

FOUR BIG RACES TO HIGHLIGHT TEAM VALOR'S REMAINING 2012 SLATE GROUP 1 RACES SET IN CALIFORNIA, FRANCE, ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA ANIMAL KINGDOM, TRIPLE THREAT, FIRST CORNERSTONE AND BRIGANTIN BREEDERS' CUP, CRITERIUM, RACING POST TROPHY AND MELBOURNE CUP



Team Valor International—heavy accent on the last world—is set to fire four big shots around the racing world in the 11-day period between October 27 and November 6. Each of the stars competing—namely Animal Kingdom, Triple Threat, First Cornerstone and Brigantin—is as live as live can be.

The four male runners—three of which, not coincidentally, are home-bred products of Team Valor or Barry Irwin's breeding programs—will be racing for a combined total prize money of about \$9 million. Syndicates formed by Irwin have won Breeders' Cups with home-bred Pluck and gallant Prized.

Here is a brief rundown of what's on tap beginning 9 days from now, as follows:



**ANIMAL KINGDOM
BREEDERS' CUP MILE
\$2 MILLION
Santa Anita, California**



On November 3, the Kentucky Derby winner will line up for a one-mile grass fixture, a win in which would elevate him both as a racehorse and as a stallion prospect. Animal Kingdom has never run in a sprint and he has never won a race over as short a distance as a mile. He will be making his first out since winning an allowance grass comebacker at Gulfstream Park over the winter. He will have the top grass Miler Wise Dan to beat in the Grade 1.



**TRIPLE THREAT
CRITERIUM INTERNATIONAL
\$325,000 (plus bonuses)
Saint-Cloud, Paris, France**



On November 1, the recent 4 ½-length allowance winner will race over the same course and distance of his victory, while stepping up considerably in class for what could be a top effort over a mile at the Paris-based Saint-Cloud race course. With 27 days between races, the timing could be perfect for the Monsun colt, who improved significantly on soft turf. The Monsuns revel on wet ground and the course could be considerably more water logged by race time.



FIRST CORNERSTONE
RACING POST TROPHY
\$315,000
Doncaster, Great Britain



On October 27, this emerging and progressive colt will line up for the most important Group 1 test for British 2-year-old colts with English Derby aspirations. Winners of this historic race have gone on to win the Blue Riband Classic at Epsom Downs on several occasions. First Cornerstone missed his prep for this grueling test when contracting a flu bug, but his trainer Andy Oliver is confident he can render the colt fit enough to perform in this important contest.



BRIGANTIN
MELBOURNE CUP
\$6,250,000
Flemington, Australia



On November 6 the entire nation of Australia will come to a stand still, as all eyes and ears will be on the Melbourne Cup, which boasts the largest prize money for a grass race in the world. The 2-mile distance plays right into the wheel house of Brigantin, who showed in the Ascot Gold Cup that he is effective beyond 16 furlongs. The Kentucky-bred horse will prep on October 24 in the Geelong Cup, where he will be ridden for the first time by leading Italian rider Umberto Respoli for the training genius Andre Fabre.

None of these horses will be favored, but each one has the credentials to win. Animal Kingdom could do with a bit of luck behind a fast pace for his best chance over a distance that obviously is too short for his best.

Triple Threat will have a sterling chance to finish the season on a high note in advance of next year's Classics. He could very well be first class over soft footing.

First Cornerstone was all the rage after he won the Group 2 Futurity Stakes at The Curragh and will be somewhat of a mystery colt when he appears across the sea in England, where bettors figure to treat him with a bit of disdain. His trainer knows the layout very well and is confident the colt will step up over the testing trip and surface. He already has won twice over soft footing.

Brigantin must be in with a huge chance at the weights and distance. He has been freshened after contracting Lyme Disease over the summer and is back in his best form, as evidenced by a pair of seconds in his last two outings, including the important Cup prep in the Group 2 Prix Kergorlay.