

March 3, 2012

**STATE OF PLAY GAME BATTAGLIA STAKES WINNER CONCEDED 6 POUNDS
TEAM VALOR PICKS UP RIGHT WHERE IT LEFT OFF IN 2011 AT TURFWAY
WAR FRONT LIKELY TO RETURN TO GRASS FOR REMAINDER OF 3YO YEAR
KENTUCKY STABLE WINS FIFTH STAKES RACE IN FIRST 10 WEEKS OF YEAR**



State of Play continued Team Valor International's hot hand with 3-year-olds at Turfway Park today when he proved a determined winner of the Battaglia Memorial Handicap. Last spring, the Kentucky-based stable won the \$500,000 Spiral Stakes with its budding star Animal Kingdom, who used the Grade 3 fixture as a springboard to a victory in the Classic, G1 Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs.

Chances are, Team Valor will be represented by a different 3-year-old for the 2012 Spiral Stakes, as the stable is loaded with sophomores and the top ones all should handle the Polytrack at the Florence oval.

Barry Irwin, Chief Operating Officer and owner of the stable, said "We will put State of Play back on the grass. It is his preferred surface. He struck out on dirt at Tampa and was effective on synthetic today, but on turf he is a superior runner. Look for him at Keeneland or Churchill Downs next time."

In providing Team Valor with its fifth stakes winner during the initial 10 weeks of 2012, State of Play was dispatched as the 2 to 1 second choice to local hotshot Mr. Prankster, who was odds-on for Turfway wizard and the colt's part owner, trainer Mike Maker. But it was not The Prankster's day, as he never featured and wound up a badly beaten fourth, 11 lengths behind the winner.

State of Play, in a field of 5, broke smoothly to take a short lead, but allowed Ill Conceived to take control of the race. That Pennsylvania-based runner packed State of Play out on the first turn and kept wide down the backstretch.

Leading Turfway rider Victor Lebron though better of pressing the pacesetter while wide, so he dropped back a couple of lengths and stayed closer to the rail. Around the turf, Mark Casse's maiden Dynamical drove up along the rail and curving for home he was on a line with the first two favorites, as Ill Conceived was still widest of all and State of Play was between horses.

"Lebron James" cut the corner on State of Play, who went on top by half a length. But Ill Conceived had plenty left and the first two favorites had a stretch long battle, with the War Front colt holding his rival off by a head. To his credit, State of Play conceded 6 pounds to the runner-up, so the win was full of merit and was worth about a length.

State of Play has now won 3 of 5 starts, including a Grade 2 on grass at Saratoga, and earned more than \$166,000 for his partners.