

June 21, 2008

HOME-BRED SAILOR'S CAP ROMPS BY 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ IN \$600,000 COLONIAL TURF CUP, J. J. TONER SADDLES DISTANT VIEW COLT FOR GRADE 3 TALLY IN VIRGINIA, COLT SCORES WIN NUMBER 13 FOR TEAM VALOR IN THE MONTH OF JUNE



Sailor's Cap, dispatched as the lukewarm 7 to 2 choice for Saturday's \$600,000 Turf Cup at Colonial Downs, turned a wide open affair into a romp, as he swooped to command shortly after entering the stretch and won by 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ lengths.

A powerful late afternoon thunderstorm changed the condition of the course from firm to yielding in a matter of minutes. Sailor's Cap has shown a proclivity for wet grass courses in winning 2 of his 3 outings and his connections were buoyed with confidence by the sudden change in events.

Kentucky Bear, one of three Triple Crown competitors in the 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ -mile turf race, set the pace, as he opened up a lead of more than half a dozen lengths through three-quarters in 1:18 and change over the slushy surface.

When the Canadian invader began to tire approaching the quarter pole, the field contracted so much that Sailor's Cap had to go four wide at the top of the long Colonial Downs homestretch in order for his jockey Alan Garcia not to lose momentum.

Sailor's Cap, who just failed to peg back Tizdejavu in the Grade 3 Crown Royal American Turf at Churchill Downs on Kentucky Oaks Day, would not be denied this time, as he drove to a lead of what appeared to be nearly 8 lengths in mid-stretch before Garcia took a hold and began celebrating a sixteenth of a mile before the finish.

Except for an allowance start at Gulfstream Park when he was shamelessly sent on a :45 and change half, Sailor's Cap has never been worse than second in 5 grass starts, winning 3 of them and going second in the Crown Royal.

"J. J. Toner deserves a ton of credit, as does his staff," said Barry Irwin. "This colt was headstrong and wanted to get it on from the start last season. But J. J. and his exercise riders taught him to settle and the colt has responded to this type of treatment."

Owned by Team Valor International, the colt is a homebred by Distant View out of the Caveat mare Wave On, a winner of 4 races for the stable in Florida before a trainer ill-advisably ran her in a stakes race even though she evinced signs of colic prior to the race.

Wave On was a daughter of the brilliant grass mare Hot Option, who raced for Team Valor owner Barry Irwin and partners, for whom she won the Grade 3 Honeymoon Handicap at Hollywood Park in stakes record time.



Trainer J. J. Toner.

Sailor's Cap was winning race number 13 for the white-hot Team Valor string in the month of June, when the stable has so far accounted for the Grade 1 Daily News 2000, the Grade 2 Colonial Turf Cup, the Grade 3 Jubilee Handicap and the Grade 3 Obeah Stakes.

The 3-year-old, who will return next month for the \$750,000 Virginia Derby over the same course in New Kent, Virginia, is Graded stakes winner number 6 for Team Valor International this season, joining Grade 1 winners Russian Sage and On Her Toes, Grade 2 winner She's on Fire and Grade 3 winners Visionaire, Alexandra Rose,

Sailor's Cap is stakes winner number 95 and Graded stakes winner number 63 for a partnership formed since 1987 by Barry Irwin. In the last 21 racing seasons, stakes winners have occurred at a strike rate of 28 percent and Graded stakes winners have come in at a percentage rate of 18.

Team Valor has now won 32 of its 149 starts this season for a winning strike rate of 22.2 percent. Sailor's Cap's \$360,000 pushed the stable earnings to \$1,834,236, about \$800,000 more than last season at this same juncture.

The following came from *Daily Racing Form*:

Sailor's Cap weathers storm in style

by Dave Grening

Heavy rains pelted Colonial Downs Saturday, but all trainer Jimmy Toner and his staff needed for protection was a Sailor's Cap.



Sailor's Cap relished the yielding turf - as he did at Keeneland two starts back - and powered home a dominant 6 3/4-length winner of the Grade 3, \$600,000 Colonial Turf Cup at Colonial. Nistle's Crunch finished second by a length over Your Round. It was a head back to Court Vision in fourth.

