

WESTERN CAPE SIZZLING SUMMER SEASON



The forthcoming Western Cape Sizzling Summer Season feature race programme is notable for substantial stakes increases and the strategic reshuffling of certain key races in the interests of maximising overall quality and opportunity.

The highlight of the season, the J&B Met, to be run at Kenilworth on 31 January 2009, sees a stakes increase of R500 000 to R2,5 million.

One of the spectacles of the 2009 running of the event will no doubt be the attempt by the reigning South African Horse of The Year, Pocket Power, to score an historic hat-trick of victories. The J&B Met should also herald the brilliant son of Jet Master's home-ground rematch with his Vodacom Durban July dead-heating adversary, the grey flying filly Dancer's Daughter, in what will doubtless be yet another titanic duel between two of the greatest horses to grace our turf in recent years. The R600 000 Investec Cape Derby and the R500 000 Fancourt Majorca Stakes complete a dazzling Grade 1 triple feature bill on J&B Met day.

South Africa's most prestigious weight-for-age mile, the Grade 1 L'Ormarins Queen's Plate, has enjoyed a stake increase from R600 000 to R1 million, coupled with the pleasing news that its high profile sponsors, L'Ormarins, have committed to a further three year sponsorship. The 2009 running of this great mile contest has moved from an end December slot to 10 January 2009, and racegoers will witness Pocket Power's attempt to rewrite the history books by winning for the third consecutive time. The Queen's Plate is thus run an optimum three weeks prior to the J&B Met and three

weeks after the Bloodstock South Africa Guineas' new date of 20 December.

The Bloodstock South Africa Guineas takes pride of place on a feature race double-header, which it shares with the WPOTA Diadem Stakes. This also provides a much-needed major raceday at the height of the Cape Summer holiday and Christmas season. The timing of the Guineas gives three year olds the opportunity of having a tilt at the Queen's Plate.

A brand new feature event to be run over 1800m and scheduled for 10 January 2009, the Politician Stakes for a stake of R125 000, will give connections of other three year olds an alternative to the Classic programme.

The fillies feature programme is characterised by a move of the R1 million Thoroughbred Breeders Association Paddock Stakes to 10 January 2009, sharing the feature bill with the Grade 1 L'Ormarins Queen's Plate and three weeks prior to the J&B Met, thus providing a platform into the Fancourt Majorca Stakes on the latter day. The R500 000 Avontuur Estate Cape Fillies Guineas will be run on 6 December 2008, meaning there is an optimum break of three weeks between all three fillies Grade I features too.

For trainers looking for alternative routes, three additional Listed fillies and mares features have been scheduled. On 17 January 2009 the Jamaica Handicap will be run for a stake of R125 000 over 1800m while on the same afternoon the Sun Classique Handicap will be run for the same stake purse over 2400m. On 24 January 2009, the sprinting fillies and mares will be given an opportunity to line up in the Laisserfaire Stakes for a stake of R125 000 over 1100m at Kenilworth.

The speed merchants have plenty to race for with the Grade 1 Cape Flying Championship, at weight-for-age over 1000m, run on 24 January 2009 and welcoming a new sponsor in Betting World. The stake of this test of speed has been increased from R400 000 to R500 000. The Grade 2 Betting World Merchants will be contested on 15 November 2008 over 1200m for an increased stake of R300 000, while the stake of the Grade 2 WPOTA Diadem Stakes run on Bloodstock South Africa Guineas day, 20 December, also increases to R300 000.

Stayers will also benefit from increased stakes in all of the five feature events run from distances of 2400m to 3200m, as well as a 'triple crown' incentive of R250,000 from the Western Cape Bookmakers Association for the Durbanville Cup, the Western Cape Bookmaker's Association Summer Stayer's Handicap and the J&B Reserve Stayers, which is run traditionally as the curtain call on J&B Met day. As a consolation, a points based scheme will be run for the three races with fantastic betting voucher prizes payable to the winning owner, trainer and jockey. Details of the competition will be issued shortly.

Gold Circle's Racing Director, Graeme Hawkins, concluded by saying that much thought and effort had gone into the changes: "Thanks to the wholesale co-operation of our world-class sponsors, we have been able to bring about changes which we believe will optimise opportunities and benefits for all our horses and stakeholders.

The 2008/2009 Sizzling Summer Season promises to be the Cape's best season of racing yet and we look forward to welcoming the very best horses from all over South Africa," he said.

BOOST FOR WESTERN CAPE RACING

The Western Cape's Sizzling Summer Season has received a further boost with the news that the Grade 2 Green Point Stakes, run at weight-for-age over 1600m at Kenilworth Racecourse on 22 November 2008, will now be sponsored by the Ocean Basket Group.

In announcing the sponsorship, Racing Director Graeme Hawkins, said that Gold Circle was extremely privileged to welcome a well-known brand name that was instantly recognizable to South African consumers and added that he looked forward to a long and mutually beneficial association.

