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Secretariat, in 1973, gave his owner, his trainer and his jockey their second straight Derby win. Their counterparts for Went the Day Well also seek two in a row.

## After Derby Win With Long Shot, Hoping That History Will Repeat

By CLAIRE NOVAK

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Penny Chenery, Lucien Laurin and Ron Turcotte found the Kentucky Derby winner's circle in 1972 with a runner named Riva Ridge. They liked the place so much they decided to come back, and the big red horse named Secretariat provided their second consecutive victory in 1973.

No other owner-trainer-jockey trio has taken back-to-back editions of the Derby, but Team Valor International, Graham Motion and John Velazquez are going to try on Saturday. They won the 2011 Derby with the long shot Animal Kingdom, and now they are here at Churchill Downs with Went the Day Well, who turned in his final breeze this past Saturday. Churchill Downs clockers gave the colt an official time of 1 minute 1 second for five furlongs, while Motion clocked six furlongs under Velazquez in 1:14 1/5 and endorsed the work as one of his best ever.

"It's hard to believe a year has gone by," Motion, 47, said.

There is a stiff field to conquer for Went the Day Well, a 3-year-old colt who won the Spiral Stakes in March just as Animal Kingdom did before winning the Derby. Top contenders like Union Rags, Bodemeister, Hansen and Dullahan are stealing the spotlight, and with good reason.

Went the Day Well has only five starts, three of them this year. A son of the 2002 Derby runner-up, Proud Citizen, he was born in New York but ran twice in England before Team Valor's president, Barry Irwin, bought a 75 percent stake in him. (Mark Ford retains a 25 percent interest.)

"It's a credit to Barry to find a New York-bred running in England on the synthetic and point him to the Derby," Motion said.

Team Valor syndicated the colt to 10 partners for \$850,000. They had him shipped to Motion's winter base at Palm Meadows in Florida at the beginning of the year, but he fell behind schedule for his debut in the United States when he was stuck in quarantine in Miami for two weeks because of a mix-up with his blood work.

"My only fear is he's a few races away from where he needs to be," said Irwin, 69, a former turf writer. "He's good enough to make an impact, and he's shown he can take a punch and come back, which is important because the Derby is tough. Distance is his ally, and I think he's the right kind of horse. I just hope he's ready."

Animal Kingdom, who had never raced on dirt, did not look like a Derby winner, either, when he went off at odds of 21 to 1.

Went the Day Well already answered the racing-surface question with his maiden win, going a mile and a sixteenth on the main track at Gulfstream Park on March 3, then stamped his Derby ticket with the March 24 victory in the Spiral on Polytrack.

"He really had to step up in the Spiral, and he did, and if it wasn't for that, we wouldn't be here," Motion said. "That performance showed us he belonged."

Went the Day Well may still be a long shot, but that seems to be O.K. "I'm fine floating under the radar," Motion said.

Went the Day Well is stabled in Stall 38 of Barn 22 at Churchill Downs, where Animal Kingdom stayed last year. But whereas Animal Kingdom hauled his rider around the racetrack in the days leading to the Derby, Went the Day Well wore blinkers Saturday and may wear them in the Derby.

"With Animal Kingdom, every breeze was fireworks," Irwin said. "This horse causes you anxiety in the mornings because he doesn't show you what he's got, but we know he's going to bring it in his races. When we bought him, I said, For people who want to try it, this is our best shot to get to the Derby again."

Irwin will search the world to find a good horse, and has been successful at it. He continues to use his platform as a prominent owner to lobby for the elimination of race-day medications in North America.

"If we've got to juice these horses up just to compete, then we don't really have a viable sport," he said.

"I think the sport has made tremendous strides in reducing the amount of stuff horses are given, but I think it could get better. Right now, we've got to get rid of Lasix if for no other reason than to say, 'These horses run drug-free.'"

Irwin says the time has come for federal oversight of the horse racing industry.

"I'd like to see some pressure brought to bear," he said. "It's almost impossible for any industry to self-regulate. You don't see the airlines doing it, you don't see the police doing it, so why should we be any different? Unless somebody holds a hammer over our heads and says, 'Look, if you guys don't get your act together, we're going to hit you with this hammer,' where's the motivation for change?"

### The Rail

This week on The Rail blog: news and analysis from Churchill Downs ahead of the 138th running of the Kentucky Derby.

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