

**PIVOTAL CONNECTION SCORES AT EVEN-MONEY IN BELMONT TURF ROUTER
IRISH IMPORT WIRES FIELD TO SCORE IN \$77,000 FEATURE OVER 1¼ MILES
MARE RESPONDS TO LENGTHY REHAB TO NAB WIN, SECOND IN PAIR OF OUTS**



Pivotal Connection ran the race of her life coming back from a 9-month hiatus to finish second last month going a too-short mile when earning a career-topping 89 Beyer speed figure at Belmont Park. That effort, plus her stretching out to a more suitable mile and a quarter made her attractive to bettors, who made her the even-money favorite.

Her odds were going the wrong way with just a few minutes to post time, as they went from her morning line of 7 to 5 up to 3 to 1, but in the last few clicks the 5-year-old Irish import was hammered, dropping to 2 to 1, to 6 to 4 to even money at the off.

The well-bred daughter of Leading Sire and Leading Broodmare sire Pivotal broke well and Junior Alvarado found himself on the lead, an uncustomary spot for the diminutive chestnut, but completely understandable given her having just run second in a scintillating mile run in 1:33-flat.

Alvarado must have given some initial heart palpitations to trainer Bill Mott, who did not expect the mare to be setting the pace, but the Hall of Famer undoubtedly relaxed when he saw an opening half run in :51 and change and three-quarters in nearly 1:17.

Pivotal Connection was closely pursued by Nonsensical, part of a Godolphin coupling, and when that one was unable to get past the Team Valor runner's hip, her entymate Fancy That picked up the challenge. When Pivotal Connection arrived at the top of the lane, she had swamped her and she appeared ready to be swallowed up. However, when Alvarado balanced the little mare and asked her for her lick for the first time in the running, the British-bred runner out of a Galileo mare found another gear and her stamina asserted itself as the mare drew right away.

At the wire Pivotal Connection maintained a safe 1-length margin and gave the distinct impression that she still had plenty left in the tank. Barry Irwin said "She can be effective up to a mile and a half. She does like a test of stamina. The season is rapidly coming to a close in New York, but she should be able to get in at least one more race before Bill brings her down to Payson Park for the winter. "Bill deserves a lot of credit not only for the way he has trained this mare, but for persevering with her comeback, because she was pretty messed up when we sent her out last year. She not only had a bad case of bone bruising, but she had plenty of other associated niggles. Now that she is feeling fine, we are seeing why I was moved to buy her in the first place." She earned \$42,350 for the win.