

June 7, 2015

## TRIPLE THREAT STRIKES FOR GRADE 2 WIN AT MONMOUTH IN U.S. DEBUT HOMEBRED FOR TVI, BARBER REJUVENATED AFTER SWITCH FROM FRANCE FLASHES SHARP TURN OF FOOT TO JUST GET UP FOR NEW TRAINER MOTT

Triple Threat, a home-bred who won a pair of group races in France as a 3-year-old, revitalized his career at 5 on Sunday by winning the Grade 2 Monmouth Stakes in a thriller in his U.S. debut.



*Triple Threat (outside) literally gets up in the final jump under jockey Jose Lezcano in the \$205,000 Monmouth Stakes.*

Racing in the hot pink silks of partner and co-breeder Gary Barber, Triple Threat stormed home under jockey Jose Lezcano to get his nose down on the wire over Middleburg to his inside. The son of Monsun out of Drei, by Lyphard, had tracked in sixth and seventh place along the rail before swinging out widest of all at the top of the stretch. He made up about 2 lengths to catch Middleburg.

Mike Watchmaker, national handicapper for *Daily Racing Form*, wrote "That was a most impressive late kick from Triple Threat to win the Monmouth Stakes. He's one to watch in the male turf division, for sure."

He required a crash course of lessons at the starting gate from horse whisperer Monty Roberts in the spring of 2013 and responded with a sharp win in the Group 2 Prix Eugene Adam over 10 furlongs. Last year, he was inconsistent and acted like a horse who was ready for something different. Team Valor CEO Barry Irwin first decided to give him a low-key winter to refresh his mind under trainer and Steeplechase jockey Danielle Hodsdon at the Camden Training Center in South Carolina.

The strategy worked, as Triple Threat was thriving by the time he joined Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott at Payson Park in South Florida in mid-March. He trained sharply there and at Saratoga Race Course in preparation for the 9-furlong Monmouth, which is the traditional prep for the Grade 1 United Nations Stakes on July 5.

"He was generous in his late run to win," said Irwin, who leaned on German bloodlines in formulating the mating that produced Triple Threat, like he did with another Team Valor home-bred, Animal Kingdom. "We should have a lot of fun with this horse this year."

Triple Threat is a half brother to the Grade 2-placed stakes winner Pina Colada, whom Team Valor and Barber also raced, and also to the unraced mare Mrs. Marsh, who produced Canford Cliffs, a champion miler in England and Ireland.

[Video from the Blood-Horse](#)

From *Daily Racing Form* comes the following:

### **Triple Threat's Nose Hits Wire First In Monmouth Stakes**

Triple Threat, making his U.S. debut for trainer Bill Mott, Team Valor International, and Gary Barber, showed a sharp turn of foot to nose out Middleburg in the Grade 2 Monmouth Stakes on Sunday at Monmouth Park.

Triple Threat went 3 for 13 in three seasons in Europe, winning a Group 2 at Maisons-Laffitte and a Group 3 at Longchamp. Now 5, he wintered in Florida with Mott and came into the Monmouth with 10 works dating back to March 17, six at Payson Park and four at Saratoga.

He was unhurried early while saving ground under Jose Lezcano, who wheeled him out in the course in upper stretch. He made up about 1 1/2 lengths on Middleburg in the stretch and was up to win by a nose, impressive considering the early fractions were slow.

The Monmouth Stakes is the local prep for the July 3 United Nations, a Grade 1 at 1 3/8 miles of turf on July 5. Based on his European form, that distance would suit Triple Threat if Mott decides to send him back to Monmouth Park.



Middleburg raced well in defeat. Outside the winner on the backstretch, he threaded his way between horses on the far turn, was angled outside by Joe Bravo entering the stretch, and got the jump on Triple Threat. He was moving well at the finish but just missed.

Pacesetter Inchscape finished third, 1 1/2 lengths behind Middleburg. Inchscape held a clear lead into the final furlong.

Cage Fighter, who pressed the early pace, was fourth, 1 1/4 lengths farther back. Ghurair, the 9-5 favorite, saved ground while forwardly placed to the stretch, lacked the needed kick and finished fifth, a nose behind Cage Fighter.

Triple Threat paid \$7.40 and was timed in 1:49.89. The fractions were 25.27 seconds, 50.51, 1:14.52, and 1:37.96.

From the *Blood-Horse* comes the following:

### **Triple Threat Sharp In U.S. Debut At Monmouth**

Team Valor and Gary Barber's Triple Threat stormed home on the far outside in the lane and won a late duel with Middleburg to take the \$205,000 Monmouth Handicap (gr. IIT) June 7 at Monmouth Park.

It marked the United States debut for Triple Threat, who was bred in France by his owners. The 5-year-old horse by Monsun out of the Lyphard mare Drei was a group II winner in France in 2013 and hadn't raced since last September.

Now trained by Bill Mott, Triple Threat, who was ridden by Jose Lezcano, won for the fourth time in 14 starts.

Triple Threat rated in sixth and seventh in the nine-horse early as Inchcape, who led for most of the way and settled for third, set a soft pace of :25.27 for the opening quarter-mile, :50.51 for the half-mile, and 1:14.52 for six furlongs. The leader was tracked intently by Cage Fighter, who eventually finished fourth.

On the far turn in the 1 1/18-mile grass test the field began to bunch. Triple Threat on the far outside and Middleburg, who was closer to the rail, began serious rallies, and in the final sixteenth of a mile it came down to those two. Triple Threat won by a nose in 1:49.89 on turf rated firm.

"He had to take back going into the first turn," Lezcano said. "That was fine because we were close to the pack anyway with the slow pace. We had to go a little wide, but once we hit the quarter-pole, he had a lot of kick left for the stretch.

"That was my first time on the horse and he had a lot of power coming down the stretch."

Triple Threat paid \$7.40, \$4, and \$3.20 across the board as the co-second choice with Middleburg, who returned \$3.60 and \$3. Inchcape was worth \$4.60 to show.

Favored Ghurair, who hadn't raced since last August, was in contention early but finished fifth, just behind Cage Fighter.

Triple Threat has now earned \$370,648, and based on his effort in the Monmouth Handicap should prove a big player in graded turf stakes at the season progresses.