

**WAKANAKA WINS FROM LAST PLACE DESPITE A MODERATE EARLY PACE
FOUR-YEAR-OLD FILLY BANKS LARGEST DOMESTIC PURSE OF THE SEASON
ITALIAN IMPORT CAPS MEMORABLE DAY FOR HOF TRAINER WILLIAM MOTT**



When Saturday's \$300,000 Fall Harvest Stakes was drawn, Team Valor International and Gary Barber's 4-year-old filly Wakanaka looked to have been dropped in the deep end of the pool, a fact that was noted by Keeneland's morning-line maker, who put her at 12 to 1 for the mile contest on grass that capped the second day of the Breeders' Cup weekend in Lexington, Kentucky.

By post time, however, the entire complexion of the race had changed. Two scratches, one of the rather insignificant Sunny One, the other of the highly regarded Technical Analysis. The latter was among a pair of entrants for the powerful Chad Brown stable.

There looked to be enough speed, even with Technical Analysis's scratch, to heat things up enough for Wakanaka's anticipated stretch run to be effective. Horseplayers, eschewing the odds, bet her down to co-second favoritism at odds of 7 to 2.

Brown's French import Shantisara was bet down to even-money for the 2-turn mile fixture.



Bill and Tina Mott, racing partner Ed Barker, The Irwins, Joel Rosario, receive julep cups from Keeneland rep.

Irwin and Mott both stressed to Joel Rosario not to be tempted to ask the filly for her best lick until the last possible moment, explaining that her kick was prodigious, but short lasting in duration. The jockey was told to expect a fast pace and not to worry how far back he was.

Leaving the post in good order, the field looked to be “off to the races” as expected, but the pace was backed up by the leaders. Fractions of $:23 \frac{4}{5}$ and $:47 \frac{3}{5}$ were tepid enough to cause connections to fear the worst, especially as Wakanaka dawdled along in last place, with Rosario sitting as still as a bronze statue, some half-dozen lengths off the lead.

However, when Rosario let the filly make her move, it was obvious the race was in the bag. Rosario had such confidence in his diminutive mount that he even took her wide around the stretch curve, not worried that the ground loss would cost him the victory. She got up to win by the better part of a length. She shaded 23 seconds for her final quarter and reached the line after a mile in $1:35 \frac{1}{5}$. [LINK](#)

The \$183,675 winner’s share was her second 6-digit prize of the season and swelled her career earnings past the \$647,000 mark. She now boasts a career record in 15 starts to 8-4-1. She has now won 6 stakes races, including the Grade 2 Dance Smartly earlier in the season at Woodbine.