

**ANIMAL KINGDOM PROVES DOMINANT ON WORLD'S RICHEST STAGE
TEAM VALOR HOME-BRED CRUSHES \$10M DUBAI WORLD CUP AT MEYDAN
AFTER LONG ROAD, BIG HORSE MATCHES HIS KENTUCKY DERBY TRIUMPH
NOW 4TH ON ALL-TIME EARNINGS LIST IN U.S., ROYAL ASCOT MAY BE NEXT**

In dominating the world's richest race, Animal Kingdom cleared up any doubt of his sensational talent and punctuated one of the most unique profiles in American racing history.



*Animal Kingdom was awesome in delivering his first stakes win since the 2011 Kentucky Derby.
Dubai Racing Club-Andrew Watkins photo*

In between those bookends, the big chestnut 5-year-old mixed in a second-place finish to eventual Horse of the Year Wise Dan in the Breeders' Cup Mile on turf, his incredible rally hindered by traffic as he returned from an 8 ½-month layoff in the deepest field assembled in North America in 2012.

In the World Cup, Animal Kingdom tied a neat and valuable bow around his résumé, back on the synthetic variety of racetracks that he glided over in his maiden win at Keeneland at 2 and in his first stakes triumph at Turfway Park at 3.

"He's a very unique, unusual horse, and I hope that breeders embrace him and appreciate him," said Team Valor CEO Barry Irwin, who planned the mating that produced Animal Kingdom after buying his sire, Leroidesanimaux, as a stallion prospect for a client and importing his dam, Dalicia, from Germany. "He's one of the few horses good enough to win any race, including a race at a mile, and a mile and a quarter here, and I don't think a mile and a half would bother him."

The manner in which Animal Kingdom ascended through the World Cup may have been the only surprise. Ever since a second-place finish in the Grade 1 Gulfstream Park Turf Handicap when Rosario made a premature move in his first time riding the horse, Animal Kingdom had struck his trainer Graham Motion as being unusually sharp. He thrived throughout a week of training at Meydan leading up to the World Cup, seemingly poised like a coiled spring.

The Team Valor home-bred crushed an international field with a devastating new twist at Meydan racecourse on Saturday, pouncing from just off the pace and cruising home in hand and with his ears pricked in the \$10-million Dubai World Cup.

Almost two years since making history as the first horse to win the Kentucky Derby in his first start on dirt, Animal Kingdom emphatically ended a record of futility for American runners on the grand stage of Meydan.

Irwin noted that the horse appeared fitter than he had ever seen him, benefiting from the chance to run in back-to-back races for the first time since the 2011 Triple Crown.



Animal Kingdom joins Silver Charm as the second horse to win both the Kentucky Derby and Dubai World Cup.

Attuned to Animal Kingdom's physical and mental preparedness, Motion was able to formulate a game plan on the fly with Rosario after they watched a very slow edition of the United Arab Emirates Derby on the World Cup undercard with a horse who was on or near the lead the whole way.

Animal Kingdom has been a deep closer throughout much of his career, mostly from a lack of gate speed. When Motion huddled with Rosario on World Cup night, he stressed that the horse needed to get away from the gate sharply from post 11 and to establish a good position early.

"We sat for about 10 minutes after the UAE Derby and I said that he's got to break well and he can't get too far out of it," Motion said. "Joel just had him in the perfect spot."

Animal Kingdom's temperament has been one of his greatest assets, especially for a mission that involves a long trip and new surroundings, including a reported crowd of 84,000 on World Cup night. Barry Irwin observed that the horse was dry as a bone and cool as a cucumber in the preliminaries, on a very warm night in the desert.

"Once the blinkers were put on Animal Kingdom, he became a different animal," Irwin said. "He knew it was 'go time.' His ears became pricked, he seemed more intent on his surroundings and for the first time, there was just a hint of lather between his hind legs."

Animal Kingdom and Rosario both delivered coming out of the gate, as the horse broke alertly and was keen to run early. Going past the finish line the first time, he was 3-wide and 3 lengths behind pacesetter Royal Delta in a field of 12. In the first turn, Animal Kingdom cruised up to the flank of Royal Delta, the 2-time U.S. champion and Breeders' Cup winner, and he pressed her along the backstretch.

Mike Smith, the Hall of Famer on Royal Delta, tried to "race ride" Rosario from the end of the backstretch to the top of the lane, packing him out and trying to force him wide. Rosario ignored him, staying just at a good enough angle to keep Animal Kingdom in a comfortable spot and out of danger, while applying pressure to Royal Delta.

