

SPANISH MISSION WINS GROUP 2 YORKSHIRE CUP STAKES TODAY AT YORK IRWIN: “HE RAN THE BEST RACE OF HIS LIFE. ON HIS DAY HE IS TOP CLASS” TVI/BARBER STAYER THRASHES IRISH DERBY HERO GIVING HIM 3 POUNDS



Spanish Mission ran the race of his life today at York when he dominated the Group 2 Yorkshire Cup Stakes over 1 mile and 5 furlongs. On the “good” ground he relishes, the Kentucky-bred horse owned by Team Valor International and Gary Barber, repulsed a couple of strong challenges from Coolmore’s Irish Derby hero Santiago and drove to a nearly 3-length triumph today to claim the first prize of more than \$95,000.

Today’s race was designed as a prep for next months’ Group 1 Ascot Gold Cup, piece de resistance of the Royal Meeting, contested over 2 ½ miles and a harbinger for the Melbourne Cup in November.

Trainer Andrew Balding phoned to say “Look, I don’t know if he actually stays 2 ½ miles, but I think he just might, and if he does and manages to pull off this victory it is a career achievement, not only for the horse, but for you (Barry Irwin), Gary Barber and me. And you can come back next year and try to win it again. It is not an easy race to win and that is one of the reasons it is so prestigious.

“Today they were not hanging around on the pace, they set a proper tempo and our boy was able to relax in behind. The turn of foot he displayed in the final couple of furlongs tells me that if he wants to, we could drop him back to a mile and a half if we wanted to. He is quite a versatile animal.”

Irwin added “Having flown twice to the Middle East this season and coming back to run a fabulous race like he ran today speaks volumes about the constitution of our horse. He has really developed into the type of professional Cup Horse we had always imagined he could be.” Spanish Mission going out for a light spin at York this morning prior to the Group 2 fixture.



The pace for the 13-furlong Cup was lively from the onset, with Wells Farhh Go and Sir Ron Priestly alternating for much of the way as the field raced in 2 lines of 2, with Spanish Mission content to lag early in an extraordinarily relaxed mode.

When the field straightened up for the run down the long 3-furlong stretch run, William Buick brought Spanish Mission to the middle of the field. He picked up a couple of runners on his own. Inside the last 2 furlongs the race became a match between Spanish Mission and Sir Ron Priestly.

When the Gary Barber-dressed Spanish Mission came to the favorite, the Mark Johnston runner held his rival at bay, not once, but twice. Spanish Mission, however, found more each time and then found an entirely new gear—not seen since he bolted up in course record time for this same 13 furlongs at 3 in the Bahrain Cup.

Spanish Mission left his rival for dead and drew off to score by 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ lengths.