

Chairman's Message



Moga Pillay

It is with great honour that I take the Chair once again on being re-elected the KwaZulu-Natal Racing Association Chapter Chairman and I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming new members to the Gold Circle family. I assure members that we, as a Board at Gold Circle, are on an extended drive to make the necessary changes needed in order to bring KZN racing to the forefront of the sporting industry. Let me introduce to our members the newly elected KZN Chapter Board for 2011.

The Board Directors: Wayne Kobusch (Vice-Chairman), Neil Butcher, Kim Labuschagne, Dean Latimer, Robert Mauvis, Babu Nunan, Greg Petzer, Warwick Render, Tony Rivalland and Steve Sturlese. The Directors and I wish you all 'great racing' and look forward to the exciting times ahead.

Media Release 02/03/2011

This year's KZN Champions Season will again end with a bang!

After careful deliberation following the unqualified success of the Vodacom Durban July Racemeeting being moved to the final Saturday of July last year, the KZN Chapter Board of Gold Circle has agreed that the Canon Gold Cup should find a new home on this day. But in addition, the country's top race for stayers will form part of a "Super Saturday" with the end-of-season championship races, traditionally run on the last Saturday in July at Clairwood, combining with the Gold Cup at Greyville.

As previously announced, the Vodacom Durban July reverts to its traditional slot of the first Saturday in July.

Gold Circle's Chief Operating Officer Graeme Hawkins said that although this was a break from Gold Cup tradition the success of last year's Vodacom Durban July meeting showed that here was an opportunity not to be missed.

"By combining the two meetings we hope to increase tote turnover and on-course attendance. In addition the day will offer us an opportunity to grow the meeting into another major event on the Durban social and sporting calendar."

The "Super Saturday" meeting will consist of seven feature races including four Grade 1's. In addition to the R1 million Canon Gold Cup, other Grade 1 features on the day will be the R700 000 Champions Cup, the R500 000 Premiers Champion Juvenile Stakes and the R500 000 Thekwini Fillies Stakes.

Other supporting features on a 12-race card will be the Grade 2 R200 000 Gold Bracelet and two Listed races, the Umgeni Handicap and the Darley Arabian.

Hawkins said that the racing programme will remain relatively unaffected and the switch to Greyville of the Champions Cup races to combine with the Canon Gold Cup will provide a massive marketing opportunity.

"It will also provide a fitting end to the national racing season," he said.

The Canon Gold Cup Racemeeting will still have a charity flavour and Gold Circle will again host about 20 charities in a "Tent City" on the inside of the racecourse. "In time we could "invade" the golf course twice a year," Hawkins added.

Achievers in KZN – CONGRATULATIONS to all the Winners.

Month	Trainer	Jockey	Owner
September	Gavin van Zyl	Anton Marcus	Gladys & Roy Meaker
October	Alyson Wright	Sean Veale	Warren Kidd
November	Mark Dixon	Muzi Yeni	Erich Buhr
December	Duncan Howells	Sean Veale	Roy Moodley
January	Herman Brown	Ian Sturgeon	Jane & Rodney Trotter
February	Allison Wright	Athandiwe Mgudlwa	John Jones

Racing News

Pocket Power has retired as South Africa's favourite racehorse. Pocket Power won many awards over the years, including three Horse of the Year titles. He also won five other Equus awards! He is truly 'The People's Champion' and hats off to owners, Marsh Shirtliff and Arthur and Rina Weber and to Mike Bass, Bernard Fayd'Herbe and the entire team on bringing so much joy to the country of South Africa.



JACKPOT



Athandiwe Mgudlwa has blossomed into a terrific jockey and in the last few months really come into his own. He did something special on Sunday 27 February 2011 at Scottsville racecourse where he piloted home the winner of the 4 Jackpot legs. This feat has been done before, but only as an apprentice, by the legendary Michael Roberts. Mgudlwa is the current 'Head Boy' of the Jockey Academy and is sure to go on to bigger and better things.



MEYDAN



Mike de Kock and his team have been in sublime form in Dubai again this year. Take note of the racing schedule at the end of this newsletter to stay in touch with Meydan racing and to support not only Mr. de Kock, but all the South Africans, doing us proud on international soil.

HARNESS RACING 20 February 2011 – Scottsville

The latest edition of Harness Racing took place on Sunday 20 February 2011 at Scottsville Racecourse. Swedish legend, Viking Harry, was on hand to call them home although the race was decided a long way out.

