

**LA PETITE COCO CAPTURES GROUP 1 PRETTY POLLY S. AT THE CURRAGH
FILLY BEATS TOP FIELD IN HER 4-YEAR-OLD DEBUT FOR TWOMEY AND LEE
PRIX DE L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE PROSPECT NOW WON 5 OF 6 FOR TEAM VALOR**



La Petite Coco stopped the strong late-stretch bid of favored My Astra dead in its tracks. She not only repulsed the bid, she moved away from her rival in the very last few strides of the 300,000-Euro, Group 1 Pretty Polly Stakes. In winning the mile-and-a-quarter international fixture the 4-year-old established herself as the top filly in training.

Everything fell into place for La Petite Coco last Sunday at The Curragh racecourse in County Kildare, Ireland and the Ruler of the World filly took full advantage of the opportunity to become a Group 1 winner and provide her super-hot trainer Paddy Twomey with his first career triumph at the highest level in the world of racing.

Appearance last Sunday was not a given, as trainer Twomey insisted that Team Valor International agree not to race the filly unless the ground eased, as firm going does not suit her. At the beginning of the week only miniscule drops of measurable precipitation were in the forecasts.

As the race drew near, the forecast gradually changed in favor of softer ground.

On the morning of the race, Twomey said that he really wanted a true downpour before he was comfortable running her.

As if on cue, half an hour before the race, a good old-fashioned drenching took place, as what seemed like a hurricane passed through The Curragh. The ground could not have been more to the filly's liking. As La Petite Coco had not raced since last fall, gamblers reckoned she would need the race, especially in the face of classy and dead-fit opposition, so her odds rose from 3-to-1 favoritism on Wednesday with the bookies to 9-to-1 on course at post time.



Team Valor International's Barry Irwin and jockey Billy Lee have a serious chat before the Group 1 Pretty Polly Stakes in walking ring before race.

The challenges for La Petite Coco in the Pretty Polly were a lack of racing and formidable international opposition, including two fillies that not only had won at the highest level already, but had a prep before their big 2022 victories. In the end none of that mattered. Quality won out.

As she had not faced the starter in several months, La Petite Coco was fresh and she tried to run off with Billy Lee. Fortunately, her rider had supreme confidence in the filly and he gradually eased her back a bit. But she raced closer than expected, tracking the pace in third much of the way.

As the field climbed the hill in the middle stages of the mile-and-a-quarter race on grass officially labeled as “yielding,” La Petite Coco held her position, Nearing the straight it became obvious that “Coco” was moving up like a winner. She grabbed the lead and strode out with great energy.

My Astra got to within a neck of “Coco” and was intent on going by her as the line approached. But “Coco” repelled the challenger’s bid, stopping it cold in its track, and actually began to draw away to score by half a length.

“She is a Champion, a true Champion,” Irwin said. “Only a Champion could do what she just did. It reminded me of the time at Hollywood Park that John Henry was in the same position and Spence Bay came at him with a devastating late kick. Old John stopped that run dead and moved ahead enough to secure the victory. Only a real, honest-to-goodness Champion can do something like that.”

La Petite Coco, after a pair of unplaced finishes in her first two races for different connections, has now won 5 of her 6 outings for Team Valor, Twomey and Lee. She is a multiple Group winner and Group 1 heroine. She is starting to earn money as well, her \$190,000 share of the prize money swelling her career earnings to just under \$400,000.

No definitive plans have been made as yet for the filly’s next race, but Twomey has mentioned races like the Group 1 Yorkshire Oaks. Twomey thinks that the filly is better at 12 than 10 furlongs. The filly is being pointed for the Arc, which is run the first Sunday of October in France. It seems likely that she could run next in the Yorkshire Oaks, followed by a race like the Prix Vermeille in Paris, with the British Champions at Ascot and the Arc further on down the line. The Breeders’ Cup is not out of the question.

La Petite Coco was given a 118+ *Timeform* rating, a 2-pound increase from 114 to 116 by both *RacingPost* and her Official Rating. At this point in time it seems likely that she is not only the best older filly or mare in Ireland or England over ground, but possibly the best in all of Europe. Her moment of truth is likely to be when she faces the best 3-year-olds later on in the season.”

[VIDEO LINK](#)