

**SPECIAL WAN WINS AT KENTUCKY DOWNS STRETCHING OUT OVER A MILE  
FILLY BOBBLED ON UNEVEN SURFACE, BUT HER CLASS PREVAILED FOR WIN  
U. S. DEBUT SEALED WITH :23 2/5 FINAL QUARTER, RALLIES FROM THE BACK**



*Special Wan, ears-pricked winner, gets up in time to account for Saturday's nw1 allowance race going a mile for the first time and scoring at Kentucky Downs as the 3 to 2 morning line favorite and 6 to 5 post time favorite. In 6 career outings, the 4-year-old filly, owned in partnership with Steve Rocco of N.Y., has never been worse than third.*

Special Wan originally was programmed to sprint 6 1/2 furlongs the previous weekend at Kentucky Downs in her intended North America debut in the Graded Ladies' Turf Sprint. However, she was one scratch shy of getting a run in the \$1-million contest.

Barry Irwin contacted the 4-year-old filly's Irish-based trainer Patrick Foley and asked if he reckoned the Belardo filly could see out a mile on an up-hill and down-dale undulating course.

The trainer answered in the affirmative, saying that going a mile would have been next on the agenda had the filly remained with him in Ireland. In 5 outings, the filly had progressed to race over 7 furlongs in her last two races, which resulted in a second and third-place finishes against males and females.

Irwin shared videos of the filly's last few races with Joel Rosario in the make-shift jocks' room (tent) and also shared the trainer's tip for him that he had garnered just prior to the horses entering the paddock at Kentucky Downs on Saturday just prior to her mile allowance race.

“Trainer says she pulls herself up when she gets in front, so you need to time this just right Joel,” Irwin said to his go-to rider at the Southern Kentucky racetrack.”

“Yes, I saw that,” Rosario said to Irwin. “We’ll figure it out.”

As virtually all European runners are prone to do in their first North America starts, Special Wan missed the break, so nobody was too surprised. But as the field raced pall mall down the long backstretch run going a one-turn mile at Kentucky Downs, Special Wan was last but one about 8 lengths behind the leaders. She raced in the clear without the benefit of cover.

The opening quarter was run in a moderate :23-flat, but the pace picked up perceptively after that, with the half being reached in a solid :45 2/5. Special Wan, with Rosario sitting chilly, still only had one rival beat at the halfway point, as the filly did not seem to be handling the undulations particularly well. Still 8 lengths in arrears at the half-mile pole Special Wan had not made up any ground at all, prompting the race caller to say “Special Wan still with a lot of work to do.”

Rosario, who had been saving ground every step of the way, eased Special Wan out as she drifted toward the outside 5 wide in order to gain a launching pad for her stretch-long bid. When the quarter pole had been reached after 6 furlongs in 1:09 3/5, Special Wan still had only 2 rivals behind her and was still more than 7 lengths adrift. When Rosario got to work on the filly she went into a new gear, quickly made up most of her deficit before passing the last couple of rivals with her ears pricked as she spotted the finish line.

The filly won by nearly 1 length, ears pricked, thoroughly enjoying herself and relishing the added distance. She hit the line in 1:34 4/5, coming her last quarter in about :23 2/5. [LINK](#)

Special Wan ran for \$100,000 of the \$190,000 pot because she is not a Kentucky-bred. She earned \$60,000, which coupled with her Irish earnings in two starts means the filly has garnered \$78,000 for her racing partners.

In 6 lifetime starts, the filly has 2 wins, 2 second and 2 thirds.