"The Managing Director of the Ocean Basket Group, Mr George Nichas, is a passionate horseracing supporter and Gold Circle welcomes the decision by the Ocean Basket Group to sponsor a longstanding race such as the Green Point Stakes. The Ocean

Basket chain has become a household name in recent years and is known to be a family eatery that offers very good value for money, while priding itself on quality and excellent service," said Hawkins.

To be known as the Ocean Basket Green Point Stakes, the race will be run for an increased stake of R300 000 this year and has been won by some outstanding horses in its long history. Current South African Horse Of The Year, Pocket Power, was the latest addition to the honour role when winning the 2007 running of the race.

In welcoming the new sponsor, Hawkins said that the Sizzling Summer Season was shaping up to be the best racing season in many years and that racegoers had plenty to look forward to.

WALLY SHARRATT

Wally Sharratt, one of the gentlemen of racing in KwaZulu-Natal, died after a long and courageous battle against cancer.

Sharratt was well known and highly respected in racing circles and owned and bred horses for over 20 years. His first trainer was Anne Upton and when she retired he moved to Pat Riley.

His most recent success came when Void won at Scottsville for trainer Colin Scott. Void was bred by Sharratt from his mare Moonee Ponds.

A head boy of Maritzburg College in Pietermaritzburg, he was also a talented sportsman who played fly-half for Natal and also cantered 10 Comrades Marathons. Wally was a highly respected sheep and cattle farmer in the Harrismith district. He was also an international cattle judge of Aberdeen Angus and judged at shows as far afield as Scotland and Australia.

Close personal friend, Rob Pickering of Middlefield Stud, said Sharratt was a brilliant stockman. "He was possibly the finest breeder of fine wool Marino's in this country and was a superb cattleman. He started breeding (thoroughbreds) with a few scrubby mares but was upgrading all the time.

"But mostly he was a great personal friend and it was a privilege to have known him."

"He is a hell of a loss to South African racing," said Anne Upton. "Wally's aim was to breed a champion which he didn't achieve but he did breed solid bread-and-butter horses which sold to an important level of the market."

"It was a privilege for me to train for the Sharratt family," said Upton.

Wally is survived by his wife Brenda, a son and two daughters.



WENDY WHITEHEAD

Wendy Whitehead sent out 36 winners while campaigning with 55 horses last season and, with the yard's number of active horses having increased to 80, they have made a flying start in their bid to reach the 50 winner mark this season. They have already sent out winners at a strike rate of just over 17%.

The Vaal satellite yard that Whitehead opened two seasons ago and that is run by her partner and assistant, Duncan McKenzie, has paid dividends and this season the 20 horses stabled there have already brought winners.

Running this yard has taught the couple a lot about the relative strengths of horses from different centres as well as about sand racing and training at altitude.

"Although we can't compete with their top horses, the lower class racing on the Highveld is compatible with KZN, if not weaker," said Whitehead, who pointed to the transformation in fortunes of a horse called Capital Comment as an example.

"We have also learnt how to assess a horse's affinity for sand tracks based on pedigree," she continued, "In world terms Fusaichi Pegasus would earn an A+ for sand. Local stallions who have done well for us on sand have been Gold Press and Houston Connection and others with an affinity are Modern Day, Goldkeeper, Muhtafal and, of course, Announce."

"We have found too that we can get horses fitter on the Highveld. In the heavier atmosphere down here horses can go 'over the top' more easily if you give them too much work. Our confidence in a horse coming down from altitude to race in Durban has often been spot on. They will have more oxygen in their blood coming down from altitude and this superior fitness will remain for anything up to a week."

Whitehead's gradual climb up the racing ladder since taking out her license in 2001 has attracted the attention of some notable high profile owners and this season the yard can count the likes of Bridget Oppenheimer, Barry Irwin's Team Valor and Robert and Robyn Muir among their owners.

Whitehead was one of the beneficiaries when Oppenheimer decided to broaden her trainer base towards the end of last season and was sent three horses-in-training, Juror, Gueridon and Lan Air Cel.

This season the grand lady of South African racing augmented her support for the yard with another five two-year-olds, three Fort Woods and two Strike Smartlys.

The Muirs have sent her two Australian-bred three-year-olds, one by Spinning World, the other by Hawk Wing, and she has three Team Valor horses in training.

In contrast, Whitehead tells the story of a horseracing-mad youngster who presented her with a Christmas present last year as a thank you for chatting to him every time she bumped into him at the races.

McKenzie has a similarly friendly nature and there is no doubt that the couple will keep their feet firmly on the ground.

"I owe a lot to my loyal owners who have been with us from day one, the likes of Dr Labuschagne, Matthew McElligot, Robin Hamilton and Tony Furness," said Whitehead, "We also have a lot of young owners who love their racing. Things are going well and we are having fun."

A recent winner for the yard was for a younger syndicate, some of them first-time owners, consisting of Lance Whiteford, Graham Calway, Garth Davis, Tommy de Charmoy and James Shaw who clubbed together to buy Bezrin filly, Bezame, for a mere R10,000, which says something for Whitehead and McKenzie's sales selection skills, especially considering another R10,000 purchase in the yard, Wing It Girl by Aristis, has also been knocking on the door

for her first win.