The next race will be held in March and will be in the form of a Montè Trot, while plans are being put together to hold series of 'run offs' on Ushaka Beach during the April spring low tide. These run offs are known as 'Kortebaan' style and it will add some energy to the day! Also in the pipeline is the sending over of 80 horses from Sweden for Harness Racing, while 4 Internationals (2 Sweden, 1 Netherlands, 1 New Zealand) have applied for training licences on our shores.



SEEN AT THE COURSE



Wendy Whitehead, Lance Whiteford and new 'Head Groom' Duncan McKenzie share a light hearted moment at Greyville.

MULTI-SPONSORED CHARITY/ SPONSORED RACEDAYS - March & April 2011 – KZN

MONTH	DATE	VENUE	MULTI-SPONSORED CHARITY / SPONSORED RACEDAYS
March	13	Clairwood	CHATSWORTH ANTI-DRUG FORUM
	20	Clairwood	CHILD WELFARE CHATSWORTH
	22	Greyville (N)	ROTARY CLUB OF WESTVILLE
	29	Greyville (N)	ROTARY CLUB OF PHOENIX
April	3	Clairwood	CHATSWORTH SPORTING CLUB
	9	Scottsville	INDEPENDENT ON SATURDAY
	17	Clairwood	REVOLUTION MOTOR CYCLE CLUB
	26	Greyville (N)	UMVOTI MOUNTED RIFLES
	27	Scottsville	SOUTH AFRICAN JOCKEY ACADEMY

Members Area

Gold Circle has started doing surveys in strategic members' areas on course and will be putting plans in place in order to make sure that suggestions are taken seriously. Please take the time to fill in the form – your OPINION counts.

We are also on a drive to update Members' details – if your details have changed please email janicemc@goldcircle.co.za

Members are also reminded of the strict dress code regulations that apply to ALL Members' fa-

cilities and are kindly requested to respect such dress codes. (These will be more strictly enforced in future)

We have also appointed a new KZN Chapter Manager – Jason Dedekind – whose main function will be to communicate on a more active basis with Members and the Racing Fraternity alike whilst implementing new policies and changes going forward on behalf of the KZN Chapter.

Do You Know – Ralph Smout



The Scottsville racetrack surface came in for a lot of criticism a couple of seasons back and generally became known as the “goat track” to trainers, jockeys and punters alike, but Ralph Smout and his team have reversed its prospects and praise is now being meted out for the Pietermaritzburg country course. Smout, who was taught the ropes by one of the best, the late Danie du Toit, is the Kwazulu-Natal Racing Facilities Manager, and oversees the maintenance of all three of the province's racetracks, Greyville, Clairwood and Scottsville, the two spe-

cialised training centres, Summerveld and Ashburton, and also the Clairwood training tracks and stables.

He explained that previously “bark fines” were used as organic matter at Scottsville and this created a very rich organic, surface layer. Consequently the grass roots found “food” near the surface and did not need to penetrate the sand further down. The shallow roots led to a lot of kickback and divots were left behind. Another problem was that when the sand had settled and been compacted by horses' hooves, rainfall or watering created patchy wet and dry areas.

Enter the miracle worker, the verti-drain, a tractor drawn machine that resembles a three metre wide crankshaft. The verti-drain has solid verticle tines attached to it that are 40cm long and 25mm in diameter and hollow tines that are 30cm long

Do You Know – Ralph Smout (continued)

and 19mm in diameter. The solid tines have the effect of aerating the ground and breaking up the compaction. The hollow tines are even more useful as they pull a core out of the ground. This not only has the effect of aerating and breaking up the compaction, but the extracted cores can be used again for dressing instead of importing new material.

The extracted cores have a top layer of organic material, with the sand beneath, but before being re-used the sand and organic material are mixed together. When the aerated ground is dressed with this mixture, some of the evenly distributed organic material now ends up further below the surface. Without the compaction the water sinks into the sand and the grass roots travel downward looking for moisture, while there is now enough organic material down there to supply food too. The end result is that the roots are now going down 300mm and the kickback has decreased dramatically, and in fact is virtually absent. Furthermore, kikuyu grass does best in high altitude wintery conditions, so Pietermaritzburg is the KZN racecourse best suited to its character. There is vigorous growth at present and excellent grass cover and Smout is now receiving favourable feedback regarding Scottsville's condition.

