



NEWSLETTER

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GOING FOR GOLD



Former winner Major Bluff and his stable companion Omaha Beach, head up the field for the running of the R1 million Canon Gold Cup (Gr I). The country's premier race for stayers, to be run over 3 200 m at Greyville on Saturday, August 4, has attracted a full field of 20 runners where both trainers Joey Ramsden and Mike de Kock hold strong hands.

Apart from Major Bluff and Omaha Beach, Ramsden will also saddle Omega Code and Kipketer.

De Kock has three runners entered, Thundering Star, Alpe D'Heuz and Wise Son.

Trainer Sean Tarry, who had his best season ever, will send out Apple-A-Day and Zambomba in an attempt to get his new season off to a cracking start.

The final field for the R1 million Canon Gold Cup to be run over 3200m at Greyville on Saturday, August 4 is:

Sc#	Horse	Mass	Dw	Jockey	Trainer
1	MAJOR BLUFF	58.0	18	B Fayd'Herbe	Joey Ramsden
2	OMAHA BEACH	58.0	2	G Hatt	Joey Ramsden
3	APPLE-A-DAY	58.0	12	G Schofield	Sean Tarry
4	THUNDERING STAR	57.0	7	J Geroudis	Mike de Kock
5	BAY LEGEND	57.0	9	*B Lerena	Tyrone Zackey
6	ALPE D'HEUZ	56.5	3	K Shea	Mike de Kock
7	DUNFORD	56.5	5	A Marcus	Mike Bass
8	MODERN QUEST	56.0	16	S Cormack	Mark Dixon
9	THE DECAGON	56.0	15	I Sturgeon	Michael Roberts
10	WINONA	56.0	19	M Byleveld	Glen Kotzen
11	WISE SON	56.0	14	*K Latham	Mike de Kock
12	LONG DOLLAR	56.0	13	J Lloyd	Weiho Marwing
13	OMEGA CODE	55.5	6	S Randolph	Joey Ramsden
14	ZAMBOMBA	55.5	1	B Smith	Sean Tarry
15	KIPKETER	55.0	10	G Figueroa	Joey Ramsden
16	PARIS TO PEKING	55.0	17	G Lerena	Tyrone Zackey
17	TO AND FRO	55.0	8	M Khan	Geoff Woodruff
18	PACIFIC WARRIOR	54.0	11	W Uys	Dylan Cunha
19	PALM KING	54.0	4	W Kennedy	Jacques Strydom
20	SUPREME GOLD	53.5	20	A Forbes	Mike Bass

Couplings: (1,2,13,15) (3,14) (4,6,11) (5,16) (7,20)

Canon Gold Cup entrance tickets

THE Canon Gold Cup takes place at Greyville Racecourse on Saturday August 4 and entrance tickets at R15 per person are now on sale at the Greyville Racecourse offices during office hours until 16h00 on Friday 3 August. These tickets allow access to the ground floor and lower grandstand areas and there will be no free entry for children.

Public parking on the Royal Durban Golf Course is available at R20 per car and the only access will be through the entrance in DLI Avenue from the city end.

Both entrance and parking tickets can be purchased in advance and on raceday at the relevant gates.

VODACOM DURBAN JULY - WHAT THEY SAID

With all the razzmatazz that is the July now a thing of the past and the winner crowned, let us take a look back and see what the trainers had to say before the big day.

TRAINER: CHARLES LAIRD - HUNTING TOWER

Laird was Happy with the preparations of both his Vodacom Durban July charges, Hunting Tower and Pick Six, and gives them each a good chance on Saturday. Both horses put in good grass gallops.

He said that stable jockey Anton Marcus had chosen to ride Hunting Tower as the three-time-winning July rider believed that the weights of the three-year-olds were too close to the older horses this year.

