

CANON GOLD CUP



The Grade 1 Canon Gold Cup run over 3200m at Greyville has been characterised by some great rides in the past and the ride Richard Fourie gave the Stephen Page-trained Mokaro ranks as up with the best of them.

A "ride of the month" award that has been run in South Africa over the last couple of years, that focuses on the last 200m of a race, should perhaps change its name to "finish of the month", for as the country's probable greatest jockey of all time, Michael Roberts, has said, "You should imagine that a horse is given X amount of petrol to get from A to B and the jockey who does it in the most economical way will be the one who gets the result."

Garth Puller, another fine horseman and great jockey of the past, explained in a walk around Greyville last year the most economical way to overcome a wide draw in the Vodacom Durban July.

"You should imagine a triangle is drawn with the three points being your own starting stall, the inside starting stall and the point at which the first

turn starts. The shortest way to the first turn is to ride along the long base of the triangle."

The Gold Cup, like the July, is characterised by a straight section before the first turn and Fourie followed the long base of the triangle that Puller talks about to perfection from his draw of 12.

He was quite content to be a few horse-widths wide of the field in the first 200m or so as he followed the shortest path, but by the time he had reached the first turn he was near the rail and in the lead.

He had also correctly predicted that two widely drawn handy or front-running types, Polzeath and Steady Chat, would have to come around him to get a good position.

Steady Chat and Polzeath duly slotted into a position in front of him and Fourie was poised in the best possible position without having used up unnecessary fuel.

The winning move had been made and from there on in he just had to bide his time.

Luck usually plays a part in a race and a dream gap opened for Mokaro in the straight, which enabled Fourie to get a perfectly straight run to the line.

The 8-1 shot, prepared to perfection by Stephen Page, was suddenly odds-on to win going through the 300m and he didn't let anybody down.

Page said late on Saturday night after a quiet celebration, "Horses like Mokaro are the reason why I train and why the journalists of the game love to write about it."

Indeed, the six-year-old gelding's win was a fairytale story.

Page is a small-string trainer from the Phillipi training centre in Cape Town and had never saddled a Grade 1 winner before, while the owner and breeder of Mokaro is Bridget Oppenheimer, one of the most prolific big race winners in South African history.

Not only that but the second horse past the post, Noblewood, was also

trained by Page and owned and bred by Oppenheimer.

Furthermore Mokaro's sire Manaløj was an unfashionable stallion, who was sent a mare, Matumi, by the leading stallion Fort Wood, only as a token of appreciation for the support that the Karoo Breeders had shown to Mauritzfontein Stud.

It was a chance mating, especially in light of Manaløj's current status as a highly sort after Warm Blood stallion, who is no longer used to breed thoroughbreds.

Oppenheimer had three runners in the race including the tote favourite, Bouquet-Garni.

Fort Wood is the best stallion to have ever graced the Oppenheimer's Mauritzfontein pastures and his excellent stamina influence was one again illustrated in that Mokaro and Bouquet-Garni are out of Fort Wood mares, while Noblewood is by Fort Wood himself.

2008 / 2009 SEASON

The 2008/2009 horseracing season in South Africa will go down as one of the most intriguing of all time as it had it all from drama to dreams-come-true on the racetrack, instant success stories to record-breaking achievements in the breeding sheds as well as some upheavals and advancements in the administrative ranks.

The dreams-come-true were plentiful, as usual, but none more so than the incredible comeback of Andrew Fortune, who came from gone-and-forgotten less than two years ago to be crowned National Champion Jockey at the end of the 2008/2009 season.

Fortune's gripping tale of how he rebuilt his life and then targeted the Championships to complete the resurrection has been told many times. He did it not only for himself, but to set an example to others who had found themselves in the position he was once in, and also to make his beloved mother, Florence, who had stood by him in the hard times, proud.

His dedication to his cause is illustrated in that he is almost certainly the heaviest jockey to ever win the title. He achieved it through hard work on the training tracks, a taxing travel schedule and, most of all, through a sublime talent. The drama in the jockey ranks was provided by apprentices Derrick David and Karis Teetan.

