

THOROFAAN

VOICE

Vol. XXIII

Nov. 3, 2008



THE BREEDERS' CUP

Much more than what you see on the surface

By Marilyn Lane

The Breeders' Cup provided a rich racing experience with full fields of international horses competing over firm turf and Santa Anita's new Pro-Ride surface. Pre-race consensus dictated that horses most likely to win on the new surface would be those having experience over synthetics and/or European horses. The absence of steroids and tightened drug testing were less discussed, but probably offered influence on the outcome of races. Most people did not hold Curlin to either premise though many bet against his 7-5 odds. The big red champion went into the race looking like a perfectly fit prizefighter. Robbie Albarado rode him with unyielding optimism, but when the real running began Curlin faded, perhaps because the Pro-Ride surface failed to provide the muscular colt with familiar footing. He remains the best horse to race this year and deserves to repeat as Horse of the Year. I'm a Curlin fan, an Asmussen fan, a dirt fan, and a big fan of what Jess Jackson did for the fans with this horse. It broke my heart to see him lose this one. I would give anything to see him go back to the Dubai World Cup to line up against Raven's Pass another time.

My other sentimental choices had either run over the Pro-Ride surface (or some brand of synthetic) or were from Europe, consequently they fared well. The new surface provided an injury-free Breeders' Cup, but just as Saratoga's course displayed over 36 days; a good dirt track can do that too!

David Hofmans's long-shot win in the Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint with Desert Code thrilled me immensely and was made even sweeter because Mig rode him. Richard Migliore does so much more for this industry than ride well—he personifies what true passion for the game is all about. This was his first BC win—in 2005 a freak paddock accident just days before the BC resulted in a broken leg and cost him the mount on eventual NetJets Mile winner Artie Schiller. Dave was winning his third BC event. He took the Classic (over Cigar) in 1996 with Alphabet Soup and won the Distaff with Adoration in 2003. "The Mig" rode a brilliant race on Dave's colt and I hope many other victories follow for these two guys. They are a couple of racing's finest ambassadors. News is out that Dave may take Desert Code to the Far East for the \$1.54 million Hong Kong Sprint. I'd love for my friends to add that one to their growing list of stellar accomplishments!



© Breeders' Cup Limited Photo
Desert code owned by Tarabilla Farm Inc

The 3-year-old Irish-bred and French-trained Goldikova provided an extraordinary thrilling display of ability taking down the males in the Breeders' Cup Mile. This was her fourth consecutive win. She was earlier defeated twice by Zarkava, the amazing three year-old filly who astonished the racing world with her victory in the 2008 Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. Hopefully, one day I'll have an opportunity to spend time in a European training yard to study how their trainers consistently do so well with fillies against the colts. Meanwhile, I am happy to hear that we can expect to see this tenacious bay filly back next year.

The Breeders' Cup Ladies Day turned out to be Mike Smith's day. Aboard his fillies, he displayed the adept skills that put him in the Hall of Fame. Mike patiently waited until the stretch to ask his girls to take command; they both did so with awe-inspiring aplomb. Stardom Bound and Zenyatta indisputably etched their names on divisional Eclipse Awards, and Mike ended the day with a staggering total of a dozen total BC victories. Like Mig, Mike is a great envoy for our sport. I was thrilled to see him win with these two extraordinary fillies. When Saturday turned not to be Curlin's day, I rooted for Mike to take the Classic with Tiago.



Zenyatta owned by Jerry & Ann Moss

Gratefully, Zenyatta is scheduled to return for another season. The industry wins when true sportsmen like the Mosses' come up with great horses. One look at Jerry Moss in the winners' circle told just how invested he is in this industry; he cares with all of his heart. He is a beautiful human being and surrounds himself with adept, tender-hearted people who also love horses. Life is made richer by such people and ever so much more exciting by horses like Zenyatta. As John Shirreffs, her trainer said; "She's a ray of sunshine in whatever cloudy things may come our way." That beam of light shines far and wide, and as fans, we too feel the warmth. May many more champions come to this team!

