

BLOSSOM D'ORANGE RISES TO THE TOP OF 3YO FILLY CLASS IN URUGUAY HOMEBRED CRUISES TO 5-LENGTH WIN IN GRADE 3 PRODUCCION NACIONAL WIN IS NUMBER 1,000 FOR A BARRY IRWIN-FORMED RACING PARTNERSHIP



Blossom d'Orange never got out of second gear in stakes.

Homebred Blossom d'Orange surprised her rider, her trainer and her owners by how effortlessly she dispatched 9 rivals Saturday to account for the Grade 3 Produccion Nacional by 5 lengths.

The victory was number 1,000 for a partnership formed by Team Valor International's president Barry Irwin. Nobody should be surprised that the win came in an international Graded race.

Final time for the 7-½-furlong event was faster than 3-year-old colts needed in a Grade 3 test one race later on the card, as newly turned 3yo colts and fillies prepped for the Classic Guineas.

"You know, I never ask my young horses for speed when I train them," said Irwin's longtime friend, trainer Pico Perdomo. "I let them go at their own pace. So sometimes they surprise me. Like she did.

"There has to be a lot of improvement to come for this filly, because the rider said he never touched her, he just steered, and he said she had plenty left in the tank. She covers a lot of ground with that long stride. I have been doing this for a long time, but this filly, she has really got me excited."

Blossom d'Orange won her debut well enough to offer hope that she might be up to earning brackets in a black-type race, as she showed moxie coming through along the rail when in tight and pulling away to win nicely. Next time out she was shuffled back at the start, never found a seam to run through and was lucky to finish fifth.

Fitted with fleecy red cheek pieces that act like blinkers, Blossom d'Orange ran right to the head of the 3yo filly class on Saturday as the 8 to 1 fourth choice in the dirt race around one turn at Maronas racetrack in Uruguay.

The filly broke running and was second much of the way down the long backstretch, but she was under severe pressure on the turn as she was passed by two horses just to her outside as this trio followed a pacesetter.

"I thought she was succumbing to the pressure," admitted Irwin. "However, rounding the stretch turn, she moved up into second and it became immediately obvious that she was simply biding her time."

A close second coming off the bend, Blossom d'Orange switched leads on cue, went into the lead and began to draw away from the leader who simply could no longer keep pace. With the rider sitting

motionless, the Team Valor colorbearer seemingly drew away with every stride and was never let out or urged as she crossed the line 5 lengths to the good.

“I think I might have to go all the way back to Ebony Flyer (r) to come up with the name of a Southern Hemisphere runner of ours that gave me this kind of feeling. It was that impressive.”

Racing is extremely popular with the public in Uruguay, so this performance was well received, both on track and in the media. A couple of examples from websites that cover the sport follow:

“When put on the run in the last 300 meters, she settled the bill with remarkable ease,” wrote one site.

“Among the fillies was a brilliant demonstration by Blossom d’Orange,” said another.

Blossom d’Orange was in the belly of a Brazilian mare Team Valor purchased named Belle Fleur. The filly was left behind in South America and her dam was flown to Florida, where after contracting a virus she died. She was a good stakes winner and Graded class both in Brazil and California on dirt and turf.

“Thank goodness Belle Fleur left a stone cold runner,” Irwin said. “It eases the pain of the loss.”

