

ANIMAL KINGDOM WILL RETURN IN \$2-MILLION BREEDERS' CUP MILE DERBY WINNER HAS TRAINED BRILLIANTLY ON GRASS FOR COMEBACK CHAMPION COLT BREEZED A STRONG 5 FURLONGS TUESDAY AT FAIR HILL

Animal Kingdom will return in the \$2-million Breeders' Cup Mile on the turf at Santa Anita Park on November 3 with a chance to become the first Kentucky Derby winner to go on to Breeders Cup glory since Unbridled in 1990.

The reigning champion 3-year-old male of 2011 scored an easy turf win on February 18 at Gulfstream Park in his only start this year. He developed a stress fracture of the ilium 3 weeks later that knocked him out of the \$6-million Dubai World Cup.

The injury did not require surgery and healed with 30 days of stall rest. Animal Kingdom resumed training in June and began breezing on August 21. Over the summer, trainer Graham Motion suggested the Mile as a viable option if the 4-year-old colt encountered no setbacks. Team Valor CEO Barry Irwin agreed, but he and Motion decided to not reveal the plan until Animal Kingdom showed in his training that the race was a reasonable goal.

"Coming off the layoff, the Mile just seems very logical for him," said Motion, who captured the Breeders' Cup Turf in 2004 with Better Talk Now and Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf with Shared Account in 2010. "He certainly has the turn of foot to handle it. The timing is right for his schedule coming back, and the caliber of horse that he is, you're not going to look for a nice, easy spot. It's a totally different situation than last winter when we ran him in the Gulfstream allowance to get ready for the Dubai World Cup. Going a mile, we feel he should be very fit for this race, and he deserves the opportunity."

This morning, Animal Kingdom breezed 5 furlongs in company with Badleroibrown on the turf racetrack across the street from Fair Hill Training Center, Motion's base in Elkton, Maryland. The official time was :50.20 for the final 4 furlongs, since there is no 5-furlong pole on the undulating course.

Animal Kingdom is a home-bred son of Leroidesanimaux, the champion turf male of 2005 and runner-up in that year's Breeders' Cup Mile at Belmont Park. Last year, Animal Kingdom won the Kentucky Derby and finished second in the Preakness Stakes on dirt and prevailed in Turfway Park's Spiral Stakes on Polytrack. He is the 7 to 1 third choice in Las Vegas future book wagering for the Breeders' Cup Classic, but Motion and Irwin prefer the shorter distance for his first start in 8 ½ months.



Animal Kingdom relaxed in a paddock at Fair Hill this morning before he breezed 5 furlongs on the turf. (Megan Jones/Team Valor photo)