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DAILY RACING FORM: WENT THE DAY WELL IS ONLY GETTING BETTER CLEANER TRIP MAY BE ALL COLT NEEDS IN PREAKNESS STAKES SATURDAY



By Jay Privman of *Daily Racing Form* comes the following:

Went the Day Well has been playing catch up since he arrived in this country and was remanded to quarantine for nearly two weeks. He has certainly made up for lost time – he nearly gave his connections a second straight victory in the Kentucky Derby on May 5 – and he still appears to have plenty of upside, which is one reason why he is being wheeled back in the 137th Preakness Stakes next Saturday at Pimlico.

Went the Day Well finished fourth in the Derby, beaten just 2 1/2 lengths by the victorious I'll Have Another, but he certainly encountered 2 1/2 lengths worth of trouble in the race. After getting bumped at the start, Went the Day Well was forced to check a furlong into the race when Prospective veered into his path after Prospective clipped heels, and then Prospective, because of pressure to his outside, tightened things up again on Went the Day Well going around the first turn, causing jockey John Velazquez to check anew.

On the far turn, Went the Day Well had a fairly clean journey, but he needed to swing wide for racing room. Though 14th at the top of the stretch, he rallied furiously, knifing between Dullahan and Creative Cause in the final yards while missing second place by one length.

“It’s extraordinary to me to think that with a cleaner trip we could have come very close to winning the Derby two years in a row,” said Graham Motion, who trains Went the Day Well for the Team Valor International syndicate and won last year’s Derby with Animal Kingdom. “Went the Day Well is a horse that still hasn’t been completely exposed. He just seems to improve every time I run him.



Went the Day Well trained for a few days after the Kentucky Derby in a field at Fair Hill Training Center in Elton, Maryland, that Graham Motion utilizes with a set of horses every day. Photos by Megan Jones/Team Valor

“So could he reach the potential of Animal Kingdom? Yes, I think he could. I’m so impressed with how he handled everything on Derby Day, from the crowds and the way he ran, to the way he came out of the race.



Went the Day Well and exercise rider Zeke Castro will get in 4 mornings of training at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore leading up to the Preakness.

“Every time I’ve run this horse, to me he’s improved. Whereas some of the horses going into the Derby perhaps had already been exposed, I think my horse was kind of an up-and-comer, and I just hope that he continues to go that way and obviously I hope he continues to go that way in the Preakness.”

Motion said he believes that Went the Day Well’s trip in the Derby was compromised by getting off a bit slowly, putting him farther back than what was planned. He raced with blinkers for the first time in the Derby.

turn,” Motion said. “He really wanted to get an inner position, and he just didn’t break sharp, and that cost him.”

Yet despite that tough trip, Motion said he was “really surprised at how well this fellow’s handled it.”

“He’s bounced out of the Derby in great shape,” Motion said.

“I guess,” Motion added, “we underestimate the hardiness of these horses.”

Went the Day Well has been at the Fair Hill Training Center in Maryland since the day following the Derby.



Last year, Motion kept Animal Kingdom at Fair Hill until the morning of the Preakness, in which he finished second to Shackleford. But Motion said he will bring Went the Day Well to Pimlico earlier in the week to get familiar with the surroundings and surface.