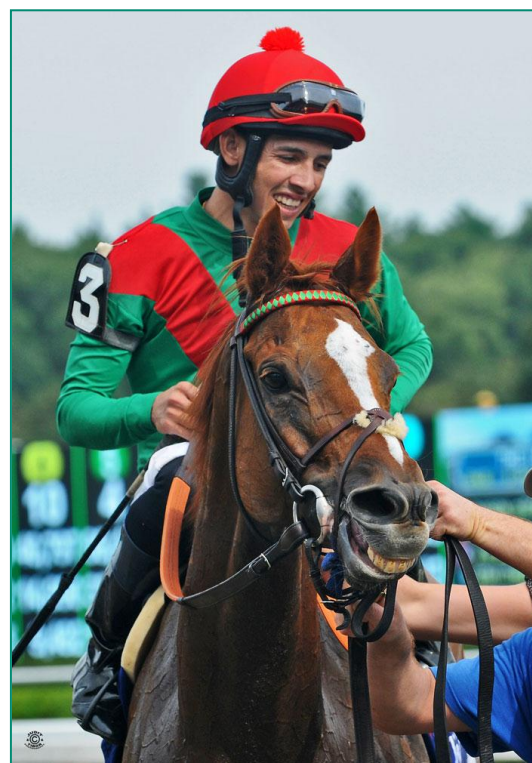
“If he runs to what he did last year and to how he’s training this year, he could be anything,” Irwin said.

Motion said he would probably run the stakes-winning 2-year-old State of Play early in the meet, possibly in the \$100,000 Dania Beach Stakes on Dec. 18. State of Play won the Grade 2 With Anticipation Stakes at Saratoga before running last in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Turf.

Daveron, whom Motion trained to 3 wins from 4 starts for Team Valor, was purchased by Charlotte Weber’s Live Oak Stud at the Keeneland November breeding stock auction. Though she is expected to be bred in 2012, Daveron could run a couple of races at Gulfstream.

Unbridled Humor, fourth in the Matriarch, will be pointed to the Sunshine Millions Filly and Mare Turf on Jan. 28 at Gulfstream, Motion said.

Motion, who won nine races from 43 starters at last winter’s Gulfstream meet, said the early opening of this meet might be beneficial to his stable, as he has several turf horses he wants to bring back. One of those is the 3-year-old Badleroibrown, a son of Leroidesanimeaux, who was beaten a neck as the 9-5 favorite in his debut at Churchill Downs on Oct. 31, 2010, when trained by Wayne Catalano. He is entered to run in a maiden race on Saturday.



Daveron is still in training with Graham Motion after Team Valor sold her for \$750,000 last month at the Keeneland November sale.



Howe Great will stretch out on the turf at Gulfstream this winter after two sprint races on the dirt in Philadelphia.

The cleverly named Howe Great, a 2-year-old half-brother to Badleroibrown by the Japanese sire Hat Trick, won a maiden sprinting at Parx and will be given the chance to stretch out and try to get on the Triple Crown trail.

Team Valor recently purchased the 2-year-old maiden Went the Day Well, a Kentucky-bred son of Proud Citizen, who ran second in his first two starts on turf in Europe and who will be tried on dirt.

“To me, he looks like a dirt horse,” Irwin said. “He’s got the build of a dirt horse, the running style of a dirt horse.”

Motion also hasn’t given up on Stephanoatsee, a 2-year-old half-brother to Preakness winner Shackleford, who finished seventh in the Remsen. Motion said he believes the horse needs to mature some.

Motion could look back on 2011 as the year he won his first Eclipse Award as top trainer, though he’d much rather see Animal Kingdom win as North America’s top 3-year-old.

“It’s a nice thing to think about – flattering to bring it up – but it’s not something I would put pressure on myself to achieve,” Motion said of winning the Eclipse as top trainer. “I would love to have a championship for a horse. I still believe Animal Kingdom deserves to be 3-year-old of the year.

“That would be a tremendous accomplishment. That’s something I always wanted to do – train a champion.”



Went the Day Well, a Kentucky-bred son of Proud Citizen, returned to the United States with two races under his belt from England this fall.