It only came to light late in the season that the Zimbabwean winners, which count towards all National Jockeys titles, weren't reflected in the published National Logs and suddenly David, who had ridden a few winners north of the Limpopo, had a chance of catching the seemingly runaway winner, Teetan.

In the last week of the season David rode seven winners, including two in the penultimate racemeeting at the Vaal.

He caught and overtook Teetan to claim the title by a single winner.

David's taxing travel schedule, that secured him some 300 more rides than Teetan, had earned him his pre-season goal and this prestigious achievement would have thrilled his biggest fan, his father Eblan.

The fairytale story of the season was Big City Life, who repeated the feat of the great Dynasty by winning the Grade 1 Cape Derby, the Grade 2 KRA Guineas, the Grade 1 Daily News 2000 and finally, the big one, the

Grade 1 Vodacom Durban July.

The three-year-old Casey Tibbs colt with a modest pedigree and price tag was bred by trainer Glen Kotzen's mother-in-law, Judy Wintle, and was born and brought up on the Kotzen family's Woodhill Racing Estate in the beautiful Paardeberg region just outside Cape Town.

Purchased by Bloodstock Agent Tony Warren, who formed the syndicate of Raymond Deacon, Glen Mitchell, Andre Hauptfleisch and Glen Kotzen himself, the horse found himself back at Woodhill.

Deacon and Mitchell are cousins whose fanaticism for racing began as youngsters, when they used to ride famous horses of the time in mock races on the family couch.

Although they and Hauptfleisch all had fathers who were significant racehorse owners of the past, the trio are by no means among the country's biggest owners.

The July was consequently a victory for the "small guy" and the elation of the win was summed up by Deacon's spontaneous Zulu-like war dance after he had been adorned with the victory sash.

Before the July, Hennie Basson, a friend and business partner of Hauptfleisch's also became an owner of Big City Life.

In the July Big City Life was ridden by Greg Cheyne, whose fantastic season began with a win in the Grade 1 Canon Gold Cup aboard the Basil Marcus-trained Desert Links and included five Grade 1 wins in all. Cheyne might have created something of a record on J&B Met day when winning the Grade 1 Majorca Stakes on the Geoff Woodruff-trained Emblem Of Liberty as the horse is part-owned by his wife, Claire.

On July night he rode another Glen Kotzen-trained horse, Lady Windermere, to win the Grade 1 Garden Province Stakes over 1600m.

Lady Windermere had won the Grade 1 SA Fillies Sprint five weeks earlier.

The great day for the Kotzen family on July day was capped in that Big City beat home Zirconeum and Forest Path, two horses trained by Mike de Kock, whose Summerveld assistant is Glen's brother, Nathan.

The headline story of the year was the great Pocket Power's completion of both a Queen's Plate and J&B Met treble, the first horse in history to

achieve this feat. The Mike Bass-trained superhorse also won the Grade 1 Gold Challenge. The July and Champions Cup races didn't pan out in his favour, but he will nevertheless leave our shores for an overseas campaign later this year as an equine hero.

In the training ranks Charles Laird sent out winner after winner and claimed the National title, that had narrowly eluded him in the last two seasons, in resounding fashion.

The wins also earned Laird's chief owners, Markus and Ingrid Jooste, the Owners of the Season title. The couple had more than 100 winners in their name, which could well be a record. Jet Master became Champion Sire for the third time. However, he was perhaps overshadowed by Captain Al, who smashed his own record by sending out 30 individual two-year-old winners, including his first Grade 1 winner in this age group, Exhilaration.

The champion first season sire, the former European Sprint Champi-

on, Var, made a huge impact as his first crop scorched the racetracks around the country. His winners included the Vaughan Marshall-trained Villandry, who scored a facile win in the Grade 1 Gold Reefs Resorts Medallion under Felix Coetzee at Scottsville.

Summerhill Stud not only claimed their fifth National Breeders title but had a memorable year in the Sales ring.

The Kahal yearling colt, Uncle Tommy, became their first ever million rand sale and went on to become the most expensive horse of this year's National Yearling Sale at R2,4million. Their new sire, Solksjaer, was in the top 10 by average with his first crop at the Sales, which included the R1,5million filly Matara Garden.