Laird said that last year Hunting Tower had unfortunately had a wide draw but had still run a great race, finishing seventh 6,6 lengths back. This year, however, the four-year-old gelding by Fort Wood has a good draw and carries the identical weight despite being a year older. He also had an excellent preparation run in the Grade I Gold Challenge over 1 600m at Clairwood. He finished very fast for sixth just 1,6 lengths behind the winner, Successful Bidder, with a 400m to finish time of 23,2 seconds.

"We are excited about his chances," said Laird, "With a bit of luck he will be there."



The five-way photo finish at the Vodacom Durban July 2007

TRAINER: SEAN TARRY - BUY AND SELL

Tarry said that the preparation of his Vodacom Durban July charge, Buy And Sell, had gone very well and one or two days lost through the rains would not make any difference.

Regarding the draw of 11, he said that he would have been happier to be closer to the rail but thinks he will handle his draw fine.

When told that someone had commented that Buy And Sell looked as "hard as nails" before winning the Daily News 2200 and questioned whether there was anything left to work with, Tarry said that if they knew the horse they wouldn't have any such concern. He said Buy And Sell is a light-framed horse and added that the best hadn't been seen of him yet.

Tarry gives both his charges equal chances and said it was very hard to separate them.

TRAINER: DEAN KANNEMEYER - JAGGED ICE

Kannemeyer, who won the Vodacom Durban July with Eyeofthetiger last year, believes that he could not have asked for a better preparation for his charge this year, Jagged Ice.

He was more than thrilled with the Western Winter gelding's run in the Gold Challenge in which he came from last over a distance too short and at WFA terms was just 1,65 lengths back, finishing very fast.

Kannemeyer was very happy with Jagged Ice's draw of one and said that he was the sort of horse who had enough early pace to be placed anywhere. "The pace is always on for the first 400 to 600m in the July and he has a good jockey on board who knows what he's doing," said Kannemeyer.

He said jockey Sean Cormack would place Jagged Ice according to his judgement of the pace and would take into account the horse's good finishing speed. "This year's race is very open," he said.

TRAINER: ORMONDE FERRARIS - NATURAL SELECTION

Ferraris said that his Vodacom Durban July charge Natural Selection was fit and well and he was very happy with him. He said that if the five-year-old by Western Winter reproduced his GommaGomma run he would have a chance.

Natural Selection finished a fast finishing third in that race, just 1,75 lengths behind the winner Pick Six with whom he is now 3,5kg better off. Ferraris said that there was always a good pace in the Vodacom Durban July and that Natural Selection would enjoy that.

TRAINER: MIKE BASS - POCKET POWER

Bass was a concerned man after all the rain in Durban had flooded the training tracks at Clairwood.

Pocket Power, second favourite for the Vodacom Durban July, had an interrupted Champions Season program and consequently needed his work. On a brighter note, Bass said that jockey Bernard Fayd'Herbe had been very happy with Pocket Power's draw of three. He said that Fayd'Herbe had felt that this would give him some control over where he placed the top class four-year-old gelding by Jet Master.

Bass is not concerned about the pace in the case of Pocket Power who has shown top form from sprint trips up to 2 400m. As far as Pocket Power's positioning goes he said that in a strong run race they would simply sit further back than if the pace was slower.

Bass had been happy with Pocket Power's progress up until the rains came. Despite being very worried about the current situation with the training tracks he said that "Pocket Power is the best horse in the field by a long way" and said that even if he was only able to get him to 95% by the day he would still give him a huge chance.

WHAT'S IN THE GENES?

This year has seen some results around the horseracing world that have confounded pedigree analysts and shows that the "dream industry" is still a fitting term with which to describe the game.

Not the least of these performances have come from Celtic Grove, a former high-class racehorse who never won over further than a mile in his thoroughbred career, but is now winning 40km endurance races in the Free State. Celtic Grove did finish second in the July which would have been as a result of the stamina influence of his sire Fort Wood as he is out of a sprinter, but, nevertheless, as South African endurance horses are specifically bred and sort after around the world of endurance racing, his latest achievements are remarkable.

