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Uncle Mo The Horseracing Comeback Story Of 2011?

I was there in the Churchill Downs press box when Mike Repole and Todd Pletcher conducted their press conference to break the [horseracing](#) news that Uncle Mo wouldn't run in the Derby. This revelation was very complicated for Repole and Pletcher to deliver considering Uncle Mo's impressive win in the Breeders ' Cup Juvenile the year before. Since his electrifying performance in the Juvenile, Uncle Mo had done enough to back up that win to stay the indicated pony in the Derby. He will surely have been the favourite.

At the time of his scratch in the Derby, Uncle Mo had only been partially diagnosed. Nobody was pretty sure what was wrong with him. As I sat there in the press box and listened to the bad news I thought to myself that Uncle Mo would never race again. It appeared to me he had already proved enough and he'd have a good stud career, such that trying to teach him back to health and racing him again wouldn't be worth the chance of injury in the act.

Horse racing isn't renowned for its great comeback stories, particularly at the level at which Uncle Mo plays. These horses are so well bred, their value is only partly a function of their record on the track. Once proven a champ, the value of these horses at stud goes through the roof. The extra value of establishing champion standing continually has marginal value. So coming back from a major illness or injury to race again isn't seen.

Uncle Mo trained well for and raced well in the Kings Bishop (Gr I) after his lengthy layoff. He raced near the front then was caught at the wire. This effort was strong, al things taken with all, although he couldn't last.

Since the King's Bishop, Uncle Mo continues to train well. This past weekend, he turned in a blistering half mile in 46.57 seconds. He's training for the Kelso (Gr II), where he is likely to be a favourite among as decent though not strong field.

Should Uncle Mo run well, let alone win, the Kelso, there will be lots of discussion around his running in the Breeders ' Cup Classic in the autumn. From champion two-year old, to late Derby scratch, back to graded stakes winner is a decent horseracing comeback story. Does he even need the Breeders ' Cup Classic to stake his claim as one of the finest horse racing comeback stories in history?

Yes, he does. So-so comeback stories are about as noteworthy as Superbowl or World Series losers. If Uncle Mo's handlers are already ok with racing him after his extended illness, they should be fine with positioning him in the Breeders ' Cup Classic simply for his shot at redemption. Running in another Breeders ' Cup race is not the same. Winning a Breeders ' Cup race aside from the Classic would be great but would not prove much about the distinction of the horse.

I wasn't a big fan of Uncle Mo in the Derby but I'm solidly behind him now. Horseracing could use some more comeback stories. I want it if he might be another one.

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