Into the turn, Animal Kingdom inherited the front as Royal Delta weakened, and he put the race away in a few powerful strides at the top of the lane. In fact, the horse took over before Rosario asked him. Perfectly in sync with Rosario's cue to switch leads, he opened up by 4 lengths and rolled through the long stretch with his ears pricked the whole way and the outcome never in doubt as British stayer Red Cadeaux came on late to get second, with a gap of another 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ lengths back to Planteur in third. Animal Kingdom galloped out eagerly like he could go around again, while more than a dozen Team Valor partners and their families celebrated the ultimate reward for their patience through 2 injuries

“That was shocking. I thought he could win but I didn’t think he could win like that. He proved that not only is he a top horse, but that he is one of the top horses in the world.”—*Barry Irwin*

“Have we ever seen a greater horse on multiple surfaces than Animal Kingdom? Dirt, grass, Polytrack, Tapeta. Gonna miss him big-time.”—*Steve Haskin, The Blood-Horse*

“Animal Kingdom is a great horse to win the Kentucky Derby and Dubai World Cup. A ‘wow’ race.”—*Bob Baffert, trainer of Silver Charm*

“He has never been beaten over a mile and a quarter and he is the best horse in the world over that distance.”—*John Messara of Arrowfield Stud*

that sidelined the horse in much of 2011 and 2012. Rosario actually had a hard time pulling Animal Kingdom up.

“This has been some kind of saga with this horse, up, down, up, down, and we always knew he had another race like this in him,” Irwin said. “He showed it in the Derby and we wanted to see it one more time. The Breeders’ Cup was almost it, but this was it.

“In the stretch, I thought ‘I hope this horse doesn’t bleed like every American told me he would do without Lasix,’” continued Irwin, who strongly believes that American racing should follow the lead of Europe, the U.A.E. and most every other major racing jurisdictions in the world and abolish the use of raceday drugs. “I am thrilled to death to win a race like this without medication. It means a lot to me, and to the horse and to the breeding industry.”

Motion said “That’s not really his style but he is good enough to produce when you take him out of his game, as we had to do. He’s just an extraordinary animal. Joel seemed to have so much and when this horse went clear he did it with supreme confidence.”

The World Cup was an important feather in Animal Kingdom’s cap as a stallion prospect. Following the Breeders’ Cup, Irwin entertained offers from interested stud farms but determined to only make a deal that he felt could position the horse as an important stallion. He found that partner in John Messara’s Arrowfield Stud, a powerhouse in Australia. Messara agreed to purchase a majority stake in Animal Kingdom, with Team Valor’s partnership staying on board with a significant interest and Irwin continuing to manage the horse through the World Cup.

Committed to supporting Animal Kingdom’s stud career, Team Valor has been stocking up on mares to breed to the 2011 Eclipse Award winner both in Australia and as a shuttle stallion to the Northern Hemisphere.

Animal Kingdom, who will be considered for one more start at Royal Ascot in June before heading to the breeding shed at Arrowfield in September, is just the second horse to win the Kentucky Derby and Dubai World Cup, joining Silver Charm. Coincidentally, Silver Charm beat Team Valor’s Captain Bodgit by a head in the 1997 Kentucky Derby and doubled up in the 1998 World Cup at the old Nad al Sheba racetrack on dirt.

Animal Kingdom earned \$6-million with the victory and now has the fourth-highest bankroll ever for a horse based in North America at \$8,387,500, behind Curlin (\$10,501,800), Cigar (\$9,999,815) and Skip Away (\$9,916,360). He joined Kinsale King, winner of the 2010 Golden Shaheen on the undercard, as the only American horses to finish in the top three since the event switched to Meydan. On Saturday, the best showing among 9 other American-based horses was a 6th-place finish in the Al Quoz Sprint.

“Our team got it right,” Irwin said.

The win came just one day removed from the 10-year anniversary of Team Valor’s groundbreaking victory at Nad al Sheba with Ipi Tombe, a Zimbabwe-bred mare who defeated males in the \$2-million

Dubai Duty Free on World Cup night. In 26 seasons, Team Valor has now captured 10 7-figure races across the world, from the U.S. to the U.A.E., Canada and Hong Kong.