In Australia there are two sprinters, Takeover Target, and Miss Andretti, who have brought joy and fortune to their respective working class owners.

Takeover Target is by Celtic Swing who was one of the most hyped pre-season three-year-olds in the last twenty years in England after a brilliant two-year-old career. However, having been beaten in the 2000 Guineas at odds of 4/5, the illusions that he was a superstar were shattered and his stud record has been more in keeping with his modest pedigree. At the time of Takeover Target's birth he was standing at stud in Australia for A\$10 000.

The seven-year-old Takeover Target was bought four years ago as an unraced throw-out with both bad knees and attitude for A\$1400 by Joe Janiak, a taxi driver who then trained part-time on a bush track and lived in a ramshackle caravan.

Janiak, could never have dreamed that the horse would go on to win a Group I 1000m race at Royal Ascot and become holder of the Global Sprint Challenge, especially as Celtic Swing's only win beyond two came in the French Derby. Takeover Target has reaped earnings in excess of A\$4.3 million and Janiak now trains out of smarter premises at Coffs Harbour, although he still has only 10 horses.

Five-year-old mare, Miss Andretti, was bred by Peggy Beaglehole, a West Australian great-grandmother, and her husband Keith. They bought Miss Andretti's dam for A\$15 000 as a yearling and after she hurt a leg before racing they sent her to cheap Australian provincial stallion Ihtiram, who was imported by Peggy's second-cousin, jockey Ray Cochrane.

Ihtiram's best result as a racehorse was a Listed win over 2000m at Newbury and he is from a family that had not produced a stakes winner for 60 years.

Miss Andretti was sold as she was tiny and Cochrane and the Beaglehole's didn't think she would amount to much.

However she has confounded her modest, stamina-orientated pedigree by winning five Grade I sprints including one at Royal Ascot in course record time. The Beaglehole's have turned down an offer by Coolmore of A\$800 000 for Miss Andretti's dam, Peggy's Bid, who is in foal with the star's full-sister. They are also going to keep the current foal, an eight-month old full-sister to Miss Andretti.

South Africa have not missed out on the Australian sprinter success story as last weekend War Artist who was bought at the Magic Millions Sales for \$A57 500 won the Grade I Mercury Sprint, beating the sprint sensation, Mythical Flight. Although his purchase price can hardly be called cheap, his sire Orpen is not terribly fashionable and is presently standing in Ireland for 8000 Euros.

The Rags to riches sensation in America is Lava Man, who is the highest earning claimer in history. He was claimed for \$50 000 in August 2004 after a claiming race at Del Mar and subsequently developed into a Grade I winner and then a legend, becoming the first horse to sweep the Grade I Santa Anita Handicap, Hollywood Gold Cup, and Pacific Classic in the same year. This year he made more history by becoming the second horse to win three consecutive runnings of the Hollywood Gold Cup.

England, the traditional home of breeding, have had their own fairytale story this year. The jumps-bred horse Turbo Linn is by Turbo Speed, who was rated a lowly 93 on the flat, out of a mare that won three bumpers. Bumpers are flat races for National Hunt-bred horses and Turbo Linn had won four minor bumpers and a Listed bumper at Aintree before being tried in a Maiden over 2400m on the flat. She hacked up by ten lengths and was then sent to The July meeting at Newmarket for a Group II race over 2400m. She once again astonished all and sundry by romping home by four lengths. Unbeaten in seven starts, one wonders when her run will end.

CHAMPION WOODMAN DEAD AT AGE 24



PETE DENK

Irish champion Woodman, sire of seven champions including American classic winners Hansel and Timber Country, was euthanized at Ashford Stud in Lexington because of declining health. The 24-year-old Mr. Prospector horse's death leaves A. P. Indy as the only active stallion to have sired more than one American classic winner.

Woodman's other top progeny include English champion two-year-old colt Mujtahid, European champion two-year-old filly Gay Gallanta, Japanese champion sprinter/miler Hishi Akebono, European champion three-year-old filly Bosra Sham, and Canadian champion three-year-old male Woodcarver.

