

GOLD CIRCLE MEMBER'S **news** LETTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION: CALL 031 314 1630 or email: peterl@goldcircle.co.za

EDITION 29. FEBRUARY 2009



Champions Season 2009

GThe Champions Season officially starts on May 3 with the running of two juvenile Grade 2 events over 1200m at Scottsville, the Umkhomazi Stakes and The Debutante Stakes. However, the away trainers have already begun settling into their winter premises and the entry list for the Grade 3 Byerley Turk and Umzimkhulu Stakes over 1400m at Scottsville on April 19 is packed with class.

This points to there being two mouthwatering Guineas races, the Grade 2 Korean Racing Association Guineas and fillies Guineas at Greyville on Sunday May 10, for which the two Scottsville features provide springboards.

The likes of Cape horses Le Drakkar, Target Acquired, Polished Steel and Rushing Wind and Johannesburg horses Superlative, Hurricane Force, Imperial Gesture, Choisir and Norquinco are entered in the Byerley Turk alongside KZN's most exciting three-

year-old colt, the Alistair Gordon-trained Lord London.

The Umzimkhulu Stakes for fillies has Johannesburg entries of the like of On Her Toes, Sharp Mistress, Thin Red Line, Her Excellency, Captain's Gal, Autumn Gold and a trio of promising sorts from the Azzie yard, Flyingwithoutwings, Mocha Special and Muamba.

The Cape trainers have entries such as Consensual, Cocoa Beach, Winterinthewoods and Spanish Wisdom and KZN has the likes of Loupe, She's So Cold, Nightstalker, Smangaliso and the interesting maiden Clarkies Promise.

Trainers of three-year-old classic contenders will be pleased with the four week gap between the Guineas meeting and the Daily News 2000 and Woolavington meeting, which takes place at Greyville on June 6.

Last year the gap was an awkward six weeks.

The Grade 1 Gold Challenge over 1600m on June 13 is once again shaping to be one of the country's races of the season as there are a number of blossoming milers around.

Pocket Power and Dancer's Daughter will have their work cut out to take care of the ever improving Our Giant, whilst it will be interesting to see whether the Cape's top three-year-old filly milers, Mother Russia and Sparkling Gem, will have a crack at this race as opposed to the less lucrative Tibouchina.

Le Drakkar and Forest Path are other possible three-year-old entries, while Buy And Sell always runs well in his July preparation events and should be a contender again.

The Glen Kotzen-trained KZN campaigner, Pirate's Gold, who recently broke the long-standing Greyville mile course record, could also be in the line up together with Summerveld contemporary, the Mark Dixon-trained Surfin' USA.

The horse Pirate's Gold received 5kg from and only beat by 1,25 lengths in his record-breaking Greyville run, the Craig Eudey-trained Thandolwami, is being targeted at the Grade 1 Champions Challenge over 2000m at Turffontein on April 25, and if all goes well he will then be going for the Grade 2 Greyville 1900 on Friday May 22 before bypassing the Vodacom Durban July on July 4 and given a break until the Grade 1 Champions Cup over 1800m at Clairwood on July 25.

The Greyville 1900 and the Grade 3 Cup Trial over 1800m on Gold Challenge day are often used by borderline July entries in an attempt to qualify for the big race.

The big Cape July contenders, like Pocket Power, often open their campaigns in the Grade 2 Drill Hall Stakes over 1400m at Greyville, which this year is on Friday night, May 8.

Sprinters have the Grade 3 Poinsettia Stakes for females at Clairwood on April 26, the big day at Scottsville on May 30, the Grade 2 Post Merchants at Greyville on June 19 and the Grade 1 Mercury Sprint on July 19 to look forward too, as well as the Non-Black Type In Full Flight Stakes over 1000m on Drill Hall night..

Two-year-olds will have their big days at Scottsville on May 2 and May 30, at Greyville on July day and at Clairwood on July 25, although there are also two R120,000 non-black type races for them on June 13 at Clairwood.

Top Stayers are catered for by the non-black type Highland Night Cup over 2500m at Clairwood on May 17, the Grade 3 Lonsdale Stirrup over 2400m at Greyville on June 6, the Gold Circle Derby and Oaks for three-year-olds over 2400m at Clairwood on June 27, the Grade 2 Gold Vase over 3000m on July day, the Listed Queen Palm for fillies and mares at Scottsville on July 8 and the Grade 1 Canon Gold Cup on August 1.

Dubai World Cup

The \$6million Dubai World Cup run over 2000m at Nad Al Sheba last night turned into a triumph for Neil Bruss, who claimed third and fourth place with his two charges, Paris Perfect and Muller, who were ridden by Bernard Fayd'herbe and Weichong Marwing respectively.

Paris Perfect, bred and raised by Mick and Cheryl Goss's Summerhill stud, is by their top stallion Muhtafal, and few watching his South African career as a top campaigner in one of the country's lesser racing centres, Port Elizabeth, would have envisaged this achievement.

