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Starspangledbanner completed a big Group One double when he followed up his Golden Jubilee Stakes victory at Royal Ascot by taking the Darley July Cup at Newmarket.

Aidan O'Brien's speedball (2-1 favourite) slightly missed the kick and was soon chased along behind fellow Royal Ascot hero Equiano, with Johnny Murtagh steering him over to the far rail.

He looked to have it to do a furlong out as 66-1 chance Alverta threatened, with Fleeting Spirit and Kingsgate Native just behind, but the ex-Australian ace found plenty for pressure to foil the gallant Equiano by a neck. Alverta finished third.

O'Brien said: "He's very tough, he's a serious horse. Johnny made the decision to go over to the far rail and it paid off.

"He's got some courage and great pace. Very few horses have that much courage when they are so fast. It was great that the two Ascot winners were first and second, it's great when they come together like that."

Murtagh added: "Not many horses win this after winning at Ascot, but he's not just got class, he's got plenty of guts and he's hardy.

"I thought the rail would help my horse, I had to make my own mind up and it helped win the race. Stamina helped us win it, some Australian horses don't go up the hill but this lad does."

Connections now face a decision on whether Starspangledbanner goes to stud or stays in training.

O'Brien explained: "We have to decide by midnight if he is going to go to Australia for the covering season.

"John (Magnier), Michael (Tabor) and all the lads (at Coolmore) will debate hard over the next few hours and we will only know after that if he is going to go into quarantine. I'll give my penny's worth and as you all know I'd love to see him stay here and keep on racing."

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