Additional Group or Grade 1 winners include Hawk Wing, Hector Protector, Way of Light, Ciro, Mahogany Hall, and Chiselling. Woodman is the broodmare sire of Group or Grade 1 winners More Than Ready, Snow Ridge, Mamool, **Carry on Katie**, Commentator, Ticker Tape, De Sica, and Sutra. "Woodman is one of a very select group of stallions to have sired over 100 stakes

winners and has been a terrific servant to his shareholders and to Ashford Stud," said Ashford's General Manager Dermot Ryan. "He will be sadly missed."

Woodman's 1,920 foals of racing age have earned \$99,483,766. He is the sire of 38 group or graded winners and 109 stakes winners. Warner L. Jones Jr. and Ed A. Cox Jr. bred woodman in Kentucky. He is out of the Buckpasser mare Playmate, a full sister to champion two-year-old filly Numbered Account.

Robert Sangster bought Woodman for \$3-million at the 1984 Keeneland July select yearling sale from the consignment of Lee Eaton. He won three of four races as a two-year-old, including two Group 3 events, and was named Ireland's champion two-year-old of 1985.

Woodman retired to Ashford Stud for the 1987 breeding season with three wins from five starts and earnings of \$28,045.

Hector Protector, Mujtahid, and 1991 Preakness (G1) and Belmont Stakes (G1) winner Hansel were in his first crop. That spectacular beginning at stud for the highly fertile Woodman led to a large book of mares, which has now become the norm at Ashford and many other stud farms. Woodman's stud fee, which went as high as \$100,000 in 1991 and '92, was \$20,000 the last three years.

Woodman's most accomplished sons at stud have been Hansel, Hector Protector, and Mujtahid. His newest hopes for an heir lie with multiple English Group 1 winner Hawk Wing, who already has Irish Stallion Farms Silver Flash Stakes winner Triskel in his first crop.

Woodman got more than 40 mares in foal this season.

SA HORSES ABROAD

Arabian Lass' half brother Topjeu (by Montjeu) was the highest price at the Tattersalls July Sale on the 2nd day fetching 106,000gns (over R2.5m). He cost 125,000gns as a yearling. Michael Murphy, the gelding's new trainer said, "we bought this one for a couple of lads from Dublin". Fieldspring, intent on supporting the champion racehorses now syndicate for stud duties, imported a daughter of Arabian Lass in 2005. Lamri, (by Fort Wood) was in foal to Indian Lodge when she arrived and subsequently produced a filly - now raced as Guess It's Me, she shed her maiden tag recently against winners having previously been unplaced in the Lady's Slipper. Mares imported by Fieldspring have now produced 5 runners, 5 winners, 4 stakes winners including their ill-fated champion Rabiya.

GOLDKEEPER'S son Tiza (bred by Daytona Stud) helped his sire maintain his well deserved title, "South Africa's International Stallion" by winning the Gr3 Prix de Ris-Orangis at Deauville in France in July. Tiza won two Gr2 races in South Africa and won his debut in France for Alain de Royer-Dupre after racing in Dubai for Herman Brown. Tiza is out of the winning Elliodor mare Mamushka from the family of Opening Partner, Maiden Lady and Vertical Sport (all by Sportsworld). Their dam Main Verte (Crystal Glitters) was imported by the late Ingrid Pfaff to Daytona Stud which is now owned by Robin Hamilton and Ingrid's former manager Mike Barnard.. Tiza beat a son of Linnamix by a length having been held up towards the rear on the outside and won easily. He began to make headway two furlongs out and took the lead inside the final furlong - the time was good given that the race was run in soft going.

