

TEAM VALOR BUYS FIRST AMERICAN-BASED 2YO DERBY COLT IN 4 YEARS EXCITING MEXIKOMA RUNS NATION'S FASTEST 2-TURN DIRT FIGURE OF 2013 COLT FLIES :24 1/5 FINAL QUARTER IN 14 3/4-LENGTH DELAWARE MAIDEN WIN



Team Valor International, for the first time since 2009, has bought a North American-based 2-year-old colt with Kentucky Derby aspirations. He was fully syndicated within 2 business days into interests of 10 and 5 percent.



Runaway winner Mexikoma was photographed earlier in the week at his Saratoga barn by Barbara D. Livingston.

Named Mexikoma, the colt broke his maiden last Thursday at Delaware Park by a startling 14 3/4-length margin, re-breaking down the lane to speed his final quarter-mile in a startling :24 1/5.

Leading Delaware Park jockey Alex Cintron, his rider, said "I have only ridden two horses the whole year that I told my agent I want to ride back. Brujo de Olleros was the first one, this is the second."

"I knew down the backstretch I was sitting on the winner, but I had no idea he was going to take off with me down the stretch like that," gushed the reinsman, who rides work and first call for Jonathan Sheppard.

The quality of the visually stunning piece of work has been backed up not only anecdotally by his rider, but by speed figures generated by Jerry Brown's ThoroGraph, Andy Beyer and the Ragozin Sheets. In winning his race over a mile in his second career outing, Mexikoma earned a 5 ¼ TG figure, a 10 ½ Ragozin and an 84 Beyer, making him the fastest juvenile colt in North American on dirt around two turns this season.



Trainer Rick Mettee will receive Mexikoma today at Fair Hill.

Barry Irwin said "It wasn't even the margin or the speed figures that impressed me most, it was the way he found that extra gear through that unprecedented final quarter-mile. Even if he ran against the biggest bums in captivity or was working alone in the morning for any horse—let alone a 2-year-old—to generate a 24-second final quarter going a mile around two turns is mindboggling."

Team Valor bought the colt from his trainer, former Todd Pletcher assistant Mike Dilger, who had bought the colt for \$55,000 at the Ocala Breeders' Sales Company's 2-year-old in training sale earlier in the year.



Going forward, Team Valor International and the colt's new trainer Rick Mettee plan to point their new charge to the November 3 renewal of the Grade 2 Nashua Stakes, going a one-turn mile at Aqueduct, where the stable's Added Edge proved victorious in the green and red silks 11 years ago.

The TVI braintrust will keep an eye on the Breeders' Cup Juvenile race a day earlier at Santa Anita and, if the situation seems positive, they will switch to the 1 1/16-mile, \$2-million event on the West Coast.

Birdstone upsets Triple Crown bid of Smarty Jones

TVI CEO Irwin said "We bought him as a Classic prospect, not to exploit him at 2. But we don't want to shortchange ourselves either. So we will point for the Nashua and monitor the Breeders' Cup."

Mexikoma is by Birdstone, who won 2 of 3 outings at 2 including the Grade 1 Champagne Stakes going a one-turn dirt mile for trainer Nick Zito, for whom he upset Smarty Jones' Triple Crown bid the following season by winning the Grade 1 Belmont Stakes. Birdstone is the sire of Mine That Bird (Kentucky Derby), Summer Bird (Belmont Stakes) and Birdrun (Brooklyn.)