Whitehead said about Bezame, "Danzig stallions have always done well here and she is out of a mare by Rakeen, who is a very good broodmare sire. Conformation wise there was nothing wrong with her either."

It is perhaps no co-incidence that the stallion Bezrin stands on the Golden Acres farm of Craig Ramsay where Whitehead's path to becoming a trainer began.

She branched into horseracing from showjumping, after she could no longer afford the good quality of horse she had been riding, and her first job was with Ramsay where she started on the breeding side, before breaking in two-year-olds and doing pre-training.

Later, after a stint as assistant to Snowy Reid, she joined Tony Furness, a master of his art.

"Tony was like a father figure to me and still is," said Whitehead. "I learnt a lot from him and still consult him regularly."

Whitehead took over Furness's string of about 18 horses upon his retirement and a year later, in 2002, McKenzie joined forces with her, bringing about 10 horses with him.

The couple have a thirteen-year-old son, Damon, which makes running a satellite yard difficult, although Summerveld assistant Nicola van Kraayenburg often takes over the duties at the Vaal.

Whitehead's best performed horse has been Chant de Nuit, a Caesour filly, who last year won two stakes races over 1160m at Turffontein in succession, The Listed Sycamore Sprint and the Grade II Camelia Stakes.

She has also done wonders with a Jallad gelding called Bonito who almost died of colic as a yearling and on arrival in her yard spent virtually everyday lying down threatening to "colic".

Treatment with an ulcer medicine aided in his recovery and he has now won four races.



New Sports Betting Programme for Tellytrack

A NEW programme called "Betting World" is being flighted on Tellytrack. Betting World, sponsored by the bookmaking chain of the same name, hosted by Neil Andrews and takes an in-depth look at major sporting events from a betting perspective.

The programme is shown on Tellytrack every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9pm and is repeated on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings.

Andrews hosts various guests - both in studio and on-the-line - all experts in their respective sporting fields, to give their views on primary contenders and to analyse the likely outcome of these events.

The Soccer 6 is one of the main areas of discussion and specialists such as Terry Paine and Amos Mananyetso

express their opinions on both local and international matches.

Other experts to be involved in Betting World include Jeremy Fredericks, Andy Capastagno and Matthew Stevens, giving their opinions on cricket, rugby and golf respectively.

Punters should also note that sports betting in South Africa has been zero tax rated.

Betting World is currently the largest bookmaking chain in South Africa. The organisation has some 30 outlets country-wide and together with the internet betting, also has the largest turnover of any bookmaking operation in the country.

NEW 'PICK 3' BET

A New Bet Type, the PICK3, launched on the national tote on Monday 29 September, 2008.

Very simply, bettors need to pick the winners of 3 consecutive races. The Pick3 is available on each race and legs overlap - for example races 1,2,3 / 2,3,4 / 3,4,5 / 4,5,6 / 5,6,7 etc.

Fractional betting does not apply for this bet. The unit of

betting is R1 and the minimum bet R6.

The Couplings and first-timer rules do not apply either.

Scratched horses are replaced by the tote favourite.

The Pick3 can be taken verbally or by betmark card.

The bet will initially not be available in the Northwest, Free State and Northern Cape but is able to be taken in all other provinces.

A NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

THERE is a new boy on the block among the stallion ranks in KwaZulu-Natal and, as a three-year-old unraced son of one of the world's leading sires, Kingmambo, he has joined the top band of sires at the Scott Bros Highdown Stud at Nottingham Road.

His name is Atso and he is the first progeny of the Seattle Slew mare Sea Of Showers. Originally the property of the Niarchos family, he was bought at auction by Des Scott and imported to join Miesque's Approval, Mogok, Overlord and The Sheik at Highdown.

In spite of only recently emerging from quarantine, the smart-looking chestnut appeared in good shape and within a short while is likely to furnish into a very impressive specimen.

The first question asked by many at his introduction to KwaZulu-Natal breeders was why did he not race?

The answer to that was simply that he kicked a stone wall and broke his off hind fetlock.

Apart from the fact that he has the looks, breeders will have to go on his breeding which, according to leading pedigree analyst Karel Miedema, has great potential.

In his pedigree evaluation of Atso he states: "Kingmambo's best runners invariably have Northern Dancer and/or Seattle Slew close up in their pedigrees. Top of the heap are mares with Northern Dancer's sons Sadler's Wells, Nureyev and Nijinsky, while Seattle Slew is in a league of his own."

Kingmambo needs very little introduction having sired champions in six countries. He is the 6th leading sire and the third leading sire of two-year-olds in the world rankings. He is the sire of Henrythenavigator, winner of the Gr1 2000 Guineas at Ascot and the Gr1 Irish 2000 Guineas; the Mike de Kock-trained Archipenko who won the Gr1 QE11 Cup in Hong Kong and the Gr2 UAE Al Fahida Fort in Dubai, as well as Student Council who won the Gr1 Special Handicap in the United States.