Just a half an hour later another South African connection, Varsfontein's resident sire Caesour's daughter Irridescence finished a length off Simply Perfect in the Gr1 Falmouth Stakes at Newmarket. The race was short of her best but obviously chosen to bring her forward for her 11th August date in the \$750,000 Gr1 Beverley D over 2000m at Arlington Park. Barry Irwin of Team Valor is reported to have picked this race as the best possible prep for the Chicago race. Irridescence has won at the highest level in South Africa, Hong Kong and Dubai and also raced in France last summer. She was aiming to become the first SA racehorse to win a Group race in the UK. This was almost achieved when the Gary Player bred Broadway Flyer was narrowly beaten by his stable mate Moonax in the Gr1 St Ledger. Though out of a South African bred mare he was born in America as a son of Theatrical.

On the home front, Captain Al's daughter Melting Moments (bred by Klawervlei Stud) won the East Cape Breeders Stakes (L) and Count Dubois' daughter African Rhythm finished 3rd. Count Dubois had another 3 winners in 3 days at the end of July and is currently the 2nd leading sire in SA by stakes winners percentage. This was Melting Moment's 9th win from 20 starts and 6 places. Her formidable form line includes previous stakes victory in the Lady's Pendant Stakes (L). Captain Al also had another juvenile winner on Saturday. Livlikeurdyng has now won 2 from just two starts. The Eric Sands trained Captain's League was looking for his 5th straight victory at Kenilworth mid-July but took a hard hold too early in the race to finish placed. His jockey reported that he was hard to restrain but not disgraced in defeat. New sire Badger's Drift's is SA's newest Champion Freshman Stallion and he is the only Freshman sire that retired in 2003 to produce a juvenile stakes winner this season.

Equus Champion 3yo Eyeofthetiger, the highest weighted 3yo ever to win the Durban July and the 2nd fastest winner in the history of the race has been syndicated to stand at The Alchemy Stud. A son of champion sire Royal Academy out of a Triple Crown winning granddaughter of Lyphard whose sire has been champion broodmare sire 7 times this magnificent horse was syndicated by John Freeman. Said Freeman, "Eyeofthetiger is a great looking bay who raced and retires sound. The demand for his shares was such that we had to increase shareholding to a 45 share syndicate". Trainer Dean Kannemeyer reports that, though sound, the horse has been retired as he has become too much of a stallion to continue racing. He has the "largest pair of knackers that I have ever seen on any horse in my stable" said Dean Kannemeyer "and they are getting in the way of his racing". - www.freemanstallions.co.za



VALOR AND SINGH PARTNERSHIP PRODUCES TWO-YEAR OLD FILLY EXPORT

Vanashree and Anant Singh's partnership with the United States-based horseracing investment consortium Team Valor (headed by Barry Irwin) has spawned a number of wins over the past two years. Among their latest successes stories is the 2-year old filly Stately, which will be exported to the United States. It is rare for a South African 2-year old filly to be exported to the United States, but the owners feel she can achieve her full potential racing overseas.

In spite of attracting a paltry bid from Team Valor of only R100 000, Stately has shown its mettle with two wins and one second placing in four outings and was the first Graded Stakes winner in her group when she won the Strelitzia Stakes at Scottsville.

Team Valor's Barry Irwin commented, "We are delighted to be associated with the Singhs who have a keen eye for champion racehorses. Stately is a tall, growing filly who I believe has great potential on the U. S. tracks, which have short stretches, favouring her abilities and we are pleased to be taking her there. We believe she has great potential."

Anant Singh said, "Vanashree and I are thrilled that a South African-bred horse like Stately is heading for the United States. We are also delighted that after purchasing her at a modest price, her value will increase significantly in the United States. We are pleased to be associated with Team Valor who are widely experienced in the racing of Thoroughbreds. Barry immediately recognised Stately's unique abilities and has decided to race her in the United States."



Stately romping home in the Strelitzia



MELISHINI PILLAY

Dynamite comes in small packages The smallest nuts are the toughest to crack and that could be a good analogy with which to describe one of South Africa's tiniest race riders, Melishini Pillay, who made history when becoming the first black female in this country to ever ride a winner.