Horses have long been known for their ability to heal people. Hopefully Stardom Bound's performances gave a big dose of wellness to her trainer, a cancer survivor and her owner with lupus. Their health and other issues prompted them to put their star filly through the Fasig-Tipton Sale in Kentucky on November 2. Owner Charles Cono was in the bidding up to \$4 million and though he and trainer Chris Paasch had planned to go to \$5 million, they dropped out when it became clear Frank Stronach and IEAH were going to go beyond them. The winner of \$1,420,600 went to IEAH for \$5.7 million. After a rest in Kentucky, she will ship to Florida to begin a new campaign under the tutelage of Rick Dutrow. IEAH managing partner Michael Ivarone indicated that she would eventually be bred to Big Brown.

Big Brown missed the Breeders' Cup because of a foot injury, but a different Brown showed up. Chad Brown, the young trainer from Mechanicville, NY won the first running of the Juvenile Fillies Turf with his undefeated Maram. Only five years ago Chad was walking hots for Bobby Frankel. Now, that's the American dream!

Forever Together presented Jonathan Sheppard with his first BC victory in the Emirates Airlines Filly and Mare Turf. The 2008 Diana (Gr 1) and First Lady Stakes (Gr 1) winner was again brilliantly ridden by French-born jockey Julien Leparoux in another of his strong stretch riding finishes.

Last year I suggested the name Conduit to a friend for a filly she had from an old family going back to Loose Wire. Vicarious did not get the name, a powerful Irish-bred and English-based son of Dalakhani did and last Saturday he powered home first in the Emirates Airlines Breeders' Cup Turf. I loved this race; the bright red colt overcame a bad post, a very firm course, a wide trip and an excellent field to win. I'll try and find you a photo of him so you can note his equipment; he wore only a neck strap and a big ring snaffle. No gimmicks for this colt. He was one of two three-year-olds in the 11 horse field and his time of 2:23.42 for the 11/2 miles was the fastest clocking in 25 runnings of the event. Luckily for the sport the strapping colt will return to train as a 4-year-old. That's not so lucky for those having to run against him.

Albertus Maximus was the winner of the Dirt Mile and provided Garret Gomez with the first of what would turn out to be four '08 BC victories for last year's Eclipse Award-winning rider. This was the twelfth start for the bay colt over a synthetic track and fifteenth overall. He broke his maiden over the former Santa Anita dirt course and was once unplaced on the turf.

The deceased stallion Chester House sired both Muhannak (Ire) the winner of the BC Marathon and Ventura winner of the Filly and Mare Sprint. Ventura out-footed the Bob Baffert-trained champion Indian Blessing in what otherwise would have been a three-bagger for Baffert. He won the Juvenile Colt race with Midshipman and the Sprint for a second consecutive year with Midnight Lute. Bob has been vehemently opposed to synthetic surfaces in the past; we'll have to see if this changes his stance.

Midshipman and Classic winner Raven's Pass are both owned by HRH Princess Haya of Jordan, wife of Sheikh Mohammed, and Darley Stable. Robert and Janice McNair's Stonerside Farm (KY) was the breeder of both colts. McNairs sold all of their racing and breeding stock except for Cowboy Cal, (a recent stakes winner named after one of McNair's sons) to Sheikh Mohammed earlier in the year. Raven's Pass was trained in England by John Gosden and all of his starts prior to the BC were on the turf in that country. Gosden also trained the winner of the Grey Goose Juvenile Turf. The favorite, Westphalia (Ire) was second. Donativum (GB) was the only gelding to score a win in this year's Breeders' Cup and plans are developing toward conditioning him for the 2009 Kentucky Derby.

The 2008 Breeders' Cup clearly displayed that the landscape in racing is changing rapidly. We Americans have a great chance to broaden our vision and mold ourselves into an exciting international scene. Everyone related to the industry should throw heartfelt energy into popularizing this great sport. We need to sing the bounties of racing to those unfamiliar with our world. Fans need to be nurtured and more people should get involved in the process. Toward that end, I suggest that you track down a new publication called Horse Society Magazine. The folks there herald the fan, love the sport, and worship the horse. I wish them and all other people of passionate concern for the future of racing a long run!

Marilyn Lane
Editor
mlane@thorofan.com