He is standing at a fee of R6 000 live foal but Des and Robin Scott are offering a rather unique share option that will assist the smaller breeders in the country.

Shares are on offer at R36 000 but breeders have the option of financing it over three years and at the same time being able to send two mares to Atso each year for the three years.

"They have two services a year at R6 000 each for the three years and then they have the share which qualifies them for two services a year for life thereafter," Des explained.

The obvious question from breeders, particularly with a new stallion, is that of fertility and Des has addressed this matter as well.

"Straight after I bought him I had extensive fertility tests done and they show he is very fertile. I have all the test certificates available for those who are interested."

DRAKENSTEIN PICKING UP THE SPEED

Johann and Gaynor Rupert have some interesting Sired North Of The Line youngsters that were born on their Franschoek stud farm, Drakenstein, including four Pivotal, an Oasis Dream and a Green Desert.

The six youngsters are the progeny of mares that the Ruperts bought overseas and had covered in England to Southern Hemisphere dates. They were then imported to South Africa and foaled down at Drakenstein. Their Southern Hemisphere-bred counterparts will thus have no advantage over them in terms of weight-for-age.

Pivotal has been one of the Stallion phenomenons of recent years in Europe. The sprinter is by the Nureyev sprint-miler, Polar Falcon, whose stakes wins included the Group I Ladbrooke Sprint Cup over six furlongs at Haydock Park, a Group II over a mile at Newbury and a Group III over a mile in France.

Pivotal himself won four races in just six starts for 148,023 pounds in earnings, including the Group I Nunthorpe Stakes over five furlongs at York, in the second fastest time ever of 56,53 seconds, and the Group II King Stand Stakes at Royal Ascot over five furlongs, also in the second fastest time ever.

He was bred by David and Patricia Thomas's England-based Cheveley Park Stud and began his breeding career at the same stud in 1997 for a modest 6000 pounds per cover.

However his ability to produce top performers from seemingly modest mares was startling and he has become highly sort after. He has produced 63 individual stakes winners and during 2007 his yearlings fetched some huge prices.

Not surprisingly his cover fee has risen to 85,000 pounds.

Sheik Mohammed's Darley Stud bought a quarter share in him in 2005.

It is indeed exciting that four of his progeny will be running in South Africa.

Green Desert is also a speed influence, having won the Group I July Cup over 1200m and he has sired 72 individual stakes winners. He is also a sire of sires, having produced the likes of stallions Cape Cross, Desert Style, Volksraad and Desert Sun. The 25-year-old stallion stands at one of Sheik Hamdan's England-based Shadwell Studs.

Oasis Dream was a Champion two-year-old and World Champion sprinter whose Group I victories included the Nunthorpe Stakes and the July Cup as a three-year-old and the Middle Park Stakes over 1200m at Newmarket as a juvenile. He entered one of Prince Khalid Abdullah's England-based Juddmonte Studs in 2004 and was the leading first-season sire by Stakes winners.

One of the Rupert-owned Pivotal's made a smart winning debut recently.

Trained by Mike Robinson, Drakenstein's pre-trainer and now trainer to a few of the Ruperts' home bred horses in training. The Rupert's Drakenstein Stud farm, upon which the exciting new stallion Trippi stands, was originally a wine farm owned by Johan's late brother and five years ago the couple decided to utilise the lower slopes, which are not as good for growing vines, for the purpose of breeding thoroughbreds.

Gaynor, who bought her first filly in 1986, previously stood her mares at Mick and Cheryl Goss's Summerhill Stud.

BRIGHT FUTURE FOR MELISHINI

Melishini Pillay has a bright future ahead of her according to South African jockey great, Garth Puller, whose career was characterised by the same steely determination and discipline that the young female apprentice clearly has.

Pillay, a karate black belt, weighed in at 38kg during her stint in Cape Town from September last year to January this year. However, after a race fall, she was advised by the Jockey Academy to take a sabbatical from racetraining in order to strengthen up and put on some weight.

The hours of gym work, instruction and workriding she has put in since then have paid immediate dividends as she rode the second winner of her career at Scottsville in just the fifth ride of her comeback and two rides later, she was in the winner's enclosure again.

Fittingly both winners were from the yard of her mentor, Puller, and the first of them, a three-year-old Opera King colt called Jungle Call, is part-owned by her parents, Ronnie and Lizzie.

"She is the most dedicated apprentice I have seen for a long time," said Puller. "In the gym she works like a heavyweight and although small she is strong. She is very eager to learn and is a good intelligent kid who listens closely to advice on riding and horsemanship. Consequently she is going to improve all the time and I have already seen her handle some difficult horses, the type that jockeys are sometimes reluctant to ride. She loves what she's doing and, coupled with her discipline and determination, I feel she now just needs racetraining experience to help her in pace

judgement and in the intensity of the finish. She has a good riding seat and if she gets the support she deserves she will ride more winners."

Puller, who was near the top of the jockey's log for about three decades, is one of the finest horsemen to ever racetrain in South Africa and Pillay could not have asked for a better teacher.

