

HAYABUSA ONE DENIED BY 'DIRTIEST OF NOSES' IN SANTA ANITA GRADE 2 FRENCH IMPORT REWARDS PATIENCE, LONG-HELD FAITH IN HIS ABILITY THIRD BLACK-TYPE HORSE FOR THE STABLE IN THE LAST THREE WEEKS



On one hand, Hayabusa One provided a true thrill on February 3 when he went toe-to-toe with the top horse in the Southern California turf division, Itsinthepost, in Saturday's Grade 2 San Marcos Stakes, as the French-bred duo hooked up to deliver one of the most exciting races thus far in 2018.

On the other hand, as exhilarating as the final 12 seconds were as Hayabusa One made good on his potential, the moment when the official result was revealed, with Itsinthepost confirmed to have gotten his nose up

at the wire, was an extremely bitter pill to swallow.

Barry Irwin told members of Hayabusa One's partnership that he doubted any of them will ever again go through such a tough beat as this one.

"The good news is that the horse confirmed our faith in him," Irwin said.

Team Valor has participated in three stakes races early in the New Year and all three have earned Black-Type, with Hayabusa One following Bombshell (third in the Ladies Handicap at Aqueduct) and Vulcan's Forge (second in the Grade 3 Toboggan Stakes at Aqueduct) the previous two weekends. Through February 4, the stable had four wins and eight placings from 22 starters in 2018.

Hayabusa One had been anointed a TDN Rising Star in his Team Valor debut almost a year and a half ago, when he dismantled an allowance field at Keeneland with an electric turn of foot. Not much else went right for Hayabusa One until this winter, when he managed to escape the Lilac fire at San Luis Rey Downs in early December and returned from a break with a sharp allowance win a month later at Santa Anita. Some speed figures poo-pooed that performance, but his final time was unmistakably fast and comparable to Itsinthepost's victory in the Grade 2 San Gabriel Stakes a week earlier, so Irwin, co-owner Gary Barber and trainer Peter Miller were game to test him in the 10-furlong San Marcos. He was let go at odds of nearly 15-to-1 and came agonizingly close to the big upset.

"That was the dirtiest of noses," said Matt Bernier in a race analysis for *Daily Racing Form*.

Itsinthepost, now a five-time Grade 2 winner, had to summon a career-best 102 Beyer to dispatch of Hayabusa One, who has reignited his career with a new trainer, Peter Miller, after missing most of last year with bone bruising.

Irwin said, "Before we returned him to training, a veterinarian told us not to even try because he was finished. Based on my theory that synthetic tracks and light training were exactly the opposite of what this horse needed, I designed a training regimen that called for strictly training on the dirt and included more time jogging and galloping before he began to breeze. It obviously worked. Peter Miller is doing a great job with him."

Hayabusa One went through the extra conditioning paces with Bruce Jackson at his Fair Hill Equine Therapy Unit in Maryland. The 5-year-old chestnut registered a career-best 5 Ragozin and could get a rematch with Itsinthe post in the Grade 2 San Luis Rey Stakes over 12 furlongs on March 24.



Hayabusa One, on the outside, appeared to have the lead before and after the wire but he fell painfully short at the decisive moment.