The years of hard work and dedication Mick and Cheryl Goss have spent in creating a world class stud farm had finally paid dividends as Summerhill found themselves in the black for the first time ever after the National Yearling Sales.

MIKE DE KOCK



Mike de Kock captured the Kwazulu-Natal trainer's championship last season for the second year running, narrowly beating Dennis Drier again, and his formidable team of horses won six Grade 1 races countrywide.

That is not to mention the now Summerveld-based trainer's well documented overseas achievements out of his Dubai and Newmarket (England) yards.

De Kock had an incredible batch of two-year-olds this season, mostly bought from South Africa, South America and Australia, so he will consequently go into this season brimful of confidence for both his local and overseas campaigns.

The fortunes of the rest of the Kwazulu-Natal training contingent showed an upturn in the 2008-2009 season.

More importantly, despite their continued lower spending budgets compared to the big Cape and Gauteng-based trainers, they have some horses that could be valid contenders for major prizes this season.

Dennis Drier has three horses, the Grade 2 winning sprint-miler, Shark's Bay, and two exciting three-year-olds, the Silvano colt Clearly Silver and the Var filly, Val De Ra, that could be contenders to win big races this coming season.

Drier can add a number of other promising three-year-olds to that trio, including Never Forever, Jo Piper and Candy Tuft, so the yard looks set for a good season.

Shark's Bay won the Grade 2 Post Merchants over 1200m last season having finished third in the Grade 2 KRA Guineas.

He has only raced nine times for four wins and should come into his own this season.

Both Clearly Silver and Val De Ra are unbeaten in two starts.

Clearly Silver is an imposing, athletic type and has been ultra impressive in his wins, which both came over 1000m.

Considering he is by Silvano out of a Goldkeeper mare he should come into his own when stepped up in trip and could develop into an exciting classic contender.

Val De Ra, by the speed sire Var, won easily over 1000m and then beat My Kazzie over 1300m at Greyville. Unfortunately she bled after that last start, meaning she could not contest the subsequent Grade 1 races, the Golden Slipper (1400m) and the Thekwini (1600m). My Kazzie went on to finish runner up in both those races.

Never Forever impressed with his finishing speed when placed in the Grade 2 Umkomazi and the Grade 1 Medallion, both over 1200m, although he did disappoint in the Grade 1 Golden Horseshoe over 1400m.

Jo Piper and Candy Tuft have impressed over sprint trips and should both see out a mile at least.

The Drier yard's other stakes winner of the season, besides Shark's Bay, was Charming Lady, who won the Listed KwaZulu-Natal Stakes over 1000m at Scottsville.

Another contender for big prizes this season is the Paul Lafferty-trained Goat, who won the Grade 2 Gold Circle Oaks over 2400m at Clairwood and the Listed Kwazulu-Natal Breeders over 1600m also at Clairwood.

She is a versatile sort who had no luck in the KRA Fillies Guineas over 1600m, when still managing fourth place, and in the Woolavington 2000, so it will be interesting to see how she fares when things go her way in the biggest fillies and mares races.

Duncan Howells won the Grade 2 Greyville 1900 with Tropical Empire, the Grade 3 Christmas Handicap over 1600m at Clairwood with Wood Be Magic, the Listed East Coast Handicap over 2000m at Clairwood with Polzeath and the Grade 3 Strelitzia Stakes over 1000m for juvenile fillies with Passive Resistance.

Besides Passive Resistance another horse to follow from the yard this season is Grade 1 Thekwini fourth-placed Touch The Moon, who has plenty of scope for improvement.

Gavin van Zyl won the Grade 3 Yellowwood Handicap over 1800m at Turffontein with the now five-year-old Prestic, who also finished a close up second and third respectively in the Grade 2 Tibouchina over 1400m and the Grade 1 Garden Province Stakes over 1600m.

Prestic, who is by Strike Smartly and is owned by Bridget Oppenheimer, will be a contender in big fillies and mares features this season again.

Van Zyl also has the Oppenheimer-owned Silvano three-year-old colt Bulsara, who advertised his classic credentials when finishing a narrow second in the Grade 1 Premier's Champion Stakes over 1600m at Clairwood.

He has a few other youngsters with potential, such as Wittenberg. This Silvano colt impressed when winning on debut and the formline has turned out to be quite strong.