Indeed, recently, although aided by her 4kg apprentice claim, she showed excellent pace judgement in leading from start to finish

on the Brazilian-bred five-year-old gelding Quick Millions, running out a comfortable 2,75 length winner of the Merit Rated 82 Handicap over 1600m in a quick time of 94,7 seconds, less than a second outside the course record. Quick Millions, a big chestnut by Spend A Buck, is owned by Estrela Energia Stables.

Puller said, "Quick Millions is a strong horse who pulls but she handled the ride very well. Last time she let them get to her before she rode him out and this time I told her to not let them get to her in the straight. She rode him exactly as planned, staying cool and letting the horse out more and more the closer they got." Melishini's father Ronnie is very proud of the work Melishini has put in and what she has

achieved since her comeback.

"I remember being skeptical when she first told us she wanted to be a jockey, as horses are such big animals, but after thinking about it briefly we put all of our support behind her and have done so ever since," he said.



SA jockeys' team announced for International Jockeys' Challenge



Mark Khan, champion South African jockey for four of the last five seasons, will captain a vastly talented team of six riders selected to represent South Africa in the International Jockeys' Challenge on Steinhoff Summer Cup Day at Turffontein on Saturday 29 November.

The other riders are Anton Marcus, Weichong Marwing, Karl Neisius, Kevin Shea and Piere Strydom with Anthony Delpech the official reserve. He will replace any rider unable to fulfill his engagements in the Challenge.

Tex Lerena, chairman of the South African Jockeys' Association, is one of many people hugely enthusiastic about the Challenge and he believes it will be the experience of a lifetime for the South African jockeys at Turffontein on the day: "The re-introduction of an international jockeys' challenge after an absence of over 20 years will revitalise the entire horseracing industry, particularly the jockeys. For them it's a privilege to rub shoulders with legends like Frankie Dettori, Mick Kinane and Damien Oliver and young stars like Ryan Moore and Christophe Soumillon."

Horseracing and tote betting operator Phumelela handed the responsibility of selecting the South African riders to the National Horseracing Authority (NHA), an autonomous body that regulates the sport and ensures all races are run according to the rules.

The NHA met with representatives of Phumelela and the Racing Association (RA), which represents owners in Phumelela regions, to lay down the criteria for selecting the riders. It was unanimously agreed that the team would be selected on merit according to the following key criteria:

- * Placings on the national jockeys' log over the last five years
- * Must hold a South African licence and/or domiciled address in South Africa
- * Profile and international achievements

A panel comprising Rob de Kock and Vee Moodley of the NHA, Patrick Davis of Phumelela and RA chairman Larry Wainstein were entrusted with the task of selecting the riders to represent South Africa.

The team chosen brims with talent and experience. Khan has been four times champion of South Africa and once runner-up in the last five years, while former champion jockey Strydom is a household name and has finished in the first three on the national jockeys' log for the last five seasons.

Marcus has also consistently finished high on the national jockeys' log in recent years and has enjoyed an ultra-successful year internationally, winning the \$5-million Dubai Duty Free and the Singapore Airlines Cup on Jay Peg.

Marwing and Shea have enjoyed enormous success, both locally and abroad. Between them they have ridden several winners in recent years at the Dubai World Cup, the richest race meeting in the world.

Marwing is currently riding in Hong Kong, where he rode with great success for several years before becoming stable jockey to trainer Mike de Kock.

Shea, who is now De Kock's stable jockey, won the \$5-million Dubai Sheema Classic on De Kock's charge Sun Classique at Dubai World Cup earlier this year and is currently riding for the stable in the UK.

Cape-based Karl Neisius has long been regarded as one of the country's top riders and has performed consistently well on the national jockeys' table.

The South African jockeys will take on one of the strongest international team of riders yet assembled in the four-race Challenge at the Steinhoff Summer Cup meeting on 29 November.

The international team comprises Frankie Dettori, Mick Kinane, Ryan Moore, Damien Oliver, Christophe Soumillon and Srinath Surender.

CAPTAIN'S LOVER TRIUMPHANT IN FRENCH DEBUT

Captain's Lover swept to the fore with half a furlong remaining and pulled out a three-quarter length victory in the Group 3 Prix du Pin at Longchamp recently in her first start outside of South Africa. She was sent off a tepid 9 to 2 favorite in the field of 10 runners in the 7-furlong trial for the Group 1 Prix de la Foret.

Andre Fabre sent out the 4-year-old daughter of Captain Al and Sunshine Lover, by Badger Land to win the 80,000-euro (\$115,000) fixture and said "Captain's Lover has been with me six months and, like all horses from the Southern Hemisphere, she took some time to adapt. I am very happy with the way she won and she will now go for the Foret."

Rain fell overnight and during morning on the Parisian race course hard by the Bois de Boulogne, but the ground did not receive a soaking, with the ground listed as good to soft. Fabre had expressed some concern earlier in the week about how the filly would handle some cut in the ground, but he never had a worry as the contest was run.

