

SPEECHIFY RETIRES AFTER RUNNING SECOND THURSDAY IN ALLOWANCE RALPH NICKS: “VETERAN SPRINTER ACTS LIKE HE IS PROTECTING HIMSELF” TEAM VALOR WILL LOOK FOR A GOOD HOME FOR \$215,185 GRADE 3 WINNER

Keeneland September Yearling Sale purchase Speechify, a multiple stakes winner including the Grade 3 Mr. Prospector Handicap at Gulfstream Park, has been retired by Team Valor International after trainer Ralph Nicks suggested following his second-place finish Thursday at Gulfstream Park that the veteran sprinter might be protecting himself.

Speechify pressed the pace in a sloppy track 5 ½-furlong dash, took command inside the quarter pole, then was passed by the runaway 3 ¾-length winner.



Speechify loved to race and train fast for Ralph Nicks.

“He is sound, his joints are clean and he still flexes all right, but I still think he is protecting himself and I’d hate to see him go down again,” Nicks said. “He’ll run along for a while, but then he gets to taking care of himself. He’s just never been the same since he fell down at Keeneland.”

Barry Irwin and Nicks now will look for a good home for Speechify and Irwin will monitor him on a regular basis where ever he goes because of his special issue. Speechify developed a serious issue with his esophagus as a 2-year-old. He can choke if he eats hay or any solid food. He has subsisted on a diet of a soup-like mash developed by Tony Everard of New Episode Farm near Ocala, Florida after his first battle with choking.

“I will never forget the first time I laid eyes on him at Keeneland,” recalled Irwin. “When he stepped out of the stall he looked like a ready-made 2-year-old in full training that was ready to start.” In the offering, Irwin was quoted as follows “The colt is bred to fly and he has the looks to go along with it. Rarely does one see a horse this powerful that also is well balanced.”

Irwin thinks that if the colt did not have his swallowing issue that he would have won a Grade 1 at 2.

Speechify ran 16 times for a record of 5 wins, 3 seconds and 1 third for earnings of \$215,185. He was especially effective at Gulfstream Park. He was equally good on turf as dirt.

In his career debut, Speechify electrified a Gulfstream Park crowd when winning by 10 ½-lengths in a 6-furlong sprint and earning an elite speed figure from ThoroGraph of 1 ¾. He ran a 103 Beyer speed figure when winning the Mr. Prospector.

A few starts after winning his Grade 3 in Florida, he ventured to Keeneland, where he was involved in an accident, in which he fell. Physically he escaped with minor cuts, but emotionally he apparently was never the same. The TDN wrote a nice story on Speechify’s background at this [link](#).

“Speechify was a fun horse to campaign and he brought his partners a lot of excitement and a lot of pleasure,” Irwin said. “A lot of his partners regularly came out to watch him run in Florida and he got a lot of visitors to the barn at Gulfstream and even at the farm in Ocala. He will be missed.”