The Colonial Cup was run in a driving rainstorm that actually began about an hour earlier. It rained so hard that the turf course went from firm to soft in a matter of two races and forced track officials to cancel the last race.

Toner, who watched the race from Belmont Park, said he was happy when it started raining, but when the race got delayed by several minutes he grew worried that the race might be canceled altogether.

"That's happened to me before when I prayed for rain," said Toner, who had assistant Dana Antonczak saddle the horse for him at Colonial.

But the show went on, and Sailor's Cap put on quite a show. Racing in fifth position under Alan Garcia, Sailor's Cap made a four-wide sweep into contention around the turn then continued to explode through the stretch for an overpowering score. Sailor's Cap, a 3-year-old son of Distant View owned by Team Valor International, covered the 1 3/16 miles in 2:04.42 and returned \$9.20 as the slight favorite in the 10-horse field.

"He settled in nicely down the backside and once he made that move it was like 'Oh, my God!' he just circled those horses," Toner said. "He loves that kind of ground, and he's just an improving horse."

Sailor's Cap won a first-level allowance race over yielding ground at Keeneland in April then was beaten a nose by Tizdejavu over yielding turf in the Grade 3 American Turf at Churchill on May 2.

Toner said that more than likely he will send Sailor's Cap back to Colonial for the \$750,000 Virginia Derby on July 19.

From *The Blood-Horse* comes the following:

Colonial's Soft Sod Suite Sailor's Cap

by Nick Hahn

When everyone at Colonial Downs was looking for shelter or an umbrella they should have been looking for a Sailor's Cap.

In a drenching thunderstorm, Alan Garcia swung Sailor's Cap four wide coming out of the turn and pulled away to prevail by 6 3/4 lengths over a willing Nistle's Crunch in the \$600,000 Colonial Turf Cup (gr. III) (VIDEO) on a soft course at Colonial Downs. Your Round, the longest shot on the board at 55-1, finished third.

The ownership group of Team Valor International managed by Aron Wellman slapped high fives and danced in the mud waiting for Garcia to return their 3-year old by Distant View--Wave On (by Caveat) to return to the winner's circle. Trained by James Toner, Sailor's Cap went off as a lukewarm 7-2 choice in a field of 10 sophomores.

The race started with a subtle lull in the rain that kicked up several notches once the field crossed the wire for the first time. While Kentucky Bear set the pace at :25.26 for the opening quarter, :50.91 for the half and 1:18.26 after three quarters of a mile, Garcia galloped Sailor's Cap eight lengths behind the frontrunner going up the backstretch. When the pacesetter faded, Garcia angled Sailor's Cap coming out of the turn wide enough to avoid traffic. After getting the lead, they increased their margin over the challengers in the final furlong.

"This horse he loves this kind of soft turf," said Garcia, running back to the paddock with a big smile in the storm. "He handled everything fine. He was much the best today."

Nistle's Crunch stalked the pace for Robby Albarado on the outside of Kentucky Bear before getting the lead near the quarter pole. Though he was no match for the winner, he held gamely for second by

one length over Your Round, who edged Court Vision by a head for third. Second choice Adriano finished fifth.

Sailor's Cap owns two wins and a second in three tries on soft or yielding ground and was coming off a tough-luck loss by a neck to Tizdejavu in the American Turf (gr. IIIT) on a yielding Churchill Downs turf course May 2. Nistle's Crunch finished a close third that day.

Wave On bred the bay colt in Kentucky. Sailor's Cap earned \$360,000 for his third win in six lifetime starts, all on the lawn, and has banked \$463,495.

Sailor's Cap paid \$9.20, \$5.20 and \$3.80. Nistle's Crunch was \$6.60 and \$4.80 to place with Your Round, ridden by James Lopez, paying \$14.40 to show. The final time was 2:04.42.

Court Vision and Adriano, both coming out of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I), were followed by Baltimore Bob, El Sultry Sun, Sporting Art, Boss Lafitte and Kentucky Bear.

From *Thoroughbred Times* comes the following:

Sailor's Cap Impressive Winner of Colonial Turf Cup

by Jeff Apel

Sailor's Cap unleashed a powerful outside move approaching the stretch and drove clear to a 6 3/4-length win in the \$600,000 Colonial Turf Cup Stakes (G3) on Saturday at Colonial Downs to earn his first stakes victory.

