

July 27, 2011

## STATE OF PLAY STRIKES ON SARATOGA TURF IN IMPRESSIVE DEBUT PRIVATE PURCHASE YIELDS CLEAR WIN IN MEET'S FIRST 2YO GRASS RACE TEAM VALOR OFF TO BULLISH START WITH TWO STRAIGHT WINS AT SPA

State of Play was all business in a striking debut on Wednesday afternoon in the first 2-year-old turf race of the prestigious Saratoga meet. The handsome War Front colt kicked away powerfully to score by 2 ½ lengths under jockey Ramon Dominguez, completing 5 ½ furlongs in a sharp 1:02.99 on firm ground.

About a month ago, trainer Graham Motion was leaning toward sending State of Play to Presque Isle Downs for his first start, but his confidence has only grown for the colt purchased privately this spring around the same time Team Valor acquired War Front's 3-year-old daughter Summer Soiree.



*State of Play was Team Valor's second 2-year-old starter this year, following the home-bred Keeneland debut runner up Lord Tarzan.*

Until today, 2-year-old first-time starters by War Front had been 0-for-39, including Summer Soiree, Grade 2 winner Fountain of Youth Stakes winner Soldat, and Grade 2 Rebel Stakes winner The Factor.

The turf debut in no way limits State of Play's career path, as in recent years 2-year-old maiden grass races at Saratoga have produced Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes winner Big Brown, Grade 1 Toyota Blue Grass Stakes winner Brilliant Speed, Grade 1 Breeders' Futurity winner J B's Thunder, Grade 1 Wood Memorial Stakes winner Eskendereya, and Grade 2 Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes winner Santiva, who all made their biggest marks on the main track.

State of Play loomed large the entire way. He broke well, which had been a concern until his final workout out of the gate last week, and settled into a nice rhythm from just off the pace as Woods Hole blazed through an opening quarter in :21.94.

Coming out of the far turn, State of Play challenged boldly from 3- wide and bounded to the lead within a few strides at the top of the lane. He opened up with only mild encouragement from Dominguez and cruised across the wire under a hand ride for Team Valor's second win in as many starts at Saratoga this season. Team Valor is the only owner to win 2 races thus far in the fledging summer meet in Upstate New York.

State of Play followed an emphatic score from Team Valor's 3-year-old filly Valiant Passion by 6 ¾ lengths in a sprint allowance race on Friday's opening day card.

Arthur Hancock of Stone Farm and his sister Dell Hancock of Claiborne Farm bred State of Play and sold him as a yearling. He caught Team Valor's attention in Ocala this spring as part of the stable's strategy to seek out promising youngsters who have not been subjected to the rigors of a 2-year-old in training sale.