

**MANSA MUSA OPENS 4-YEAR-OLD ACCOUNT WITH LISTED BLACK-TYPE WIN
IRISH IMPORT BENEFITS SATURDAY FROM STRONG RIDE BY IRAD ORTIZ JR.**



Mansa Musa collars pacesetter in deep stretch, hangs head on him right on the wire to win Colonel Power Stakes

William Mott is not enshrined in the Hall of Fame at the National Racing Museum in Saratoga by accident. The 71-year-old South Dakota-born Thoroughbred racehorse trainer's genius was on full display Saturday at Fair Grounds racetrack in New Orleans, where the Payson Park-based conditioner did just enough with the Irish import Mansa Musa to allow Irad Ortiz Jr. to get him to the line on top going 5 1/2 furlongs on grass in Louisiana.

The turf was long and thick, the type the son of Ten Sovereigns thrived on in Ireland, but it tested his fitness in his 4-year-old unveiling. The \$100,000 Colonel Power turned out to be quite a tactical affair for an abbreviated dash on the greensward, as the contest's only speed horse Kavod was able under the national's best speed rider Luis Saez to dole out fractions so tepid they compared favorably with a maiden filly race that opened the big holiday weekend of racing in NOLA.

Taking full advantage of the slow :22 2/5 and :46-flat splits, the nation's premier grass rider Flavien Prat positioned himself right outside of the pacemaker, thereby putting Mansa Musa and Ortiz in a box heading into the turn.

Prat's race favorite No Nay Hudson (trained by speed specialist Wesley Ward) had dead aim on Kavod at the top of the lane, as Prat ranged up alongside to challenge the pacesetter, and Ortiz was forced to take the final bend 4 wide in order to launch his bid.



Ortiz timed his winning final bid right on the finishing post to take the \$100,000 Colonel Power Stakes in Louisiana.

Ortiz, a brilliant tactician and the strongest stretch rider in the game, allowed the top two to trade blows, before he asked Mansa Musa to get serious inside the final furlong. With a few strides remaining for Mansa Musa to get to the line first, Ortiz used all of his bodily strength and willed his mount to reach the winning post on the correct bob to score by a head over Kavod. The last-named entered the fray with the field's best Ragozin mark of 7. His jockey saved something for the inevitable challenge as he dug deep for the onslaught.

Mansa Musa ran the 5 1/2 furlongs on firm grass in 1:03 3/5, employing a final sixteenth of a mile in right at 6 seconds to secure the win. He made up every bit of 2 lengths from the top of the lane to the wire. [LINK](#)

Owned by Team Valor International and Gary Barber, Mansa Musa was the 9 to 5 second favorite to No Nay Hudson, which faded to fourth. "I had a perfect trip," Ortiz said. "The horse made me look good. I was able to sit just behind the speed and bide my time until the stretch. Even though I had the perfect trip, I have to give a lot of credit to the horse. He fought back down the lane and really tried hard."



TVI racing partner Jeff Boschwitz with Irad Ortiz Jr.

Racing partner Jeff Boschwitz, in from his New Jersey homebase, led in Mansa Musa, then posed in the winners' circle with his wife Dr. Anne Macaulay.

Says Barry Irwin "I knew that Bill had designed the race to advance the colt's fitness, but I thought he had left him too much to gain physically, so I was particularly happy with the result, as he figures to improve significantly next time out."

Mansa Musa ran to a 94 Beyer, 6 points below his best earned when he was Grade 1 placed at 3. He looks set for a big season. Consistent and classy, Mansa Musa was scoring his first

black-type win, but he has placed in 6 others (3 of them Graded). In a dozen outings, he has a record of 3-4-1 for earnings of \$371,475. He is his sire's most accomplished runner in terms of earnings and Racing Post ratings with a mark of 113.