



# SID FERNANDO

## *Gemologist has classic-distance connections*

One of the more intriguing Triple Crown preps took place on March 16 at Gulfstream Park in a five-runner allowance race that pitted undefeated Grade 1 winner Currency Swap against undefeated Grade 2 winner Gemologist at one mile on the dirt. On paper, it was a classic case of a sprinter-miler taking on a speedy middle-distance horse.

Both highly regarded colts were making season debuts and had been training well. Currency Swap, by the Dixie Union sire High Cotton, is an attractive colt who had won the Three Chimneys Hopeful Stakes (G1) at Saratoga Race Course last summer at seven furlongs. He'd drilled six furlongs in a bullet 1:11.40 from the starting gate on March 10 at Gulfstream and was attempting a mile for the first time.

Gemologist, by top stallion Tiznow, is a big, rangy colt like his sire and had won the Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes (G2) at 1½ miles in late November at Churchill Downs. He was entering the race off two bullet five-furlong breezes and an easy half-mile blowout at Palm Meadows Training Center in South Florida.

Gemologist set the pace with Currency Swap stalking in second in the allowance race, and Gemologist eventually drew away with ease and crossed the finish line seven lengths clear of the Grade 1 winner, who was five lengths in front of the third-place finisher. Gemologist covered the mile in 1:35.95 and gives every indication that he'll handle a mile and a quarter—a forte of his sire, who won the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) twice as well as the Santa Anita Handicap (G1) and the Super Derby (G1) at that trip.

Tiznow stands at WinStar Farm, which purchased Gemologist from Lane's End Farm, agent for breeders G. Watts Humphrey Jr. and Louise Ireland Humphrey Revocable Trust 2, for \$310,000 as a weanling at the 2009 Keeneland November breeding stock sale. The Eclipse Award-winning owner of 2010, WinStar has had uncanny success as an owner and breeder of dirt horses capable of excelling at 1½ miles or longer, and this fact should add heft to Gemologist's chances as he advances to the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1) by way of the Resorts World Casino New York City Wood

Memorial Stakes (G1) on April 7 at Aqueduct.

WinStar is based on the former property of what was Art, Jack, and J.R. Preston's Prestonwood Farm near Versailles, Kentucky, which raced 1998 Belmont Stakes (G1) winner Victory Gallop. Kenny Troutt and Bill Casner developed WinStar together and had a piece of Victory Gallop, who was trained by Elliott Walden. Together with Walden and Doug Cauthen, Troutt and Casner built a relatively new venture into an unqualified success with Tiznow (in partnership with Taylor Made Farm) and Distorted Humor as their cornerstone classic sires, and WinStar's connections to the best distance races on dirt are impressive.

These days the best dirt races at 1½ miles or longer are the Kentucky Derby, Travers Stakes (G1), Belmont Stakes, Breeders' Cup Classic, Jockey Club

Gold Cup, Santa Anita Handicap, and the Dubai World Cup (UAE-G1). WinStar, which is now owned solely by Troutt and run by Walden after Cauthen departed with Casner, has a connection to each race.

Resident sire Tiznow, of course, is a four-time Grade 1 winner at 1½ miles on dirt, but WinStar is the breeder of 2003 Kentucky Derby and 2004 Jockey Club Gold Cup winner Funny Cide (by Distorted Humor); breeder and owner of 2010 Kentucky Derby winner Super Saver (by Maria's Mon); owner of 2010 Belmont Stakes winner and 2011 Breeders' Cup Classic winner Drosselmeyer (by Distorted Humor); owner and breeder of 2009 Dubai World Cup winner Well Armed (by Tiznow); and owner and breeder of 2008 Travers Stakes winner Colonel John (by Tiznow). WinStar also owned and bred 2006 Kentucky Derby, Belmont Stakes and Travers Stakes runner-up Bluegrass Cat (by Storm Cat).

There isn't another stable around that can boast of such a collection of trophies, which are quintessentially for classic American horses. And in Gemologist, WinStar appears to have yet another very serious contender for one of these races.

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