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Heading Up

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is going



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NOVEMBER 1 & 2

‘If Tyler Gaffalione was a stock, you would want to buy in - because he’s heading up’

Michele MacDonald | June 07, 2019

Walking through the sun-dappled barn area at Keeneland last Sunday morning, Tyler Gaffalione was keeping a steady pace, mindful of what he had to accomplish before driving back for his mounts at Churchill Downs, where he had ridden two winners the previous evening.

Tyler Gaffalione winning the Preakness on War Of Will. “We’re going in there [to the Belmont Stakes] with the mindset that we should be able to win,” says the jockey. Photo: Michele MacDonald



His agenda included reporting to trainer Wesley Ward's barn and breezing a possible Royal Ascot-bound juvenile colt and a G1-placed, G2-winning filly owned by one of the world's most successful owners and breeders, Katsumi Yoshida.

Gaffalione also had a personal priority to attend to along the way, and he quickened his steps a bit and lightly twirled the whip in his hands.

The jockey wanted to stop at Mark Casse's barn to pat War Of Will, the colt who had carried him to his milestone first classic victory in the Preakness Stakes two weeks earlier, before the van arrived to carry the horse to New York, where they will be reunited for the 151st running of the Belmont Stakes on Saturday (June 8).

First, however, the 24-year-old, who has already climbed to #56 in the TRC Global Jockeys' Rankings, asked permission from assistant trainer David Carroll, with whom he had just traded some lively banter about the latest goings-on in Kentucky racing.

Perhaps as much with this kind of small gesture, his politeness punctuated with a magnetic smile, as with his strong, stylish position in the saddle while crossing the finish line, Gaffalione shows every day why he is rocketing to stardom in North American racing.

"This is all I've ever wanted to do, so now I am literally living the dream," he reflected after gently handing peppermints to War Of Will and stroking the colt's neck.

"Honestly, I love what I do and just being around the horses makes me so happy. I love working with the people I work with. It's such an incredible industry to be in, and, to have success at such a young age, I feel so blessed and thankful for my opportunities. I get to ride such nice horses and I enjoy waking up every morning and coming to work."

Ward is among those who admire Gaffalione, not just for what he described as his polished riding skills but for his character and a work ethic that had him galloping horses for the trainer in Lexington the morning after riding into the Preakness winner's circle in Baltimore.

"First and foremost, he's a great kid — a really good person," said Ward, who understands as well as anyone

the heady challenges and thrills that Gaffalione is experiencing as a rising riding star. Ward began his racing career as a jockey and, like Gaffalione did in 2015, earned an Eclipse Award as outstanding apprentice - in 1984.

"It's nice to see, especially with what he has just achieved, that Tyler is really focused. He's going to achieve more success. We've seen some jockeys who have won Derbys and other big races in the past that have fallen off the path, but I don't see that happening with him. He is really grounded, and he strives to keep doing better and better.

"It looks to me like he is on the freeway to success," Ward declared.

Gaffalione's life shifted to the fast lane this year following a 2018 season in which he earned his first career G1 win aboard the Casse-trained filly Salty while defeating champion Abel Tasman in the La Troienne Stakes at Churchill Downs. He followed up by becoming Keeneland's leading rider in the fall meet and piloting Next Shares to victory in the G1 Shadwell Turf Mile.

Turning point

In hindsight, Gaffalione encountered a key turning point while riding in a Churchill Downs maiden race on November 24. That was the day he got on War Of Will for the first time in competition.

The well-bred son of War Front, who had failed to win in four previous races for other riders although clearly talented and already G1-placed on turf, responded to Gaffalione, drawing off by five lengths in his initial start on dirt.

Their partnership flourished over the winter as they bounded through triumphs in the G3 LeComte and G2 Risen Star Stakes at Fair Grounds. Although War Of Will lost his action early in the Louisiana Derby when stymied by a momentary catch in his hind end ligaments, he still was well regarded in the Kentucky Derby.

Then the weeks of May flashed by in a blur of near tragedy prior to ultimate triumph for Gaffalione and War Of Will, with a unique unfolding of history cementing a bond between rider and horse.

