

HOMEBRED THREE HEARTS SCORES IN RED CARPET HANDICAP AT DEL MAR JOINS BREEDERS' CUP HERO PLUCK AS SECOND GRADED WINNER FOR DAM COMES 27 YEARS TO DAY AFTER NEIL DRYSDALE'S FIRST BIG WIN FOR IRWIN



Team Valor International's 4yo homebred filly Three Hearts, well positioned throughout by jockey Joe Talamo, dug deep down the homestretch of the Bing Crosby Turf Course to score a convincing upset at odds of 29 to 1 in the \$100,000 Red Carpet Handicap.

Three Hearts joined Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf hero Pluck as the second Graded winner for her dam Secret Heart. New Grade 3 winner Three Hearts was sired by Japanese import Hat Trick. Both sire and dam were imported to the United States by Barry Irwin.

In a nifty bit of historical coincidence, Neil Drysdale was saddling a Graded winner for a partnership formed by Barry Irwin 27 years to the day that he sent out B. Eye's initial Graded winner in the 1987 Grade 1 Hollywood Derby winner Political Ambition.

Three Hearts was making her first start for Drysdale, who had been sent the Kentucky-bred after Irwin closed up the company operation at Fair Hill training center in Maryland and dispersed his stock to several trainers.

"I feel comfortable having horses in Neil's care," Irwin said. "He is a super talented horseman and he always lets me know where I stand with my stock. He took the blinkers off today, stretched her out to what turned out to be a suitable distance and the result was fantastic."

Three Hearts was well positioned throughout by Joe Talamo, who got a split at the top of the lane, put the filly's head in front and rode her to a convincing half-length score that secured her first money of \$60,000 to increase her earnings to nearly \$200,000.

Talamo told a TVG interviewer after the race that the filly was not tired even after the race. Drysdale said the filly would continue to improve. Team Valor plans to keep the filly in training as a 5-year-old, after which she would join Team Valor's broodmare band.

"Her dam Secret Heart, which I imported from South Africa as a racehorse, died unexpectedly from a coronary thrombosis," Irwin said. "Three Hearts is a magnificent specimen, as was her dam, and we look forward to breeding foals to sell and race out of her."



Neil Drysdale trained the winner Three Hearts for Team Valor.