

## VAA BANK LEAVES NO DOUBT IN GROUP 3 SCORE TODAY IN BERLIN STORMS TO 5-LENGTH VICTORY AFTER PAIR OF NOSE DEFEATS POLISH HERO REVIVES OLD FORM IN DAZZLING EINHEIT PERFORMANCE KICKS OFF IMPORTANT WEEK WITH TVI'S SEVENTH STAKES WIN OF 2018

Va Bank dusted off his dazzling form of old with a dominant win in Berlin today in the Group 3 Preis der Deutschen Einheit that was certainly welcome and well-deserved after he had dropped a pair of Group races this summer by miniscule margins.

The 6-year-old stormed away at the top of the Hoppegarten stretch to win by 5 lengths in a performance reminiscent of his Baden-Baden score two years ago that prompted Team Valor to buy the previous year's Polish Triple Crown hero. He left no doubt today, in stark contrast to heartbreakers twice this summer when he was second by a nose in both the Group 3 Preis LOTTO and Group 3 Preis Sparkassen.



Va Bank collected Team Valor's seventh stakes victory of 2018 and it came at the start of a key week that will also see the stable

complete in a pair of Grade 1 races at Keeneland as well as a Listed event in Paris.

Barry Irwin credited jockey Eduardo Pedroza with a brilliant ride over the 10-furlong trip at Hoppegarten, as he was able to get Va Bank to relax beautifully and finish full of run despite washing out severely in the preliminaries. As the 3-to-1 second choice, Va Bank tracked in second and third and burst clear on Pedroza's cue at the top of the lane, putting the race away powerfully and leaving just the spoils for former German Horse of the Year Iquitos, who made a belated rally to nail down the second spot in the final jumps as the 9-to-5 favorite.

Woehler said the turf condition was ideal for Va Bank with just a bit of cut in the ground, as he relishes a course that is "on the soft side of good."

A return to the winner's circle had been a long road for Va Bank, who missed much of 2017 with injuries and went to the sidelines again last winter with ankle trouble after shipping to Dubai to compete in a stakes series there. The initial prognosis was negative for a return to peak form, but Woehler and his team rendered him sound and had him spot-on for a Group 2 return at a mile in May when he finished a game second behind English shipper Stormy Antarctic, who went on to finish third in the Grade 1 Woodbine Mile.

In July, Va Bank finished third behind Benbatl and Stormy Antarctic in the Group 1 Grosser Dallmayr-Preis - Bayerisches Zuchtrennen.



Woehler is now game to send Va Bank to Rome for the Group 2 Premio Roma over 10 furlongs on November 4 with a purse of \$296,000, one of the largest pots at the Group 2 level in all of Europe.

From *German-Racing* comes the following:

### ***Impressive Victory from Va Bank in Hoppegarten***

It was an Impressive and deserved success for the 3-to-1 second choice Va Bank on Wednesday in pferdewetten.de - 28th prize of the German Unity (Group III,

75,000 euros, 2,000 m) in front of 12,200 spectators at the racecourse in Berlin-Hoppegarten. Under jockey Eduardo Pedroza, the six-year old stallion, prepared by Andreas Wöhler in Spexard near Gütersloh, triumphed after four strong placings in top-class tests in the now penultimate run of the German Racing Champions League against the 18:10 favorites Iquitos and Itobo in third place. Iquitos took over the lead in the eleven race comprehensive race series.

Va Bank mustered the lead from three-year-old Balmain at the top of the stretch in an optimal situation in the seven-man field. And 300 meters from the finish, Eduardo Pedroza quickly climbed up a gear and said goodbye to the competition, opening up by five lengths. It was an impressive victory for Va Bank, who was bred in Ireland, trained in Germany and is owned by an American-Polish group (Team Valor International and Janusz Piotr Zienkiewicz).

**[Race Replay](#)**  
**[Hoppegarten video of stretch run](#)**  
**[German-Racing video recap](#)**  
**[Va Bank coming back](#)**

Va Vank became a serial winner in Poland at a young age, before he had to take a long break. Now Andreas Wöhler has brought him back to his best form. His statement: "He had several narrow defeats this year. Therefore, this victory is really earned. We had already thought that there would not be much speed and considered, if necessary, even to determine the pace. In Balmain, Va Bank had an ideal leader, could wait there and then easily disengage on the home straight. The plan is to go to the Premio Roma in Rome at the beginning of November. Of course, I want him to stay in training next year. "

Jockey Eduardo Pedroza added, "I'm delighted that Va Bank has now earned the deserved victory and got off to a good start again."

### ***Iquitos has too much to catch up***

The favorite Iquitos just had to make up too much ground. The 2016 Horse of the Year came on fast and fought second place in front of the equally well- fitting training companion Itobo, but more was not possible from this position. Coach Hans-Jürgen Gröschel: "That was just too much Iquitos could not catch up. The performance of the horse was good again. Itobo did a great job as well, he was close and fully confirmed his work performance."