He had high praise for one of the quietest and most efficient men of KZN racing, Scottsville's racecourse manager Inos Majola, who learned his profession from previous Scottsville manager and now Summerveld manager George Furniss. Clairwood also came in for severe criticism last winter, especially from jockeys and trainers, and was often referred to as a "tarred road". Mike de Kock reckoned that it had gone from being the province's best racing surface to the worst.

Smout explained that a decision made to dress with Umgeni sand had been disastrous as the sand had been infiltrated with "goose grass", a weed that kills everything around it, grows widely on top, is thin in the middle, and then is wide on the bottom. Removing this weed created bare patches. Smout's team addressed the problem by putting in 300,000 kukuya plugs and in the spring treatment the track was verti-drained and supplied with as much water as possible. Further good news is that Clairwood will soon be

acquiring a hi-tech watering system to replace their outdated one.

Smout pointed to the recent weather, where virtual flood conditions have been replaced by 3mm of rain throughout February, as an example of how difficult it can be for track managers. There are complexities in watering a training centre like Summerveld and not many people realise how sophisticated the watering system is.

There are three systems, one for the turf tracks, one for the sand and one for the trotting tracks. The sprinklers are placed according to a computerised design that takes into account the width of the track, the size of the sprinkler and size of their nozzles. They turn in a 180 degree radius to ensure even watering.

At the pumphouse a safety valve is in place that prevents water being dropped near the sprinkler nozzles as the pressure builds up. A diaphragm measures the water pressure and when it is correct the sprinklers will pop up on a periscope and the watering begins with an even spray. Each set of six sprinklers is attached by a central wire to the timer boards at the pump-house. Each system, turf, sand and trotting, has its own timing board. Watering is done at night when weather conditions calm down as the wind can have a dramatic drying effect, especially a north-easter.

All three systems for turf, sand and trotting are active at night, but not at the same time. There must be as little overlapping as possible in order to keep the water pressure even at about seven-and-a-half bars. The first system is turned on at about 9pm and the last must be completed before the first trainers arrive at track, sometimes before dawn. The watering system requires high maintenance and is serviced once a week.

A track manager's task is not easy. He must check the weather forecast before doing the night's settings, as potential rainfall as well as wind speed and direction must be taken into account. In spring this year, rain clouds continually formed but the rain never came, an example of the headaches and frustration a track manager can face.

Done by David Thiselton

Staff News

New Staff Member:

Name: Jason Dedekind
 Office: Greyville racecourse
 Department: Racing/KZN Chapter
 Started: 01 February 2011

1 Retiree:

Name: Heather Tanner
 Venue: Umbilo Branch
 Position: Branch Supervisor
 Service: 33 years

Joke

Did you hear about the Irishman who couldn't tell the difference between his two horses? His friend suggested measuring them, that didn't help though, the Irishman discovered that the brown horse was only an inch taller than the grey one!



Racing Diary

Day	GC	Rest of SA	Some International	Day	GC	Rest of SA	Some International
Sat 5/03	Durbanville	Turffontein	Meydan	Tue 22	Greyville (N)	Fairview	Kempton
Sun 6	Greyville		Singapore	Wed 23	Kenilworth		Hong Kong
Mon 7		Arlington	Lingfield	Thu 24		Vaal	Southwell
Tue 8	Greyville (N)	Vaal	Southwell	Fri 25		Fairview	Singapore
Wed 9	Durbanville		Hong Kong	Sat 26		Turffontein	Meydan (N)
Thu 10		Vaal	Meydan (N)	Sun 27	Scottsville		Singapore
Fri 11		Arlington	Wolv(N)	Mon 28		Flamingo Park	Plumpton
Sat 12	Durbanville	Turffontein	Ayr	Tue 29	Greyville (N)	Vaal	Lingfield
Sun 13	Clairwood		Singapore	Wed 30	Kenilworth		Hong Kong
Mon 14		Flamingo Park	Plumpton	Thu 31		Vaal	Wolv
Tue 15	Clairwood	Turffontein (N)	Cheltenham	Fri 1/04		Fairview	France
Wed 16	Durbanville		Cheltenham	Sat 2	Kenilworth	Turffontein	Mauritius
Thu 17		Vaal	Cheltenham	Sun 3	Clairwood		Kenya
Fri 18		Fairview	Cheltenham	Mon 4		Flamingo Park	Chepstow
Sat 19	Kenilworth	Turffontein	Lingfield	Tue 5	Scottsville	Turffontein (N)	Southwell
Sun 20	Clairwood		Singapore	Wed 6	Durbanville		Hong Kong
Mon 21		Turffontein	Lingfield				