The facile 14 length winner of the race was the Eoin Harty American campaigner, Well Armed, ridden by Aaron Gryder.

This time last year, Mike de Kock and Herman Brown were celebrating a highly successful World Cup night.

However this season a 10 day delayed aeroplane in England in December got their operations off to a troublesome start and the meeting last night, in which they failed to have a place between them, was the final nail in what has been a largely disappointing campaign.



Disappointing World Cup, but we can't win everything, every year!

WHILST naturally disappointed in not getting near the winners enclosure on Dubai World Cup night, Mike de Kock says there is no reason for despair. "This is racing. We can't win everything, every year.

"As previously pointed out this was not an easy season with training difficulties due to the Meydan building operations, and we had lots of respiratory problems, I can't say we were unlucky, with the exception of King Of Rome, who couldn't find a run on the fence, the others had every chance.

"Starting with Lucky Find and Art Of War in the Godolphin Mile, they simply weren't good enough. Brave Tin Soldier ran on nicely, we were pleased with his fifth place.

"Archipenko and company had to chase the hard-galloping star Gladiatus in the Duty Free and as a result didn't have much to come late in the race. But we could never have beaten Gladiatus, he is arguably the best turf horse in the world over 1600m – 1800m."

"In the Sheema Classic, Front House ran well for a long way, she faded late; King Of Rome was trapped on the fence, Russian Sage was reported bleeding after the race and Macarthur just never got going from a bad draw.

"Asiatic Boy pulled up coughing badly - not a surprising end to a frustrating race day, he finished tailed off after missing the break."

De Kock added that Asiatic Boy and Honour Devil will be joining trainer Kieran McLaughlin in New York for a tilt at their summer season. While Asiatic Boy is likely to retire to Argentina after US season, Honour Devil will return to Dubai.

"I do feel for my staff who rely on winners for bonuses and my loyal patrons who spent a lot of money to get to Dubai and had to leave with very little," said Mike.

Typhoon Tracy

Typhoon Tracy, a three-year-old filly out of Tracy's Element, who raced with great success in South Africa in the 1990s, has become one of the most talked about fillies in Australian racing after keeping her unbeaten record in the Group 1 Coolmore Classic over 1500m at Rosehill on Saturday.

Typhoon Tracy, who is the 89th stakes winner for sire Red Ransom, is now unbeaten in five starts and what made Saturday's victory all the more impressive was that she did it from a woeful draw of 15.

Jockey Glen Boss reportedly gave the Peter Moody-trained filly a gem of a front-running ride and she also showed great courage, fighting back after being headed in the straight by New Zealand mare, Culminate.

Tracy's Element, a sprinter by Last Tycoon, was brought to South Africa by Ormond Ferraris in the early 1990s and won eleven races including four Grade 1s.

She was then resold to Australia for breeding purposes and has produced six winners from six runners, including Typhoon Tracy's stakes-winning full-brother Red Element and Group 1-placed full-sister Kylikwong..



Harness Racing is here

A fete like atmosphere permeated through Greyville on Friday night as over two years of blood, sweat and tears came together in pleasing fashion for South African Harness Racing Chairman, Dean Latimer.

The meeting turned into something of a dream night for young Mauritian, Nicolas Planel, who will forever be in the history books as the winner of the first official harness race on South African soil.

Planel looked skyward in gratitude as he crossed the line on the six-year-old Swedish-bred mare, Quickness Brew, who is owned by Latimer himself together with Goldcircle's KZN chairman, Moga Pillay, and Sonu Sewraj.

The softly spoken student, who hails from the small Mauritian town of Vacaos, could hardly have imagined just a week or so ago that he would be surrounded by press photographers and newsmen from across the land.

He had been called in as a replacement rider for Garth Puller, who, owing to circumstances was only able to fulfil one of his driving engagements on the night.

Planel is currently studying at the South African Jockey's Academy at Summerveld with the aim of going into thoroughbred training.

He was involved in showjumping in his school years in Mauritius, but it was the indelible mark left on him by his trips to the Champ de Mars racecourse in the capital city of Port Louis that steered him towards his current career path.

Hardened punters took a while to warm to the sport on the evening, but the second race attracted interest from their ranks as there was some form from the first race to go on (the two races were contested by the same seven horses).

One of Sweden's top harness race owners, Kenneth Dolk, a VIP guest on the night, summed it up, "It is all about betting. Once punters understand that it is an excellent betting medium, it should take off. Also if spectators were on top of the action as they are on a normal 800m oval track, they would soon see that it is a very exciting sport."

Indeed, the form of the first race stood up as Quickness Brew, this time ridden by Swedish professional, Johan Nilsson, was denied by the shortest of short-heads by Carla Kemp, ridden by Bart Rice, and their exciting duel over the last 300m had the crowd on their feet and cheering.

Carla Kemp, an eight-year-old Swedish-bred mare, is owned by DA Rousseau, M Peterson and BE Coghlan.

The races were in some sense reminiscent of the old days of amateur racing, as it soon became evident to inquisitive spectators that there was no reason why they themselves could not take part in the sport if putting in the effort.