Captain's Lover broke out to her left at the start, but Stephane Pasquier quickly righted her and knew he was on a live wire shortly after the start, with the filly being keen. The jockey had no trouble settling her in second, as Garnica set what appeared to be an honest enough pace. The field was stretched out and Captain's Lover raced about 3 lengths behind the leader and a couple of lengths ahead of the nearest pursuer.

With about 150 meters left in the race, the pacesetter started to look vulnerable, Captain's Lover had a challenger lapped halfway up her body and Spirito del Vento was building up a full head of stream on the outside.

Barry Irwin, who had bought Captain's Lover for \$27,000 at the National Yearling Sale in South Africa, said "She looked like she was going to be either swallowed up or put in a box, but the jockey had a lot in hand. When he switched her off the rails and allowed her to quicken, she gave him a sharp response to go clear inside the final sixteenth of a mile."

Captain's Lover always looked in control in the run to the wire and she prevailed by three-quarters of a length, running the distance on softish sod in 1:20.30. Spirito del Vento, who owns a Timeform master rating of 122, came up to get second, HH The Aga Khan's 3-year-old filly Alnadana third in a close photo.

The win improved Captain's Lover's career record to 6 wins and 2 seconds from 8 outings, among which is the Grade 1 Cape Fillies Guineas. She had legitimate excuses for both of her losses, one coming when she was denied a run until it was too late in a sprint and the other coming when her saddle slipped and



nearly came off.

Captain's Lover carried the hunter green and white personal colors of Team Valor International's owner Barry Irwin, who revealed that Sunshine Lover is due to foal a full sibling to the winner at Klipdrif Stud in the Western Cape. A Team Valor partnership acquired her last season in South Africa and plans to breed her back to Captain Al, who stands at Klawervlei Stud.

"All credit goes to Andre Fabre," said Irwin. "The filly took a bit of time to come around and as late as a month ago, she was not looking or training well enough to warrant a run this season. I told Andre that if she didn't come around well enough to make a start this season that he should not fret over it. I gave him every opportunity to wait until next year.

"But he told me not to panic and to be patient, because she still had time to come around. Sure enough, about 10 days before the Prix du Pin she worked a good three-quarters of a mile and we were on. If I said I was not worried about this race, I would be fibbing.

"We have a ton of confidence in the filly and reckon she may be the best South African horse we have exported outside of Ipi Tombe. When I said after the Guineas that I thought she was better than Irridescence, a few eyebrows were raised and a few winces noticed. I think those facial tics may be a bit more relaxed following this race."

Captain's Lover was voted the Champion Filly at 3 in South Africa for the 2007-2008 season, despite missing the second half of the campaign, as Team Valor sent her to France to be trained by Fabre.

"She is probably best over 7 or 8 furlongs," noted Irwin. "She handles the soft, she runs well on a short curve of a straightway. And has a turn of foot. I thought she had the right profile to fit French racing."

Following the Group 1 Prix de la Foret, Team Valor will reassess its plans with Captain's Lover, as trainer Andre Fabre has sold his yard and will become more or less a private trainer for Sheikh Mohammed of the United Arab Emirates.

"In the best of all possible worlds," said Irwin, "Andre Fabre might be able to squeeze her into his yard. But if not we have other trainers in France we can use. A trip to the United States is not out of the question either."



Captain's Lover was Champion Filly at 3 in South Africa for 2007-2008.

HONG KONG RACING SEASON



A NEW Hong Kong racing season burst into life at Sha Tin but the old order remained intact as reigning champion trainer and jockey, John Size and Douglas Whyte, combined to win the traditional curtain-raiser, the HKSAR Chief Executive's Cup.

They teamed up to take the 6f event with Enthused, who was an impressive winner by one and three-quarter lengths from Scintillation and Prime Score.

"He was something of a bridesmaid horse for most of last season but he got stronger as the season went on and won very well with a big weight on his final run," said eight-time champion jockey Whyte, who rode a double for Size at Sha Tin.

"He felt even better today; stronger and fresher, and he beat a good field quite easily in the end.

"On that kind of form, he could develop into a Group horse as the year progresses - particularly with John Size training him."

Three-horse races are a rarity in Hong Kong, but the second edition of the Trainers Ride For Charity still produced an exciting climax as Me Tsui Yu-sak, on board Bodacious, edged out Derek Cruz on board Bobo Win by a short head.

Tsui, who later prepared two winners, said: "I feel much the same as I felt last year after this race, even though this time I've won. I'm just happy to be able to contribute the HK\$200,000 first prize to Unicef.

"I was always within a length of Derek and I was happy with how he was galloping. He hung a little in the finish so I gave him a tap with the whip and he just got up. It was quite a workout for me, but more of a barrier trial for the horse!"

Betting turnover for the opening fixture reached HK\$827.84m with an on-course attendance of 51,439.

"We are happy with how the season started given the prevailing economic environment," said HKJC chief executive Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges.

