

VALOR RED DELIGHTFUL WINNER OF EAST CAPE OAKS IN SOUTH AFRICA TINY WESTERN WINTER FILLY STAYS MILE AND A QUARTER IN LISTED RACE CAREER FINALE SENDS WELL-BRED FILLY OFF TO TVI'S BROODMARE BAND

Valor Red, in her career finale, thrilled her connections with a convincing 1 ¼-length victory at Fairview race course today to become a stakes winner of the East Cape Oaks. The stars were in complete alignment for today's contest, as trainer Justin Snaith scratched Gaynor Rupert's favored Star Gem when she was not 100 percent. Star Gem stood head and shoulders above the other 3-year-old fillies in the race, throwing the door open for a longshot.



Justin Snaith leads in Valor Red last summer.

encouraged Irwin to try the East Cape Oaks.

Valor Red found cover in mid-pack on the inside under jockey Muzi Yeni, and they had a clear path as they gradually advanced along the rail in the lane. As the 4 to 5 favorite Silvan Spirit came up lacking in deep stretch, Valor Red ran right on by her and actually won comfortably by a length and a quarter in the field of 13.

“Now we have a very valuable broodmare prospect,” Irwin said. “She is now a stakes winner and she has an impeccable pedigree. This is very, very gratifying.”

Just why is Valor Red so valuable as a broodmare, even though she stands only 15 hands high? She is one of 4 stakes winners produced by her dam. Amazingly 3 of them won their stakes in the last 30 days. The next two dams produced Champions. There are plenty of successful instances of the cross with Western Winter within the first two generations of the dam's pedigree.

So Team Valor will breed foals out of Valor Lady and sell them as yearlings.

Valor Red was bought as a yearling by Irwin at the inaugural Cape Premier Yearling Sale in Cape Town. “I had a hard time allowing myself to buy her because she was so small,” Irwin admitted. “She was a beautiful model of a horse because she was so well balanced. But she was tiny. Neil Bruss urged me to buy her, and I give him full credit for that. I needed that final push to raise my hand.”

The filly had been pointing for the 10-furlong fixture for months as a final bid to get her any kind of Black Type for a broodmare career, as she comes from a terrific family. Snaith prepped the filly in the official Oaks Prep, in which she finished fourth in the best effort of her career. She tried hard and very nearly lasted for third.

“Hey, I know I saw it with my own eyes,” laughed Snaith, “and I realize that she crossed under the wire first, but I still cannot believe it. This filly is a true midget. She has no length of rein. She is by Western Winter. She is not bred to get anywhere near this far.”

The rationale for stretching her out was that the filly was a full sister to Nania, who was a Grade 1 filly at 2 over a mile. Michelle Hemingway told Barry Irwin that Nania actually improved with distance and age, which