From the *U.K. Guardian* comes the following:

Animal Kingdom Triumphs For U.S. in Dubai World Cup

A horse trained in the United States took the Dubai World Cup for the first time since it moved into the sport's grandest venue on Saturday as Animal Kingdom, the 2011 Kentucky Derby winner, came home two lengths in front of British-trained contenders Red Cadeaux and Planteur.

This was a polished performance by Animal Kingdom, far removed from the disappointing efforts of American challengers in the past three seasons. Joel Rosario, the five-year-old's jockey, soon had him settled close behind his compatriot Royal Delta, who set the pace until the top of the home stretch.

At that point, Rosario sent Animal Kingdom into the lead and, from there, they floated away down the straight, ghosting over the Tapeta surface that had proved such a problem for American horses in the past.



Alice Clapham, exercise rider and traveling assistant for Graham Motion, in a quiet moment with Animal Kingdom.

Red Cadeaux, a former Melbourne Cup runner-up from Ed Dunlop's Newmarket stable, set off in pursuit, but the gulf in class was too wide to bridge. Planteur, trained by Marco Botti, emerged from the pack to finish third.

This was a hugely significant success, a demonstration that the best American 10-furlong performers can win the world's most valuable race on a synthetic surface and without the benefit of raceday medications.

"[When he went clear in the straight] I thought, I hope this horse doesn't bleed like every American told me he would do without Lasix," Barry Irwin, Animal Kingdom's owner and a vociferous opponent of raceday drugs, said. "I am thrilled to death to win a race like this without medication. It means a lot to me, and to the horse and to the breeding industry.

"He's a very unique, unusual horse, and I hope that breeders embrace him and appreciate him. He's one of the few horses good enough to win any race, including a race at a mile, and a mile and a quarter here, and I don't think a mile and a half would bother him."

Animal Kingdom has been sold to stand at stud in Australia and is unlikely to return to the United States, but Royal Ascot in the middle of June could well be the next stop on his route towards the breeding shed.

"He will ship to England on Saturday," Graham Motion, his Nottingham-born trainer, said. "We will talk about it [his target] in the morning. I'm not a big believer in getting too far ahead and, when pointing for this race, it was hard to think about England."

The obvious races which Animal Kingdom could contest are the one-mile Queen Anne Stakes, the first race of the meeting, which was won last year by Frankel, and the Prince of Wales's Stakes over 10 furlongs the following afternoon. He is 5-1 with Coral to win any race at the royal meeting.

From the *Dubai Racing Club* comes the following:

Animal Kingdom Triumphs For United States in Dubai World Cup

With effortless looking but ground devouring strikes, Animal Kingdom crushed his competition in the 18th running of the G1 US\$10 million Dubai World Cup sponsored by Emirates Airline on March 30.

Now owned in partnership by Australia's Arrowfield Stud and the Team Valor International racing partnership based in the United States, Animal Kingdom stunned even his owners with his remarkable victory by two lengths over late running Red Cadeaux in the world's richest race at Meydan.

"It's unbelievable," said a beaming jockey, Joel Rosario, who waved his whip to cheers and applause as Animal Kingdom strode into the winner's circle. "He's a very good horse; he's very quick."

Rosario steered Animal Kingdom to loom outside two-time American champion filly Royal Delta, who had set fractions of :26.59, :50.02 and 1:13.63 under Mike Smith, before they swooped to the lead coming out of the far turn. In just a few steps, Animal Kingdom opened up several lengths—and the race was over.

Animal Kingdom, winner of the 2011 G1 Kentucky Derby off a stakes victory on the all-weather Turfway Park track, crossed the finish line in 2:03.21 for the 2000 metres, earning US\$6 million for his efforts. Trained by English-born Graham Motion, Animal Kingdom now has a career record of five wins in 11 starts with earnings of \$8,387,500.

The victory by the five-year-old son of Leroidesanimaux marked the first by an American-based and –trained runner in the Dubai World Cup since Meydan opened with an all-weather surface in 2010, replacing the dirt track at the old Nad Al Sheba Racecourse on which American runners frequently prevailed.

LINKS

[**Racing Post**](#)—Animal Kingdom went into the 2013 running of the Dubai World Cup as the one horse capable of producing something special, and produce something special he did, blowing away his rivals with a display steeped in authority.

[**The U.A.E. National**](#)—Animal Kingdom destroyed the myth that horses trained in America could not win the Dubai World Cup at Meydan Racecourse with a power-packed performance.

[**Daily Racing Form**](#)—Animal Kingdom Takes the World By Storm.

[**Video**](#) of the race and winner's circle.