Another youngster who impressed from Summerveld last season was the Herman Brown-trained Rich Man's Gold filly, Mary Lou, a facile winner of her maiden and she is another possibility for feature races this season.

Former Dingaans winner Lion's Blood is back in the Brown yard after his disappointing Dubai campaign, while former Summer Cup winner, Strategic News, is back with Dylan Cunha at Summerveld having had some success in Dubai.

Dennis Bosch's Fanatic Dane filly, Another Shadow, is another promising young filly, who beat Mary Lou first time out before winning her maiden easily. The Alistair Gordon-trained Lord London was one of the most talked about horses last season. Although he didn't live up to his billing, there is little doubt that his potential still remains and having now been rested and gelded his return is eagerly anticipated.

The Craig Eudey-trained Thandolwami finished a 0,25 length second in the Grade 2 November Handicap over 1600m, a one length third in the Grade 1 Champions Cup over 2000m and a 1,25 length second in the Grade 3 King's Cup over 1600m.

The Woodborough gelding, who is from Eudey's first crop of horses as a trainer, is particularly suited to the long Turffontein straight and is sure to be a lively contender in some big features races this season again.

There were some other achievements by KZN trainers last season.

Mike Miller won the Grade 3 Flamboyant Stakes over 1600m with his stalwart mare, Outcome.

Mark Dixon won the Grade 2 Midmar Premier Trophy over 1800m at Kenilworth with Surfin' USA and the Listed Banyana Handicap over 1000m with Nottgalashia on the Vaal sand.

Bart Rice won the Listed Michaelmas Handicap with Modern Day gelding Royal Day. The Rice yard do very well with a small string of unfashionably bred horses and deserve better support.

Kumaran Naidoo, in just his second full season as a trainer, had 35 winners. These included Ultra Vires, who won the Listed Easter Handicap at Clairwood over 1800m, dead-heating with fellow Summerveld trainer James Goodman's Tailormade.

Michael Roberts won the race named in his honour, the Listed Michael Roberts Handicap, for the second year in succession with Tropical Empire, who later moved to the Howells yard.

Tony Rivalland won the Listed Sledgehammer Stakes with London Guest.

The Alyson Wright yard had a fine start to last season, although the older horses largely responsible for their 14 winners from just 83 runners before Christmas were sold off to Mauritius, where they were deemed by the Wrights to have better career prospects. The Wrights ended with 25 winners in just their second full season.

Colin Scott has settled well into Sumerveld and formed a fine partnership with Muzi Yeni.

The yard sent out 22 winners in their first full KZN season.

Doug Campbell, training out of his private Richmond yard, had one of his best seasons for a long time sending out 33 winners.

JJ Moves yards Bizarre

In further breaking news in an eventful week JJ The Jet Plane, unplaced in Betfair Cup at Goodwood, has been moved from Mike de Kock's yard to trainer Richard Hannon. Circumstances border on the bizarre.

Queries have revealed that the gelding's part-owner, Thea Boyens, was unhappy because De Kock didn't greet her properly in the parade ring before the start of the Betfair Cup. They were also unhappy that jockey Kevin Shea was again engaged to ride the former South African star sprinter. It is no secret that the owners were always keen to have JJ The Jet Plane's regular rider Piere Strydom flown to the UK to ride their horse, yet De Kock was adamant that his stable rider would continue to do his duties. While De Kock is not a man known for bowing a knee and exchanging an avalanche of pleasantries with patrons, he told racingweb.co.za: "I was courteous before the race, I introduced myself to Thea's boyfriend and then discussed tactics for the race with Kevin."

This morning (Wednesday), De Kock was informed by Richard Hannon

himself that he had been approached by the owners of JJ The Jet Plane to take over his training. "Thea Boyens's behavior is juvenile, but if this is the way they want things, so be it. One cannot expect to win every time. We were committed to beat our draw and take Main Aim on and as it turned out we ran each other into the ground. We finished second to last, Sir Michael Stoute finished last with Main Aim. This was JJ's weakest run for us, but that is racing." He added: "I was privileged to train this horse. He competed at the highest level, won a Listed race and a Group 3 and was Group 1 placed. Richard Hannon is a good trainer and I wish him well. JJ will win again."

