



OCEAN RUNAWAY

CHAMPION 2-YEAR-OLD • CHAMPION 2-YEAR-OLD COLT

“NEW STAKES RECORD.” “BLEW ‘EM AWAY.” “HAND RIDE.” “BUMPED, Driving.” Past performance lines boil a race down to its most succinct point, and champion 2-year-old and champion 2-year-old colt Ocean Runaway’s show his dominance over the freshman class of 2004.

Owned by Gary Muller’s Muller Racing LLC of Kansas City, Missouri, and trained by Dennis Ekins, the gray son of First Down Dash started 10 times and finished as the leading money earner of the year. He won five times and thrice finished second, earning \$1,158,104.

Ridden in his first two starts by Sam Thompson and Joe Badilla Jr., respectively, he was piloted by Alex Bautista for the remainder of the year.

The colt is only the fourth Quarter Horse since 1959 to lead the nation in earnings without winning the All American Futurity (G1). The others include champions Native Gambler, My Easy Credit and Jet Deck.

The gray got his career off slowly. He qualified to the Kindergarten Futurity (G1) in his second start and went on to finish fourth in the final, but his first win did not come until his fourth start. In the Governor’s Cup Futurity (RG1) he rolled to a stakes-record-setting win, scorching 350 yards in :17.393.

Next he headed to Ruidoso, where he finished second in the 16th All American Futurity trial after being bumped at the start.

Ocean Runaway returned to Los Al and exploded in his Golden State Million (G1) trial, winning the race by a length. Returning in the \$942,400 final, he set his second stakes record, winning by a half-length.

Next on the list was the Los Alamitos Million Futurity (G1). The colt was hand ridden to a 2 1/4-length victory in the trials, scoring the fastest time of 98 horses entered. In the final, he earned his *third* stakes record in his third stakes win, beating a stellar field by a cool length despite being bumped roughly at the start.

“The outside horse bumped him for the first 50 yards of the race,” said Bautista. “At about 150 yards into the race, my horse finally got going to the best of his ability. He made

things look easy from there. After his early trouble, I never expected him to post a record-breaking effort. That goes to show you how special this horse really is.”

Muller plucked Ocean Runaway from the 2003 Ruidoso Select Yearling Sale for \$70,000. The choice was a team effort between owner and trainer.

“Gary goes through those catalogs from front to back, looking through pedigrees and trying to find something that we’re interested in that will work in his program,” explained Ekins. “He picks out several of them, and then I go through and take a look at them. We eliminate quite a few and get down to the ones that we’re extremely

interested in, and then we go try to buy something. That’s how we acquired this individual. He has tremendous body conformation. He has a neck and head on him that just fit right in with his body, and he has big shoulders and a tremendous rear end, and his back is just unbelievable.”

The colt was consigned to the sale by breeder Dan Lucas, last year’s champion breeder. He is one of 29 champions sired by First Down Dash, the all-time leading sire of racing American Quarter Horses.

He is the third foal out of Lucas’ homebred Runaway Wave, a stakes-placed daughter of Runaway Winner produced from the Thoroughbred mare In The Curl.

Despite heavy interest from stud farms around the country, Muller wishes to see his champion have another go at the track. The horse will be pointed at a sophomore career that includes the possibility of major derbies in California and New Mexico. BY ANDREA CAUDILL

OCEAN RUNAWAY gray stallion 2002

Breeder: Lucas Racing Inc.; Owner: Muller Racing LLC

Trainers: Dennis Ekins

Jockeys: Sam Thompson, Joe Badilla Jr., Alex Bautista

A Q H A P E D I G R E E

	Rocket Wrangler
Dash For Cash	Find A Buyer (TB)
First Down Dash	Gallant Jet
First Prize Rose	Rose Bug
OCEAN RUNAWAY	Beduino (TB)
Runaway Winner	Miss Fast Chic
Runaway Wave	Shelter Half
In The Curl (TB)	Ocean Girl