The latter point will probably be the key to the success of the sport, as an amateur aspect will definitely swell racecourse attendance as well as having a great chance of attracting the previously disadvantaged.

In the thoroughbred ranks today, the likes of Mike Bass, Chris Snaith, Geoff Woodruff, Doug Campbell, Julie Dittmer, Mike Rattray and many more, all paved their way in amateur racing, proof of how important those gymkhana days were, and if trotting can bring that aspect back it can only be good for racing.

A final positive was that the drivers all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and there were no complaints from the professional thoroughbred jockeys.

Grade 3 King's Cup

Also on the night, the Grade 3 King's Cup over 1600m was run and it saw the Glen Kotzen-trained Pirate's Gold under Sean Cormack holding on from a low-flying Thandolwami from the Craig Eudey yard.

Pirate's Gold looked set to be one of racing's major disappointments up until Christmas last year, as he had never fulfilled his huge potential.

However a totally new daily program was planned for him and under the care of Kotzen's Summerveld assistant, Frikkie Greyling the previously difficult five-year-old Rich Man's Gold gelding has taken on a happy countenance and now won his last five races.

Owner of the month - February 2009



The owner of the month for February has been awarded to owner/trainer Adam Kethro.

The love of the horse is what has driven KwaZulu-Natal owner/trainer Adam Kethro throughout his life and 40 years of dreams and dedication finally bore fruit at Clairwood on February 15 when his three-year-old Jallad gelding Prince Hal, trained by him and owned in partnership with his wife, led throughout to win an Open Maiden Plate over 2 500m. It was his first winner since taking out his trainer licence 17 months before.

February 15 became a red letter day for him when, in the last race, a Maiden Plate for Fillies and Mares over a mile, his three-year-old Lavery filly Irish Eyes thrashed the opposition to give him a double.

The following weekend at Scottsville, his two-year-old colt East Coast Gold was beaten into second place in the second race but later in the day his five-year-old Alami mare, Crusher Run, was first to the wire in the ninth race to give him the third win of his training career.

For Adam, the horse was the centre of his world from a child and he owned his first horse at the tender age of 12. A year later he was riding work for trainer Taffy Thomas at Alberton.

"Back in the 80's I once said to Gerald Rosenberg that I could make money out of racing and he replied that my only reason for being in the game was the love of the horse. We had a bet and some years later I was forced to accede to defeat by getting on my knees before him in public which I did in a less populated area at the Germiston sales."

Adam has had his colours for about 25 years and at his farm in Mooi River has had various private trainers preparing horses for him. He decided in August 2007 to take out his own trainer licence and has worked steadily since improving his tracks and training skills.

"In the winter last year I rented stables at Summerveld and saw how they prepared the tracks. Now on my farm I have a dirt track, a proper sand track and a 1 600m turf track where I train. There is also some 7km of trotting tracks between the sugar cane and the forests which prove particularly beneficial to the youngsters.

"One of the tracks is alongside the N3 and the noise and hooting from the passing traffic ensures that the problems of shying are soon eliminated."

Of the future there is great hope and promise and his colt East Coast Gold showed when running third in the Sentinel Stakes at Clairwood in his next race that he was going the right way.

Well done Adam.

Horse Chestnut Returning to South African Stud Duty



Former South African Horse-Of-The-Year Horse Chestnut (Fort Wood-London Wall, by Col Pickering) "is returning to his land of birth to continue his career as a stallion," reported gold-circle.co.za. Horse Chestnut (who has been standing at Claiborne Farm in Kentucky) will stand alongside former Florida champion sire Trippi at Johan & Gaynor Rupert's Drakenstein Stud in the Cape. Stud manager Ross Fuller confirmed: "The likelihood is that his fee will be set at R10,000 (A\$1,500) nomination & R40,000 (A\$6,000) live foal. There may be some shares made available. He will however cover a limited book each year." His initial 4 crops at Claiborne have yielded 70% winners-to-runners, with 137 individual winners of 323 races (including 9 stakes-winners of 20 stakes races) for earnings of US\$8.5million.

South Africa Yearlings: \$121k Jet Master Colt

In South Africa, Johannesburg trainer Dominic Zaki paid top price of R800,000 (A\$121,000) for a colt by champion sire Jet Master already named Locked On Target (a brother to Mythical Flight, a champion sprinter two seasons ago) at the 1-day Equimark Vintage Yearling Sale on Durbanville racecourse in Cape Town. Zaki told racingpost.com: "I bought the colt for 1 existing client & 2 new ones. But I would not have gone any higher - I'd reached my top limit."

South Africa Yearlings: Average Down 36%

Overall at the Equimark Yearling Sale, the "bloodstock market was hit by the global recession when prices fell across a broad front," summed up racingpost.com. The aggregate of R17.6 million (A\$2.6m) for 201 yearlings sold was down 38% & the average fell 36% to R87,681 (A\$13,000) "the lowest level since 2004".