Hennie du Preez, speaking on behalf of JJ The Jet Plane's owners, told racingweb: "Our reasons for moving from Mike de Kock are personal and have nothing to do with the performance of the horse. We'd like to leave it at that." – racingweb.co.za

Mother Russia

The tough Joey Ramsden-trained Windrush filly Mother Russia started the new season where she left off last when brought home by Anton Marcus for yet another big race stakes cheque at Greyville.

The Grade 2 Golden Bracelet over 2000m was the sixth stakes race win of her career.

In total she has now won one Grade 1 race, two Grade 2s, a Grade 3 and two Listed races varying in distance from 1400m to 2000m.

The racing cliché “autocash-machine” could be used to describe Mother Russia although the term usually refers to maidens or handicappers and not top-class sorts.

Mother Russia's longest career break has been just two months and in the 11 stakes races she has contested she has only failed to pick up a cheque once.

In all she has run 16 times for 9 wins and five places.

This smallish Normandy Stud-bred filly clearly loves to gallop and Peter Muscutt, Ramsden's Clairwood assistant, summed her up earlier in the season when describing her as “all heart”.

Mother Russia had seemed likely to fight out the season's Equus Champion three-year-old filly category with her arch-rival Sparkling Gem after the pair had battled out a number of big races during the Cape Summer Season.

However, they have both possibly been replaced in pole position for the award by the Mike de Kock-trained Zirconium, who beat Mother Russia in the Grade 1 Woolavington 2000 before going on to finish second in the Vodacom Durban July.

Both Sparkling Gem and Mother Russia had beaten Zirconium in the Grade 1 Cape Guineas during the Cape Summer.

Of the trio Mother Russia's win record last season is the most impressive as she won a Grade 1, a Grade 2, a Grade 3 and a Listed race, while both Zirconium and Sparkling Gem only won a Grade 1 and a Grade 2 each.

However, Zirconium's July second might be regarded by panellists as the best achievement by a three-year-old filly of the season.

Mother Russia is owned by Klawervlei Stud.

The first stakes race of the day on Saturday, the Listed Umngeni Handicap over 1000m, was one in exhilarating style by the Alistair Gordon-trained Red Flyer.

Gordon had said earlier in the week that this six-year-old gelding loves

fast ground, so he would have been relieved that the predicted rain held off until later in the day.

Red Flyer came from some way back in the running to mow down a wall of horses with a breathtaking finish under Stuart Randolph.

Gordon is the longest standing trainer in Kwazulu-Natal and his record with sprinters speaks for itself.

The many top speedsters he has trained include the memorable pair Scarlet Lady and Extra Cover.

Red Flyer, bred by Roy Eckstein and owned by Ravi Padayachee, David Coleman and MJ Convery, became the first stakes winner for his sire, Martinelli.

Martinelli is a half-brother to the stamina influential sire, Fort Wood, but, although he does produce his share of stayers, his most successful progeny have been sprinters to 1400m horses, probably due to the influence of his Mr Prospector male line.

Red Flyer's damsire, Shoe Danzig would also have been a speed influence.

Later in the day the Listed Darley Arabian for four-year-olds over 1900m was won by last season's most formidable combination, the newly crowned Champion Trainer, Charles Laird, and his stable jockey Anton Marcus.

Rudi Rocks was having only his second run for the yard.

The former Cape-trained colt by Silvano had come off five month break before his last race over a too sharp 1400m on June 17.

This was a more suitable trip and he showed courage aplenty in the finish, fighting a ding-dong battle with the Alec Laird-trained Iron Wood over the last 200m before just getting his nose in front on the line.

Rudi Rocks is owned by Markus and Ingrid Jooste and was bred by Maine Chance Farms.



Mother Russia Sold

Joey Ramsden confirmed from Durbanville racecourse that his crack four-year-old filly, Mother Russia, had been sold and had joined the Mike de Kock yard.

Mother Russia won six stakes races with Ramsden over distances from 1400m to 2000m including the Grade 1 Majorca Stakes over 1600m, the Grade 2 Gold Bracelet over 2000m and the Grade 2 Odessa Stud Fillies Championships over 1400m.

