

CHURCHILL RETURN AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR GRAHAM MOTION KENTUCKY DERBY PLAQUE WELCOMES TRAINER FOR BREEDERS' CUP

Ed Gray of the Boston Herald provided the following account of Graham Motion's return to Barn 22 at Churchill Downs for the Breeders' Cup World Championships, six months after Animal Kingdom's Kentucky Derby triumph under the famed Twin Spires.

When Graham Motion returned to the Churchill Downs backstretch with his five-horse contingent for this weekend's Breeders' Cup World Championships, the 47-year-old trainer noticed a new adornment tacked outside the entrance to Barn 22: a colorful plaque commemorating Animal Kingdom's victory in the Kentucky Derby last May.

Motion, who saddled Team Valor International's color-bearer for a 20-1 upset in America's most cherished horse race, was struck again by the magnitude of being a Kentucky Derby-winning trainer. "It was the first time I'd been back to the barn since then, and it was somewhat emotional. It was a pretty special feeling, for sure," the native of Cambridge, England, said yesterday morning. "It's somewhat of an odd sentiment because it feels so long ago, to be honest. It's exciting to be back. It's nice to be back. It brings back great memories."



Motion didn't always have a warm and fuzzy feeling about Churchill Downs, where he also saddled Shared Account for a 46-1 upset in last year's Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf. "It's funny, I always felt I was a little jinxed at Churchill, and then here we are, we win a Breeders' Cup and then a Derby within a space of however many months. It's amazing. I'm very fortunate," said Motion.

Although Animal Kingdom certainly left a void after being sidelined with a minor injury following a second-place finish in the Preakness and sixth-place result in the Belmont, Motion hardly trains a one-horse stable. He has saddled the winners of 100 races, including 16 graded stakes, and nearly \$8 million in purses. "It's been an amazing year. I never could have predicted having a year like this, having the two best 3-year-olds I've ever trained," said Motion, who saddled Toby's Corner for a Grade 1 Wood Memorial victory. "If somebody told me at this time last year that I would win the Wood Memorial and Kentucky Derby within the next six months, I would have said, 'No way.'"

Motion hopes to add to that success Friday in the \$2 million Filly & Mare Turf with defending champion Shared Account and multiple stakes winner Aruna, and Saturday, when he will saddle Lucky Chappy and State of Play for the \$1 million Juvenile Turf, and Hoofit for the \$1 million Turf Sprint. Aruna will be more seriously regarded by bettors than Shared Account, who is destined to go to post at long odds again after going winless in only two starts since her upset at Churchill last year. Motion, though, certainly hasn't given up on the 5-year-old defending champion. "I feel very good about her coming into this race. It's been our goal for the whole year. The fact that Shared Account hasn't won is really only a matter of circumstances," Aruna, at 6-1 in the morning line, is generally regarded as a better bet to give her trainer back-to-back successes in the Filly & Mare Turf, but she will be making her first start beyond 1 1/8 miles in the 1 3/8-mile race.

Despite drawing outside post positions, Lucky Chappy, a two-time winner in Italy before finishing a troubled third in his U.S. debut, and State of Play, who has won his only two starts, give Motion a strong hand in the Juvenile Turf. Hoofit, who had won only 2-of-16 starts in his native New Zealand, heads into the Turf Sprint with a 2-for-2 record since joining Motion in the United States.