Trained by James Toner for owner Team Valor International, Sailor's Cap entered off a runner-up finish in his stakes debut in the Crown Royal American Turf Stakes (G3) on May 2 at Churchill Downs.



Grade 1-placed Kentucky Bear gained command at the start of the Colonial Turf Cup, a 1 3/16-mile race contested in a downpour that changed the turf course rating from firm to soft in less than 90 minutes.

Kentucky Bear led by 4 1/2 lengths through a half-mile in :50.91. Sailor's Cap stalked the pace in fifth through six furlongs in 1:18.26 under jockey Alan Garcia. Quickly moving up on the outside of foes,

Sailor's Cap opened a 3 1/2-length lead in early stretch and continued to increase his advantage approaching the finish.

Sailor's Cap completed the distance in 2:04.42.

Multiple Grade 3-placed winner Nistle's Crunch finished second, one length in front of Your Round, who rallied from last in a field of ten to finish third.

Sailor's Cap earned his third win in six starts and increased his earnings to \$463,495. Bred in Kentucky, Sailor's Cap is one of four winners from as many starters out of the winning Caveat mare Wave On.

From the Colonial Downs website comes the following:

Sailor's Cap Dominates Colonial Turf Cup

Team Valor's Sailor's Cap re-affirmed his affinity soft turf by powering away in upper stretch to drown his opponents in the \$600,000 Colonial Turf Cup (gr. III) Saturday June 21 at Colonial Downs. He sliced through a driving rain win a breathtaking four-wide move exiting the turn, engulfing the field in upper stretch and drawing off to an authoritative 6¾-length victory over Nistle's Crunch.

"It was worth it to get soaked like this for that," part owner Nick Ben-Meir said. "The wetter it got the more we liked it. If you look at his last 2 races, they were both on yielding and he ran brilliantly." The connections were the happiest people in New Kent when the skies opened up around 4:00 p.m. and pounded the Secretariat Turf Course right through Colonial Turf Cup at 5:45 p.m.

Jockey Alan Garcia was equally enthused with the wet weather. "I was confident. He loves the kind of soft turf," he said. Sailor's Cap came into the Colonial Turf Cup with two straight strong races on yielding turf courses, an allowance win at Keeneland and a close second to multiple graded stakes winner Tizdejavu in the Crown Royal American Turf (gr. III).

Sailor's Cap raced in midpack throughout the first three-quarters of the 1 3/16-mile race. Garcia was able to tuck into a two-wide trip after breaking from post position nine as Kentucky Bear opened a clear lead on the front end.

Kentucky Bear ran an opening quarter in :25.26 and extended his lead to 4½ lengths around the clubhouse turn to reach the half in :50.91. Nistle's Crunch raced in second while Sailor's Cap was 11½ lengths off the lead.

The pace slowed dramatically down the backstretch, allowing Kentucky Bear to extend to a five-length lead through three-quarters in 1:18.26. There was little movement around the turn but the race changed almost instantly when the field turned for home and Garcia tipped Sailor's Cap four-wide to launch the winning move.

Kentucky Bear tired from his early exertions but Nistle's Crunch continued gamely to the wire to hold second, a length in front of Your Round, who closed from dead last to get third by a head over Court Vision.

Adriano finished fifth, followed in order by Baltimore Bob, El Sultry Sun Sporting Art, Boss Lafitte and Kentucky Bear.

Sailor's Cap ran the 1 3/16 miles in 2:04.42 over the soft turf.

The Colonial Turf Cup win was Sailor's Cap's third from six lifetime starts. The 3-year-old Distant View colt pushed his earnings to \$463,495 with the win. Sailor's Cap can increase his bankroll dramatically in the coming months by sweeping the other three legs of the \$5 million-plus Jacobs Investments Grand Slam of Grass.

Next up in the Grand Slam is the \$750,000 Virginia Derby (gr. II) on July 19 at Colonial Downs. The \$400,000 Secretariat Stakes (gr. I) and the \$3,000,000 Breeders' Cup Turf (gr. I) complete the Grand Slam.