

October 23, 2010

ANIMAL KINGDOM LOOKS POTENTIALLY SPECIAL IN KEENELAND SCORE, COLT IS AMONG 3 SENSATIONAL TEAM VALOR HOME-BRED 2-YEAR-OLDS, EARNS FLASHY 84 BEYER GOING 1 1/8 MILES IN 1:49-FLAT FOR MAIDEN WIN



Animal Kingdom is airborne in breaking his maiden in his second career race, winning by 3 ¼ lengths at Keeneland, where he ran 1 1/8 miles in a very fast 1:49 and no change

Team Valor International's home-bred 2-year-old Animal Kingdom, making the second career start, broke his maiden in impressive fashion today racing 1 1/8 miles at Keeneland on Polytrack.

The tall chestnut colt scored handsomely by 3 ¼ lengths, showed a lot of gameness and earned a big 84 Beyer number, which is quite a speed figure for a juvenile running over that testing distance.

Animal Kingdom is trained by Wayne Catalano, for whom he was a very good second in his Arlington Park debut when he missed the break and had a ton of traffic woes in a race his connections figure that he should have won.

Wilcox Inn, the colt that beat Animal Kingdom in his debut, came back in his second start over this same Keeneland Polytrack and rallied to finish third in the Grade 1 Breeders' Futurity and is headed to the Breeders' Cup.

Today, under Robby Albarado, Animal Kingdom broke smartly and was able to take advantage of his good draw from post position number 3 and race at or near the lead, which eventually was taken over by eventual second-place finisher Bonaroo. Under an aggressive ride, D. Wayne Lukas-trained Bonaroo was positioned half a length ahead and just outside of Animal Kingdom. Jockey Michael Baze, obviously riding to instructions, did his best to intimidate Animal Kingdom.

Turning for home, Baze tried to cut with Bonaroo and open a daylight advantage. But Albarado had been biding his time and when he set him down in midstretch, the race was over in a matter of a few strides, as the big chestnut lengthened his enormous stride and began to put daylight between himself and the eventual runner-up. *Daily Racing Form's* chart footnotes on the runner up said that he was "rushed" to the lead and set a "pressured pace" over the winner.

"He is something this colt," said Albarado. "He knows absolutely nothing about racing. He was just getting into his stride when the race was over."

"Hey, that was not only a great effort by the colt, but a nice little gut check and he came through it with flying colors," said trainer Catalano. "I was very proud of what he did out there today. Barry (Irwin) and I will huddle up and we will figure out what to with him next. Pretty exciting!"

Daily Racing Form columnist and handicapper Marty McGee, writing in his blog on-line, said "There's talk that the winner of the sixth, Animal Kingdom (\$3.40), might turn out to be something for Team Valor and trainer Wayne Catalano. The Leroidesanimaux colt showed far more speed than in his AP bow when easily winning the sixth under Robby Albarado."