

Gouverneur Morris to Try 2 Turns in Breeders' Futurity Impressive maiden winner at Saratoga to prep for Breeders' Cup World Championships at Keeneland

By Bob Ehalt, September 21, 2019



Gouverneur Morris breaks his maiden at Saratoga Race Course

After a dazzling debut at Saratoga Race Course, the next step for Team Valor International and WinStar Farm's **Gouverneur Morris** will come Oct. 5 around two turns in the \$500,000 Claiborne Breeders' Futurity (G1) at Keeneland.

A 2-year-old son of first-year sire Constitution,

Gouverneur Morris had an eye-opening nine-length victory in his Sept. 2 career debut at the Spa for trainer Todd Pletcher, covering 5 1/2 furlongs in 1:04.29 on a sloppy track as a 3-5 favorite.

Team Valor founder and CEO Barry Irwin said distance played a role in choosing Keeneland over the one-mile, one-turn \$500,000 Champagne Stakes (G1) at Belmont Park on the same day.

"I favored this plan because of the two turns and experience for the Breeders' Cup. The deciding factor was that (Grade 3 Iroquois Stakes winner) Dennis' Moment is not running in this race, and the New York race looks like it's loaded while this race looks like it will come up more or less normal, so we feel more comfortable going to Keeneland," Irwin said. "I'm not worried at all about the two turns after his last work (five furlongs in a bullet 1.00.88 Sept. 20 at the Belmont training track). He looks strong."

Although John Velazquez rode Gouverneur Morris in the colt's debut, Irwin said Javier Castellano is expected to be aboard in the Breeders' Futurity.

The gray colt will stretch out to 1 1/16 miles in a race that will determine his status for the \$2 million TVG Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1), a stakes contested under the same conditions Nov. 1 at Santa Anita Park.

The Breeders' Futurity is part of the Breeders' Cup Challenge Series and will provide the winner with a free spot in the Juvenile.

Since 2014, winners of the Breeders' Futurity have accounted for one Juvenile victory (Classic Empire in 2016) and two runner-up finishes (Knicks Go in 2018 and Carpe Diem in 2014).