Ramsden said, "I would like to wish the new owners everything of the best with her."

Wonder Lawn is another Cape horse that has recently joined the de Kock yard.

This former Dean Kannemeyer-trained six-year-old gelding remains the highest-priced yearling ever sold in South Africa at R3,3 million.

His best achievements to date have been a win in the Grade 3 Peninsula Handicap over 1800m as a four-year-old and a second placed finish to Jay Peg in the Grade 2 Selangor Cup over 1600m as a three-year-old.

Rocket Man comes through surgery well

Singapore's sprint sensation Rocket Man is already back at trainer Patrick Shaw's stable following surgery to repair the hairline fracture to his off-side foreleg.

The rising four-year-old underwent surgery at the Singapore Turf Club's veterinary hospital and veterinary surgeon Dr Eugene Reynders described the operation as a success.

Rocket Man had a screw inserted to his leg to fuse the hairline fracture and Dr Reynders said the gelding had recovered well from the surgery.

Rocket Man and Robbie Fradd under happier circumstances. Surgery went well for the gelding on Tuesday to repair a hairline fracture.

"I couldn't be happier with how the surgery went," said Dr Reynders.

"We inserted just one screw to hold the leg in place.

"He was placed in a cast overnight, but we have since replaced that with a bandage and he has already returned to his own environment at Patrick's stable.

"They can do all the cuddling and whatever they do with him now but we have recommended six to eight weeks of box rest.

"We will continue to monitor his progress and at the end of that six to eight week period we will again x-ray the leg to see how it is progressing."

Dr Reynders said Rocket Man stayed in the veterinary hospital overnight where staff monitored his recovery and reported the gelding ate up and had come the surgery well.

Rocket Man was transported back to Shaw's stables in the horse ambulance as an added precaution from the surgery.

Dr Reynders added that the prognosis is good for Rocket Man to make a return to racing.

"We have had a good deal of success with this type of injury previously by using screws to fuse fractures together," said Dr Reynders.

"The early signs are good that he will make it back to the racetrack."

Shaw said he would be guided by the veterinary surgeons in the recovery of Rocket Man but hopes to have the gelding back racing in the New

Year. "He will have box rest and when the x-rays come back to say the leg has recovered then we will start some light exercise," said Shaw.

"Some horses recover quicker than others. It's just like people. Some get over broken bones quicker than others.

"Hopefully he will get the all clear so we can get him ready to race in the New Year and if everything goes smoothly we might head to Dubai with him."

The more Shaw thinks about it the more he believes Rocket Man first started showing some signs of injury when the gelding jumped the winning post lights in winning on the Polytrack back in February – landing awkwardly.

Despite Shaw's initial concerns, Rocket Man proceeded to go on and record two victories – including the Group 1 Lion City Cup – before his brave second to Sacred Kingdom in the Group 1 KrisFlyer International Sprint over 1200m on May 17.

"On a few occasions he would twist on his off foreleg and there were a signs of soreness coming through," said Shaw.

"But we thought it might have been a foot problem as there was nothing else showing up, but watching the KrisFlyer again I don't think he was stretching out like he normally did on that firm track.

"I think jumping the lights that night was where this problem started and I said to Ricky (assistant trainer Ricardo Le Grange) at the time that I think this might come back to haunt us at some time.

VICTORY MOON

Leading young stallion Victory Moon was euthanised at Main Chance Farms. The superb son of Al Mufti, who helped to put South Africa on the world racing map with a win in the 2003 UAE Derby, was found with a broken off-hind leg in his stable on Sunday afternoon.

Stud Manager John Slade said: "We found him at 4pm. We're not sure exactly what happened, but the injury to his leg was a long fracture consistent with horses getting up from the floor of their barns. They get up in an awkward way which can lead to a leg snapping."

Victory Moon was taken for X-rays and veterinary surgeons then tried to save his leg and his life by inserting screws and plates, but found that there were missing pieces of bone which made it impossible to perform the procedure. He was not revived.

An emotional Slade said: "I am not one to get involved personally, but this great horse changed many people's lives. He was owned in partnership by the Victory Moon Syndicate and several other prominent stud

farms. John Maroun, for one, is devastated. He lived for Victory Moon.

