

DUNKIRK

Normally, the silver spoon babies that go through the sale ring for outrageous bucks are still in diapers when their less-heralded classmates are running off with graded stakes victories. But on a rare occasion, they live up to their pedigree and good looks and actually have their owners walking tall instead of moping along with their tails between their legs.

Well, this year is looking like one of those rare occasions. With two runaway victories in his first two career starts, Dunkirk, a \$3.7 million yearling purchase, is being heralded as the sport's next potential superstar. The son of Unbridled's Song has a big leap to make before he actually attains such a lofty status, but judging from his last start, it might only be one race away—the March 28 Florida Derby (gr. I).

Dunkirk, trained by Todd Pletcher and owned by the Coolmore coalition of Susan Magnier, Michael Tabor, and Derrick Smith, went into his last race a bit of an enigma.

Despite winning his debut on Jan. 24 by 5¼ lengths, his slow final time (seven furlongs in 1:25) and paltry speed figures (a “10” on Thoro-Graph) left most people unimpressed.

Then came his stretch-out to 1½ miles. Surprisingly, the fans sent him off as the 6-5 favorite against what looked to be a competitive field. When Edgar Prado deserted him to ride a horse for Rick Dutrow, Pletcher summoned Garrett Gomez from California. It looked to be a wasted trip when Dunkirk was forced eight-wide on the first turn. But he made a steady move, surged to the lead turning for home and drew off to a 4¾-length score, this time earning a hefty 98 Beyer Speed Figure and a “-1/2” on the Thoro-Graph.

If Dunkirk passes his test in the Florida Derby, he will try to become the first horse since Apollo in 1882 to win the Run for the Roses without having raced at 2. 🐾

Here's a trivia question for you: How many winners of the Kentucky Oaks have produced a Derby winner? The answer: one (Calumet's 1956 Oaks winner Princess Turia is the dam of the farm's 1968 Derby winner Forward Pass). However, if Dunkirk, yet another in what seems to be an ever-flowing stream of promising Unbridled's Song 3-year-olds pouring toward Churchill Downs, lives up to his pre-Derby hopes and hype, that lonely number will have a buddy. And his pedigree indicates he can.

Not much need be said here about Unbridled's Song. His sons and daughters on the track have spoken volumes for him. Dunkirk is inbred 5x4 to that fount of speed Raise a Native but through two lines that can tip the scale more toward stamina. On the sire side of the pedigree, Raise a Native's grandson Fappiano was a brilliant miler who won up to nine furlongs and when bred to more stamina-oriented female families produced sons capable of carrying that speed more than a mile and reproducing it in their own offspring: Unbridled, Cryptoclearance, Quiet

American; on the bottom line is his son Alydar, who just missed the 12-furlong Belmont Stakes by an infinitesimal nose.

Dunkirk's female family, which came to the U.S. via the hardy environment of South America, is flooded with names that indicate 10 furlongs should be a mere walk in the park. His dam, Secret Status (by Belmont winner A.P. Indy), won the 2000 Kentucky Oaks over nine furlongs and placed in the CCA Oaks and Alabama at 12 and 10 furlongs, respectively. Her dam, the stakes-winning Private Status (by Alydar), also produced Alumni Hall (A.P. Indy), whose average winning distance is an “almost unheard of these days” 8.9 furlongs. Seven of his nine wins at nine furlongs comprised four stakes. Private Status' half-sister, South American champion Maria Candela, won three of Chile's most important distance races, including Las Oaks and El Derby, both at 12 furlongs. Their dam, Miss Eva, is a daughter of Con Brio II, a son of undefeated, two-time Arc winner Ribot. 🐾

DUNKIRK

Gray/roan colt, foaled Jan. 23, 2006
Bred in Kentucky by W.S. Farish,
James Elkins, and W.T. Webber

Unbridled's Song	Unbridled
	Trolly Song
Secret Status	A.P. Indy
	Private Status