"Turnover was a little bit better than last year when we had significant bonus jackpots on offer and the attendance was the best in six years, taking out last year's exceptional figure for the tenth anniversary of the HKSAR handover." (HKJC)

Curlin Sets US All-Time Earnings Record

Jess Jackson's multiple Gr1-winning 4YO entire & reigning US Horse-Of-The-Year Curlin (Smart Strike-Sherriffs Deputy, by Deputy Minister) moved past 2-time former Horse-Of-The-Year Cigar to become the all-time leading North American-raced earner when he won the US\$750,000 Gr1 Jockey Club Gold Cup Invitational Stakes (10 furlongs) at Belmont Park in New York for the 2nd successive year. With the victory, Kentucky-bred Curlin (unraced as a juvenile) took his record to 11 wins (7 Gr1 victories) & 4 placings from 15 starts for US\$10,246,800 (to pass Cigar's previous mark of US\$9,999,815 from 33 starts between 1993-96). In his latest triumph, hot favourite Curlin (ridden by Robby Albarado for trainer Steve Asmussen) came from mid-field to score by 0.75-length from

front-running multiple graded stakes-winning 7YO entire Wanderin Boy (Seeking The Gold-Vid Kid, by Pleasant Colony) & 4YO gelding Merchant Marine (Tiznow-Head East, by Gone West). At his previous start, Curlin won last month's Gr1 Woodward Stakes (9 furlongs) at Saratoga, after finishing runner-up in his turf debut in July's Gr1 Man o' War Stakes (11 furlongs on turf) at Belmont Park; prior to that, he won June's Gr1 Stephen Foster Handicap (9 furlongs) at Churchill Downs & March's Gr1 Dubai World Cup at Nad al Sheba. During 2007 Curlin won the US Gr1 Preakness Stakes, Gr1 Jockey Club Gold Cup Stakes, Gr1 Breeders' Cup Classic, Gr2 Arkansas Derby & Gr3 Rebel Stakes, as well as finishing runner-up in the Gr1 Belmont Stakes & 3rd in the Gr1 Kentucky Derby.

COURT APPROVES "SEALED BIDS" FOR CURLIN 20%

Meanwhile Kentucky Judge Roger Crittenden signed a court order "that could possibly pave the way for a 20% minority interest in defending Horse-Of-The-Curlin to be sold by sealed bid," reported bloodhorse.com. The order "allows the court-appointed receiver for the operator of Curlin's minority owner Midnight Cry Stable to immediately begin the sealed-bid process." Curlin is owned 80% by Jess Jackson's Stonestreet Stables & 20% by Midnight Cry Stable's parent Tandy LLC. Midnight Cry Stable "is the racing operation of Shirley Cunningham & William Gallion, a pair of Kentucky attor-

neys who are facing a new federal criminal trial in November for their alleged mishandling of the settlement in the prominent fenphen class-action lawsuit; a previous criminal trial ended in a mistrial earlier this year." Cunningham & Gallion are also involved in separate civil litigation with some of their former fenphen clients (over which Crittenden is presiding); funds from the sale of Tandy's interest in Curlin "could go toward a US\$42 million judgment previously awarded in the civil case against Cunningham, Gallion & others."

TAMAYUZ NAMED JOINT TOP MILER



TAMAYUZ has joined Henrythenavigator as the world's top miler according to international handicappers following his victory in the Prix Jacques le Marois.

A mark of 124 for the Freddie Head-trained colt has catapulted him alongside the Ballydoyle star in the latest list of the world's leading racehorses, as compiled by a team of international handicappers for the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities.

Head reports Tamayuz, winner of five of his six career starts, to be in the form of his life.

"The horse is very well and he really couldn't be better," he said. "I think he has even improved since Deauville. He was very impressive that day.

Curlin retains his position of overall supremacy in the latest list of the World's Top 50 Racehorses by virtue of the mark of 130 he achieved in both the Dubai World Cup and the Stephen

Foster Handicap. The four-year-old is 3lb clear of Duke Of Marmalade, the top turf horse in the set of rankings for the six-month period from March 1 to September 7.

However, the list as a whole is yet again almost totally dominated by grass performers. From a total of 62 (including ties), only 12 horses achieved their ratings on either dirt or all-weather.

It will be interesting to see if Curlin can retain his position until the end of the year and therefore become overall world champion, a title he was denied last year by Manduro.

Turf performers are usually favoured in the global world rankings - since the US joined the international classifications in 1995, only Cigar, Skip Away, Ghostzapper and Invador have been named overall world champion. The last of those was a controversial choice, as the Racing Post's world champion that year was the Japanese superstar Deep Impact.

HARNESS RACING HITS THE FREE STATE



The dry, dusty little town of Senekal played host recently to the Free State's first harness race meeting. Enthusiastically supported by farmers and their stockmen who made up the majority of owners and drivers, several thousand interested onlookers watched in amazement as a spectacle of speed and colour unveiled before them.

Consisting of time trials, heats and a final main race, the Gold Circle Senekal Cup was eventually won by 6 lengths by the 4yo chestnut boerperd gelding Roemryk Lexion, owned by Pieter Terre'Blanche and ably driven by Koos Rakgetsi.