Starting at 3-1 third favourite, Encora De Lago, whom she described as a small filly with a huge heart, was the shortest priced horse Pillay had ever ridden and she brought her home with the aplomb of a rider who has had a lot more than a mere 21 rides under her belt.

Having settled the filly very nicely in the running of the 1400m race, the pair dived for the inside off the false rail and hit the front at the 200m mark, at which stage Pillay gave her a couple of back-handers when a challenger began looming up. The filly kicked again after which Pillay sensibly put the whip away and drove her out to the line, winning by a length.

"It was a great honour for me to ride for Charles Laird, being one of the top trainers in the country and the July winner, in the colours of Mr. And Mrs. Jooste", said Pillay.

"At home my family were jumping up and down and shouting and screaming and I think they were even more excited than me," she said proudly.

Pillay has been Head Girl at the Summerveld Racing and Equestrian Academy for the last two years and Encora De Lago was led in by her fellow third-year apprentices, a wonderful gesture that she very

much appreciated.

Affectionately known as "Mel", the bubbly nineteen-year-old weighs in at a mere 39-40kg but her strength of body and character are not in question.

She is a karate expert with ten years experience and it was in fact her instructor, Sash Bagwandeem, who first recognised in her the combination of skill, strength and attitude that could see her making it as a professional sportswoman.

She consequently enrolled at the Academy, having never sat on a horse before, and she admitted to not enjoying it too much at first as she spent plenty of time falling off.

However, she grew in confidence and is now tremendously committed. She rides at Clairwood five mornings a week, and at each of Asburton and Summerveld one morning a week. On top of that she spends hours honing her riding style on the equi-sizer, a mechanical horse at the Academy, with the help of senior riding master, Paul Gadsby. Gadsby has helped develop a style most suitable and comfortable for her and Pillay said that this had definitely paid dividends.

Although she finds it a tough lifestyle, especially being the only female in the racing section of the Academy, she has drawn encouragement from the outstanding performances of the likes of female jockeys Jessica Goslett and Vicky Minott and compares notes over the telephone with the latter whenever she can.

Pillay studies all of the best riders carefully and picks out points which she can aspire too. She mentioned Weichong Marwing for his ability to stay perfectly still and balanced whilst driving with his upper body alone, Anton Marcus for his power in a finish and Pieter Strydom for balance so good that he requires little driving to get a horse home. She also admires Vicky Minott's amazing balance which allows her so much success despite still lacking strength at this stage.

Pillay first caught the eye with her first race around the turn, which unusually came over 3000m, when after a very intelligent ride she extracted a fast finish out of a one-time winning gelding named Sauron and came within 0,45 lengths of victory. The pair followed with another placed effort at Clairwood over 2600m.

However, although her vigorous finishes over that marathon trip provide proof of her stamina and strength, she says that the best quality she has taken out of karate is in fact "discipline", a crucial asset for any jockey.

Pillay has a maturity beyond her years and views herself as a role model who could encourage other black females to follow in her footsteps.

She also has a feistiness that belies her size.

"During a race my voice is the loudest and I got into hot water recently for shouting at a senior jockey," she confessed with a chuckle.

It was Charles Laird's stable jockey, Anton Marcus, who recommended Pillay for the ride on Encora Da Lago after he had watched the pair put up a particularly good gallop alongside his mount one morning. She hopes that the win will lead to her getting more rides.

She certainly would be richly deserving of that.



Mel bringing home Encora De Lago

STARS OF THE TURF

Woodruff is Tops!

Geoff Woodruff clinched one of the closest fought Trainer's Championships in history on the penultimate day of the season at an eight-race meeting at his home course at The Vaal..

He went into the day leading by just over R70000 and had one runner, Jet Blaster, in the last race of the day whilst Charles Laird had two runners in the sixth and one in the seventh.

Woodruff watched the all important sixth race at Clairwood where he has been preparing his charges for Canon Gold Cup day.

"I wouldn't say I was exactly hanging onto the tails of Charlie's horses," said Woodruff, "but at one stage I thought they were going to run first and second."