Somehow, the colt managed to keep his balance after getting his

front legs entangled with Maximum Security's churning hindquarters as that frontrunner veered out suddenly in the run around the far turn in the Kentucky Derby, shuffling War Of Will sideways.

Excruciating tension

Not only did Gaffalione have to stay sharp in those moments that could have cost them their lives, he also had to withstand the crushing disappointment of losing all chance to win the Run for the Roses.

The excruciating tension did not end on the track, however. Gaffalione endured a heated barrage that followed as Maximum Security's owner, Gary West, accused War Of Will of provoking the incident prior to filing a federal lawsuit over the Derby disqualification.

"I think when it's all said and done and all the evidence is put on display, frame by frame in slow motion, you will find that [War Of Will] actually caused the infraction, not our horse," West asserted in a nationally broadcast interview with Fox News.

West pointed out that Gaffalione did not claim foul against Maximum Security, who was disqualified after jockey Jon Court filed an objection because his mount, Long Range Toddy, also was affected when he lost position in a chain reaction caused by Maximum Security's veering.

Despite the pressure involved with America's highest-profile race and a billionaire owner contending that his mount caused the incident — not to mention Gaffalione's youth — the rider confidently and professionally took to social media to relate what he experienced.

Including images of the incident as it occurred, Gaffalione showed how Maximum Security ducked outward and then went back toward the inside as War Of Will "took the spot he vacated".

"Never once did I bump or push anyone," Gaffalione wrote in his matter-of-fact response on Twitter.

Casse and War Of Will's owner, Gary Barber, strongly supported their young jockey.

Casse related that Gaffalione had told the trainer "I almost went down" as soon as he and War Of Will had returned after the race. Together, trainer and jockey

decided not to claim foul because War Of Will had finished eighth after the mayhem and could not gain a placing or prize money via any action from the stewards.

Barber issued a statement in which he empathized with West's frustration after the Derby disqualification while also noting his own disappointment that War Of Will was prevented from having a clear run. In the end, Barber said he was glad no one was hurt.

"Mr West's horse, and not mine nor my jockey, Tyler Gaffalione, denied him the Derby victory, and it is wrong for him to deflect blame anywhere else," Barber said.

Looking back, Gaffalione said the incident happened so fast that his primary sensation at the time was the explosive adrenaline that had been building as he aimed to make his move around the turn and on to the Derby finish line. He could not fail to grasp the immediate threat that he and War Of Will could fall, with many of the other 18 Derby horses thundering perilously behind them.

"[Maximum Security] came out directly in front of me and you can see on the replay that my horse's legs were going between his. At that point, I was just worried about staying up.

"We were approaching the quarter pole and that's game time for us, so I was caught up in the moment," he said in explaining that he didn't have time to absorb the danger viscerally. While there was not much he could do in those tumultuous strides, Gaffalione credited War Of Will with saving them from disaster.

"He is an incredible athlete and he took care of me that day," Gaffalione related. "He knew what he was doing. I just had to let him handle things."

While the Derby often is a race of close calls in bumping and shuffling, there had never been an incident such as this one in which the action of a horse was so drastic — and potentially so calamitous — that the stewards chose to disqualify him.

Gaffalione kept his cool during the uproar. And two weeks later, he confidently steered War Of Will through an opening on the rail to sail to victory in the Preakness.



Gaffalione on Belmont favorite War Of Will: "He has all the raw, natural talent, he has the mindset, he has the intelligence. He's already, in my opinion, one of the stars of the game," says the rider's agent, Matt Muzikar. Photo: Michele MacDonald

Caught up in an unexpected wave of emotion in the ensuing moments under a cloudy sky at Pimlico, Gaffalione bent over in the saddle and hugged and kissed War Of Will before greeting Casse. As the crowd cheered, Gaffalione seemed to have to check himself, looking down and focusing hard on War Of Will's neck as dozens of camera shutters whirled.

"I can't even put it into words," Gaffalione said of what it felt like to saunter into the winner's circle under the cupola at venerable Pimlico. "It was just so special. It meant everything to me.