Gold Circle, together with Harness Racing South Africa, were sponsors of the event.

HRSA chairman Dean Latimer enthused on his return to Durban saying that the interest had been nothing short of amazing. "We have been requested to stage racing regularly in the Free State now, and the pool of horses available to us would seem to support this. The hardiness of the boerperd as well as its ability to trot and pace will make this breed a very sensible mating to the standardbred, and we hope to be providing imported semen shortly."

Meanwhile six fillies and mares, the first registered trotters to



be exported from Sweden to South Africa are currently in quarantine in Europe awaiting shipment by air at the end of October. A further 23 horses are booked to fly in January 2009.

For info contact: Dean Latimer on 082 694 9906

BEST OF THE BEST

No. Horse (trained) Best race Official rating

- Curlin (US)** Dubai WC/S Foster H 130D
- Duke Of Marmalade (Ire)** King George 127T
- Big Brown (US)** Kentucky Derby/Preakness 126D
Montmartre (Fr) GP de Paris T
New Approach (Ire) Derby T
Papal Bull (GB) King George T
- Tartan Bearer (GB)** Derby T
- Henrythenavigator (Ire)** Irish 2,000 Guineas 124T
Tamayuz (Fr) Jacques le Marois T
Youmzain (GB) GP de Saint-Cloud T
Zarkava (Fr) Prix de Diane T
- Phoenix Tower (GB)** Juddmonte International 123T
Soldier Of Fortune (Ire) Coronation C/GP de S-C T
- Colonel John (US)** Travers 122D Commentator (US)
Whitney Hcap D
Good Ba Ba (HK) Champions Mile T
Kip Deville (US) Poker Hcap T
Raven's Pass (GB) St James's Palace/Sussex T
Weekend Hussler (Aus) Newmarket H/G Ryder T
Yeats (Ire) Ascot GoldCup/Gdwd Cup T
- Adlerflug (Ger)** Deutschland Preis 121T
Apache Cat (Aus) TJ Smith/Doomben 10,000 T
Getaway (Fr) Jockey Club T
Kamsin (Ger) GP von Baden T
Mambo In Seattle (US) Travers D
Matsurida Gogh (Jap) Nikkei Sho T
Pocket Power (SA) Durban July/Champions Cup T
Sacred Kingdom (HK) Gome Sprint T
Vision D'Etat (Fr) Prix du Jockey-Club T
- Archipenko (SA)** QEII Cup/Summer Mile 120T
Famous Name (Ire) Prix du Jockey-Club T

Frozen Fire (Ire) Irish Derby T

- Go Between (US)** Pacific Classic AW
- Haradasun (Ire)** Queen Anne T
- Heatseeker (US)** Californian H D
- Honour Devil (SA)** UAE Derby D
- JJ The Jet Plane (SA)** Golden Hse Spt/Mercury T
- Jay Peg (SA)** Dubai Duty Free T
- Kingsgate Native (GB)** Golden Jubilee T
- Marchand d'Or (Fr)** July Cup/Maurice du Gheest T
- Paco Boy (Fr)** Hungerford T
- Sun Classique (SA)** Sheema Classic T
- Viva Pataca (HK)** Sheema Classic T
- Vodka (Jap)** Yasuda Kinen T
- Zenyatta (US)** Clement L Hirsch Hcap AW
- Benny The Bull (US)** Golden Shaheen/Smile Spt 119D
- Doctor Dino (Fr)** Sheema/GP Chantilly/GP S-C T
- Equiano (Sp)** King's Stand T
- Ginger Punch (US)** O Phipps H/Personal Ensign D
- Goldikova (Fr)** Prix Rothschild/Moulin T
- Linngari (SA)** Dallmeyer-Preis T
- Lush Lashes (Ire)** Coronation Stakes T
- Macarthur (Ire)** Coronation Cup/Hardwicke T
- Mount Nelson (Ire)** Eclipse T
- Quijano (Ger)** Sheema Classic T
- Racing To Win (Aus)** George Ryder T
- Sageburg (Fr)** Prix d'Ispahan T
- Sirmione (Aus)** Australian Cup T
- Spirit One (Fr)** Arlington Million T
- Traffic Guard (GB)** Irish Champion T
- Well Armed (US)** Pacific Classic AW
- Winchester (Ire)** Secertariat T

Equus Horse of the Year Pocket Power heads the list for South African horses in joint 21st spot with a rating of 121, followed closely by Archipenko, Honour Devil, sprint sensation JJ The Jet Plane, Jay Peg and Sun Classique all on a 120 rating and currently joint 30th.

JAPAN TO OPEN RACING TO FOREIGN OWNERS

Japan "is to open its racing to foreign owners under new guidelines being put together by the Japan Racing Association & to be officially unveiled at the Asian Racing Conference in Tokyo in November," reported racingpost.co.uk. Under the regulations, the JRA "will begin accepting licence

applications from non-Japanese individuals who are already licensed in another racing jurisdiction next April". Companies, syndications & partnerships "will not be eligible for licensing".