But it was not to be for Laird who had to win both the races he was contesting to have a chance of claiming his first Championship title.

Sheisachillygirl, a half-sister to the top Sean Tarry-trained juvenile, Kilcoy Castle, ran a gallant race from the front but had no answer to the finishing speed of Island Swing from the Brian Wiid yard. Meanwhile Laird's other charge, Lady Major, had been making steady progress from behind along the inside rail but despite the efforts of jockey Marthinus Mienie he failed by 1,75 to catch Island Swing.

"Charlie's horse in the seventh must have a decent chance so I was really nervous watching that race," Woodruff said after being congratulated on his fifth title after the running of the sixth race.

"Jet Blaster is a dear old soul but not one I would want to put my last dollar on," he said of his runner in the last race.

"After July day we didn't think we had much of a shout," admitted Woodruff.



GEOFF WOODRUFF

Champions Day

"We thought the Championships would be decided at the big meeting on Saturday and if we knew it was going to come down to this we



Woodruff's Champion juvenile - Argonaut

would have had 30 horses running today," he quipped. "I feel sorry for Charlie going so close as I know how he must feel now".

Woodruff put his success down chiefly to the great support he gets from his owners and staff together with a fair amount of luck.

"Without the support of our owners we couldn't have done it," he said, "While one is enjoying a good run another is having a shocking run."

"It's a helluva lot of work", he said of his staff, "Nobody let's up. I think our never say die attitude is what really makes the difference."

Of his jockey, Mark Khan, who successfully defended his Champion Jockey crown, he said that his strengths are "ability and loyalty".

"You can't ask for more than that", he said. "He is a good judge and works with me. There are no egos. We discuss things and sort problems out together."

Last season Woodruff endured a nightmare three-and-a-half months before March in which they were frequently up at night taking care of horses and rushing others off to hospital. They still lost five horses including the top class Royal Approval.

"The titre levels were very high at that time last year and this year we put up nets to prevent a repeat," he said, "They helped and although we had a bad trot it only lasted for six weeks. It was also only a normal case of rhinopneumonitis and nothing like as bad as last year."

Woodruff actually felt that he was light on good horses before this season. However he had good horses running for him at most of the crucial meetings of the season with the likes of Soft Landing winning the November Handicap, Festive Occasion doing well in the Cape Summer Season, Elusive Fort, Ravishing and Hit Song enjoying an excellent Highveld Summer Season and the brilliant juvenile Argonaut sweeping the floor in July in Durban.

"We haven't got a big string. We have stables for 140 horses but that leaves only a nucleus of about 50 or 60 horses to race with as most of them are two-year-olds being prepared for racing. You have to mix and match but the little races count too."

Woodruff said his yard would have a little celebration party but that there was still work to do with the Gold Cup approaching.

He has To And Fro running who he has wanted to try over a trip for a long time. "He is a hard-knocking type and if he stays he will be a big runner," he concluded.

GOODBYE EDDIE - AFTER 60 YEARS

Western Cape Starter Eddie Seymour has sprung the gates for the last time after a racing career spanning sixty years and a full forty years involvement with the Western Cape start - his career having commenced in July 1967 with the introduction of the mechanical starting stalls.

