

April 5, 2013

## TEAM VALOR HIRES RICK METTEE AS PRIVATE TRAINER, EFFECTIVE MAY 1 GRAHAM MOTION WILL CONTINUE TO TRAIN ANIMAL KINGDOM METTEE TRAINED FOR BARRY IRWIN IN PAST, GUIDED GODOLPHIN STRING

Team Valor International has hired Rick Mettee to train all of its North American-based racehorses.

Mettee's last job was as an assistant trainer to Saeed bin Suroor, running Godolphin's U.S. division for the Dubai royal family. He will commence training for Team Valor on May 1.



In the 1990s, Mettee trained horses for Barry Irwin's partnerships, winning the Jaipur Stakes with French import Kanatiyr. With horses trained mainly by Mettee, Godolphin won the 2009 Eclipse Award as outstanding owner.

"Rick has experience training horses on synthetic and dirt surfaces in America and in Dubai," Irwin said. "He did exceptional work while winning several Grade 1 races with the Godolphin runners. We are looking forward to renewing our relationship with him."

*Rick Mettee*

Graham Motion, who saddled Animal Kingdom to win the recent Dubai World Cup, has been training the Team Valor horses since late 2010, while also conditioning horses for other owners.

Irwin said "Graham Motion trained Team Valor's horses privately from our barn at Fair Hill Training Center as an accommodation to us. But he made it clear that he would continue to train for other owners. We understood this and accepted his conditions.

"However, due to the unique type of operation we run with partnership-owned horses, we feel at this time it would serve our needs better to have one trainer that was exclusive to our stable. Graham agrees. He has offered to continue to train our horses through the month of April until our new trainer has set up his operation."

Motion continues to train Animal Kingdom, who is expected to make his final start in June at the Royal Ascot meeting in either the Group 1 Queen Anne Stakes or the Group 1 Prince of Wales's Stakes for Arrowfield Stud and Team Valor International.

In addition to the World Cup, Motion won the Grade 1 Kentucky Derby with Animal Kingdom, the Grade 1 Del Mar Oaks with Summer Soiree and the Grade 1 Matriarch Stakes with Gypsy's Warning.

Mettee will operate primarily out of Team Valor's barn at Fair Hill in Elkton, Maryland. He is a native of Maryland and first rose to prominence as an assistant to trainer John Gosden in Southern California in the 1980s when Gosden trained champions Bates Motel and Royal Heroine, who defeated males in the inaugural Breeder's Cup Mile. Gosden recommended Mettee for the job with Godolphin. In 6 seasons, Mettee oversaw the U.S. roster that won such prestigious races as the Matriarch, Forego, Cigar Mile, Vosburgh, Coaching Club American Oaks and 2 straight editions of the Beldame.

For more about Mettee, see the following from *Daily Racing Form*:

[Mettee settles into new role](#)

[Mettee guiding Godolphin hot streak](#)