



THE GALLOPS

The Vodacom Durban July Gallops will take place at Greyville Racecourse on Thursday, 26 June 2007, and the race commentators will keep everyone abreast of what is happening with detailed accounts of what horses are running, who the jockeys are and the times they set. A restricted number of runners in the other graded races on the Vodacom Durban July Day card will also be invited to take part in the gallops.

Gallops taking place at the Gauteng and Western Cape venues will be shown on Tellytrack and a panel discussion will be held after the completion of the gallops to address how the runners performed. The latest betting will be revealed and out on the track fashion designers will be offering previews of "big day" creations.

In all it will be a festive occasion to set the stage for Africa's Greatest Horseracing Event of the year, the 2007 Vodacom Durban July.

For those wanting to attend there will be the following facilities available:

Grandstand area – Entrance FREE – with free coffee and sticky buns being served.
Durban View Restaurant – Continental breakfast from 7am for only R35.

For more information on the catering aspects please contact Gail (031 3141780) or Laura (031 3141658).



THE HISTORY OF THE GALLOPS

The Vodacom Durban July gallops at Greyville Racecourse in central Durban began in the early years when trainers were given the opportunity to put their big-race runners on the grass for a final workout before the big day and to enable visiting horses to familiarize themselves with the venue.

In the years before the establishment of the Summerveld Training Centre at Shongweni just outside Durban, local horses were stabled at various sites around Durban and in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Some were trained at the private out-of-town venues in the province, others at Pietermaritzburg's Scottsville track and many at Clairwood.

Many more were stabled at Newmarket in the northern region of Durban and these horses were trained on the beaches at Blue Lagoon.

Visiting horses from Gauteng and the Western Cape were freighted into the area weeks before, many competing in the important races early in the season from which their trainers hoped they could emerge as candidates for invitation into the country's biggest race.

In the final week before the race the runners were invited to use the Greyville track for their final workout and the public was encouraged to attend the event with coffee and sticky buns available free of charge.

And so was born the July gallops and they became one of the biggest occasions in the build-up to the event with thousands of people crowding the course to watch their fancies in action and to make their final selections.

It became a tradition, but when the Summerveld Training Centre was established and trainers had the superb grass training tracks on which to prepare their candidates, they became reluctant to take their horses to Greyville for their final workouts. This situation was exasperated as transportation methods improved and trainers from Gauteng began floating their runners overnight to Durban, arriving either the day before or even on the morning of the race.

So the July gallops fell away and a part of the July tradition disappeared.

However with constant pleas from the public, Gold Circle decided in 1999 to re-introduce the gallops. Only a few of the final field made an appearance with Geoff Woodruff's star, El Picha, putting up a splendid gallop before going on to win the country's greatest racing event some 10 days later.

Gold Circle then went one step further and made appearance at a timed, televised, public gallop a condition of acceptance into the race and the Vodacom Durban July Gallops was officially reborn.