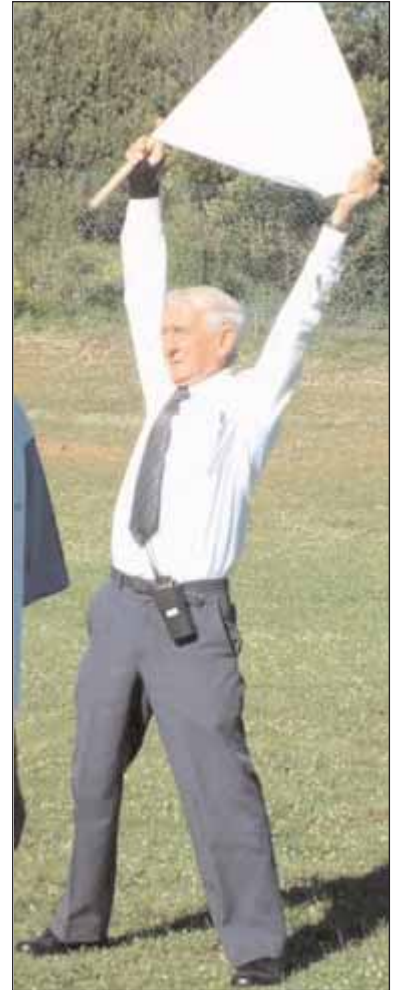
The 71 year old Edward Bert Seymour started his racing career as an apprentice jockey to Cape trainer Kenny O'Connor in 1949 and rode good horses like Pinewood and Saskatchewan. He then transferred to Alan Higgins after Higgins had stopped riding to take up training. The urge for adventure and a change of scenery saw him relocate to the then Rhodesia where he rode with great success for trainers like Finnegan and Malcolmson. Eddie describes life in Rhodesia then as 'absolutely wonderful- great days in a beautiful country.' This was followed by a short stint in Port Elizabeth before he returned to his beloved Cape Town in 1966. A riding spill saw him reconsider life in the saddle and he joined the Cape starting team as a handler just as the new mechanical starting stalls were introduced.

Dedication to duty and his prowess and ability with the handling of horses saw him promoted to Starter some 15 years ago and he has in that time earned a reputation amongst the jockeys and his staff as a balanced and fair person who is 'always the same'. Senior multiple champion jockey Garth Puller said that Eddie was well qualified to do his job by virtue of the fact that he had ridden professionally : " Understanding the quirks and mind of the thoroughbred and the jockey is so important and difficult for those Starters who have never ridden . Eddie was a refreshingly flexibly and understanding man who related to the emotions and difficulties and unpredictability of the start. He is a quiet yet assertive guy who did everything in the best interests of racing. Being a fisherman he was a man after my own heart and we shared many good hardluck stories of the one that got away. A salt of the earth member of the old school, it is sad to hear him leaving his post but life is not only about work I suppose and he will have plenty of opportunity to do some serious fishing now. I wish him good health and much happiness. "

Longstanding Western Cape Stipendiary Steward, Tarquin Norval said of Eddie:" He is one of those guys who just gets on with the job. A quiet unassuming man who has the respect of everybody who works with him, he could always be relied upon to do what amounts to a difficult job, with 110% commitment. A great asset to the industry and while I wish him a long and happy retirement, he is going to be sorely missed by us all."

Eddie says that he has many fond memories of his 60 years in racing: " I am thankful for everything that horseracing has done for me and particularly for the many lifelong friends that I have made. It has kept me young -I really don't feel like a day over 41 years old and would love to have continued for another 20 years. I however wish Fred Bosman, the new starter best wishes and I am sure that he will continue the high standards of the Western Cape starting team. "

Eddie and wife Rita will be spending their retirement at their home in Melkbosstrand enjoying their three grandchildren and Eddie says that he also intends using his fishing rod a little bit more than he has over the past few years, although he bemoaned the fact that there "aren't too many fish left in the sea!"



CONGRATULATIONS



Gold Circle congratulates Mrs Bridget Oppenheimer, owner and breeder of Hunting Tower, winner of the 2007 Vodacom Durban July, on her sixth July win, trainer Charles Laird on his first July winner and jockey Anton Marcus on his fourth July victory.



(Main picture) Hunting Tower, winner of the 2007 Vodacom Durban July, takes a bow. (Bottom left to right) - Victorious jockey Anton Marcus and trainer Charles Laird lead in Hunting Tower. Mrs Bridget Oppenheimer celebrates with daughter Mary Slack and granddaughter Jessica Slack at her side.

Hunting Tower is driven home under a perfectly timed ride by Anton Marcus to win the 2007 Vodacom Durban July. Pictures: Nkosi Hlophe