

## McGaughey points U. S. S. Valor to Champagne

David Grening | Sep 07, 2026



Debra A. Roma

U. S. S. Valor, who earned a 105 Beyer Speed Figure in his second career start, will point toward the Champagne.

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. – U. S. S. Valor, the 13 1/4-length winner of a fast seven-furlong maiden race for 2-year-olds on Saturday at Saratoga, shipped to Belmont Park on Monday, where he will be based this fall, and will be pointed to the Grade 1 Champagne Stakes on Oct. 3.

After finishing third with some trouble in his debut, U. S. S. Valor ran seven furlongs in 1:22.04 and earned a 105 Beyer Speed Figure.

"I hope I got something special, we'll have to let him tell us that," Shug McGaughey, who trains the son of War of Will for Team Valor International, said Monday. "I always thought when those young 2-year-olds run really fast, it takes a little something out of them. We'll have to wait and see. He did it fairly easy. He ran past the wire, it wasn't like it was over when he got there."

U. S. S. Valor is the first horse Team Valor and McGaughey have teamed up with to campaign.

"I waited 'til I had one that qualified," said Barry Irwin, president of Team Valor.

In the Champagne, U. S. S. Valor would again face Gaudreau, the horse who beat him by three-quarters of a length in an Aug. 8 maiden race.

Gaudreau, a son of Nyquist, is trained by Chad Brown, who said he remains happy with his decision to skip Sunday's Grade 1 Hopeful to await the Champagne.

"For this particular horse, I didn't feel it was the right thing to run him twice at Saratoga," Brown said. "He had a hard-fought victory that day and it took him a couple of weeks to bounce out of it."

The Good Life won the Hopeful by four lengths on Sunday. He earned a modest 83 Beyer for the effort. The Good Life, a son of Life Is Good trained by Brad Cox, is 2 for 2. The Good Life will likely ship to Cox's stable in Kentucky but will remain considered for the Champagne or the Breeders' Futurity on Oct. 2 at Keeneland.