"It caught me a little bit," he added. "I'm not much of an emotional person, but that was a touching moment."

Gaffalione had spent much of his life readying for this chance and he had

made the most of it, delivering what one broadcaster described as a "Hall of Fame ride" to urge War Of Will up the rail to victory.

"He was definitely born to do this, that's for sure," declared Matt Muzikar, who has worked with Gaffalione as his agent since December 2016 and has been impressed not only with Gaffalione's natural ability but by his dedication and upbeat personality. Casse also has praised Gaffalione's positive outlook and has called him a "great rider".

"I don't see a weakness in his game," Muzikar said. "I think that he is definitely a student of racing — he wants to learn, he wants to get better. He wants to adapt to things, he wants to understand. He's just an all-around great person and I think the sky is the limit for the kid."



Tyler Gaffalione, War Of Will and some peppermints. Photo: Michele MacDonald

‘That day I knew he was going to be special’

As the son of former jockey Steve Gaffalione and grandson of jockey Robert Gaffalione, who rode for 41 years, Tyler Gaffalione grew up riding a pony he was given at age four and a special Equicizer his father had made for him when he was ten. By the time he was a young teenager, he was riding Thoroughbreds alongside his father at an Ocala farm.

One day, when Tyler was 13, Steve Gaffalione watched him follow through on an assignment to chase down a lead horse in the closing moments of a workout.

“He was just flat down on this horse. I saw that determination and I thought, ‘What have we got here?’” Steve Gaffalione recalled to the South Florida Sun-Sentinel newspaper in 2017. “I grew up in this business and I have seen a number of great riders, but that day I knew he was going to be really special.”

Tyler Gaffalione’s aspiration was always to ride professionally in races,

but his father required that he finish high school first. Prior to graduating from Sunlake High School near Tampa, Florida, Gaffalione flexed his muscles and gained some grittiness by playing football even though he weighed only about 100 pounds at the time.

His football coach, Bill Browning, recalled after the Preakness that players on an opposing team once tried to intimidate Gaffalione, a Sunlake cornerback and receiver, by harassing him and even pushing him during a game. His teammates banded together to support Gaffalione and that camaraderie helped fuel them through a strong season that took them to high-school playoff games.

Pivotal moment

“Our team rallied around him — kind of brought us closer together,” Browning told a Tampa-area television station after Gaffalione made national news at Pimlico.

“I’m probably the only head coach in the state of Florida who can say I

coached a Preakness winner,” he added proudly.

Not long after gaining his high-school diploma, Tyler Gaffalione crossed a finish line first for the initial time on a Ghostzapper gelding named Holdin Bullets at Gulfstream Park on September 7, 2014. He was 19 at the time and there has been no stopping him since then.

He earned his Eclipse Award by leading all American apprentice jockeys in 2015 with 182 wins, and he finished that year with 217 wins to rank 12th among all North American riders. On December 30, 2018, at Gulfstream, he notched his 1,000th career winner.

Characteristically, Gaffalione deflected attention at that pivotal moment to others who have helped make his story what it is.

“It’s such a blessing, especially to have it [at Gulfstream]. I grew up here. This is my home track. I just want to thank all the owners, trainers, horses — and, of course, my agent — for getting me here,” Gaffalione said.

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“He has all the raw, natural talent, he has the mindset, he has the intelligence.”

‘I think his personality has a huge role’

Only five months later, he was expressing thanks after the Preakness, having reached a summit of American racing. Given a spotlight on the live NBC telecast, he spoke about everyone but himself.

“I’m just so happy for Mark [Casse] and his team, they do a fabulous job. [War Of Will’s owner Gary Barber] has given me so many opportunities and I’m just so happy for them. I’m very happy for Mark to get his first classic win. Very happy for the horse, he deserved it more than anything. He’s so special.

“I can’t thank my family enough for all the support. Of course, my valet down in Florida, Jay Glass, and my agent, Matt Muzikar. Great team effort, I’m just so thankful.”

Muzikar said that Gaffalione is one of those rare people who “every day gets better and every day makes me smile”.