"This happened at a time when Victory Moon was starting to shape as a stallion. He had a very good rate of winners to runners, even better than top stallion Var, and this while we only expected his runners to come into their own when they were older."

Victory Moon, by Al Mufti from Dancing Flower, leaves a legacy of four crops. He covered 130 of 140 booked mares in this, is fourth season and Slade said: "He was bought for R5 million at Mike de Kock and Dean Maroun's dispersal sale but he recovered that quickly, covering more than 100 mares a season for four seasons. This is a great loss not only to us, but to the South African breeding fraternity as a whole."

As a racehorse, Victory Moon won 7 races from 13 starts and over \$US2,4 million in stakes. He won the 2003 Grade 2 UAE Derby, the Grade 3 UAE 2000 Guineas and finished third in the 2004 Dubai World Cup. - racingweb.co.za

South African Horseracing Operators

Phumelela Gaming and Leisure Limited and Gold Circle (Pty) Limited, the South African horseracing operators, have entered into a partnership with Primedia Sport to market and promote the sport of thoroughbred horseracing, including the sale of sponsorships, advertising and hospitality.

Primedia Sport will also take over the marketing and promotion of the Summer Cup from this year with the aim of building Phumelela's premier horseracing event into a major highlight on Johannesburg's event calendar, and will be responsible for the sale and provision of hospitality at the raceday.

Major events like the Summer Cup are a significant yet small part of a sport that daily has a huge following in South Africa and an infinitely bigger global audience.

Horseracing is one of the world's major sports, ranking in the top five most popular sports globally. Some two million South Africans from all walks of life follow horseracing with more than one million visitors to racecourses each year.

The sport enjoys substantial media coverage annually, both in electronic and print media. Horseracing receives some 4,000 hours TV coverage every year and the sport has its own TV channel in South Africa in Tellytrack (channel 232 DSTv).

There are also numerous official and independent horseracing publications and internet and mobile sites.

And South African horseracing now reaches far beyond the borders of this country. Phumelela Gold Enterprises (PGE), a joint venture between Phumelela and Gold Circle, broadcasts South African horseracing to

more than 40 countries daily through its Racing International TV channel. Racing International is estimated to reach about 100-million viewers per annum.

Given its global footprint and fan base, horseracing offers exciting and varied sponsorship opportunities and Primedia Sport, the holding company for five sports marketing and entertainment brands in Megapro, Warwick, Megaview, Signet and Matchworld, is ideally placed to develop and market sponsorship packages that will deliver exceptional value for sponsors and create new revenue streams for horseracing.

"I am very pleased that we have agreed with Gold Circle to jointly promote and market the sport of horseracing on both a national as well as international basis. We have a long way to go to educate corporates of the value of being associated with the sport of horseracing. Given the popularity of the sport both locally and the international reach that we offer, we believe that we can offer unrivalled advertising and brand awareness value for money to corporates. Our partnership with Primedia Sport is an exciting step forward in this initiative. They rank among the world leaders in sports marketing and hospitality and we believe they are an ideal partner to assist us in maximising our advertising and sponsorship opportunities and growing the Summer Cup into a mega social and tourist attraction," said Phumelela's Group CEO Rian du Plessis.

"We also believe that, together with Primedia, we can offer visitors to the Soccer World Cup next year exciting days at our many racecourses on days that they are not able to watch their favourite soccer team and are looking for something else to do," Du Plessis continued. "Clyde Basel, formerly CEO of the Racing Association, has been appointed to head up

the new sales and hospitality division within PGE and he will work closely with Primedia Sport.”

Gold Circle Joint Chairperson John Bescoby said: “Gold Circle is very pleased to be part of a joint initiative that is going to benefit this wonderful sport of ours.”

Basel said he was looking forward to the challenge of unlocking the value that horseracing offered for selected corporates. “It’s a big chal-

lenge, but we offer a wonderful product that is enjoyed by millions of people across the globe daily and that in turn presents unique and cost-effective marketing opportunities for many corporates,” he said.

George Rautenbach, Executive Chairman of Primedia Sport, said: “We are very excited about this agreement and hope as partners that together we can put horseracing on the sports calendar at the highest level.”