“I think that his personality has a huge role [in his success] because of the way he handles things, adapts to things and lets things come to him naturally. When he does obtain success, his reactions and actions just make you that much happier for him. You think, ‘This kid deserved that.’”

‘He really does his homework’

Gaffalione’s nature and his attention to details also are advantages in working with racehorses, Ward and Muzikar said.

“I’ve put him on some horses today who have some funny antics, with a little speed on their mind. We’re looking for them to settle now so they don’t go too fast early when their races are coming up,” Ward said. “He’s able to get along with them.”

In races, Gaffalione “is a very strong finisher and a very polished rider as far as style — he works real hard at that because he’s come a long way from where he started,” Ward observed. “He’s a very intelligent rider. He can ride from the front or he can come from behind. And he studies the races, each and every horse. He really does his homework. He has no bad habits.

“To me, this guy, if he was a stock, you would be wanting to buy in because he’s heading up,” Ward said.

With a chuckle, Muzikar said that Gaffalione “is actually like a little bit of a nerd” in going over charts of past races and videos of prospective mounts or rivals. The jockey remembers small details and can recount them quickly, including which owners have specific promising horses in their stables, a valuable asset in a volatile sport that often pivots on relationships.

Natural talent

It was Gaffalione who initiated their working bond, calling Muzikar several months after the agent had ceased working with four-time Eclipse Award winner Javier Castellano. Muzikar saw Gaffalione’s potential then and continues to see unlimited possibilities now.

“He has all the raw, natural talent, he has the mindset, he has the intelligence. He’s already, in my opinion, one of the stars of the game,” Muzikar said.

Statistics back up that opinion. Gaffalione, who intends to ride at Saratoga Race Course this summer, currently ranks tenth among North American riders by 2019 mount earnings with \$6.59 million amassed in 588 starts through June 3 that have yielded 94 wins.

In typical style, Gaffalione talks about how far he has come so far and his future with a soft understatement that seems to be backed up by an unspoken but steely commitment to achievement.

He also truly loves horses and spends some of his non-working time with three Off-Track Thoroughbreds he owns with girlfriend Casi Edwards. She helps with her father’s e5 Racing Thoroughbreds, which has campaigned the likes of champion Good Magic and Breeders’ Cup winner New Money Honey.

Helpful guidance

“Of course, I dreamed about it, but I never thought it would actually be a reality,” Gaffalione said of his newly gained status as

a classic-winning rider as he prepared to get on Ward’s horses at Keeneland. “I’ve had good people behind me, great support from owners and trainers, and I’ve caught a lot of lucky breaks that helped us get to this point.”

Along with helpful guidance he has received from top veteran riders including Mike Smith, John Velazquez, Castellano, Julien Leparoux and Edgar Prado, Gaffalione particularly credits his father, who would call him after each racing day earlier in his career to go over what he might have done better.

“I’ve learned so much from him,” Gaffalione said. “He helped me develop into the rider I am today.”

Looking to the future, Gaffalione is too modest to talk about any far-flung goals, but he also leaves the impression that any top competition, including international racing, is possible.

Serene, focused approach

“Just to be able to do this for as long as possible, to have a good, long career, would be the most important thing, and to stay healthy,” he said. “I’m just taking it day by day for now. My agent picks the spots and I go where he tells me. He does a fabulous job. I’ll be taking his advice, and wherever it takes us, it takes us.”

In the meantime, he and War Of Will are set to try to make more classic history together in the Belmont Stakes. Knowing that War Of Will is “a high-strung horse” and that a key to his Preakness victory was keeping him calm before and during competition, Gaffalione will again concentrate on a serene, focused approach.

“I feel like with his breeding and the way he does everything, the mile and a half shouldn’t be a problem. I just have to get out there and keep him as cool as possible.

“I have a ton of confidence. I know how special a horse he is,” Gaffalione added, smiling. “Regardless of where we are positioned or who is in the field, we’re going in there with the mindset that we should be able to win.”

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Royal Ascot winners from Down Under: how a royal gift horse started it all off 60 years ago

JA McGrath | June 16, 2019

Choisir gave the mighty Phar Lap a nudge as a pioneering antipodean when he won both the King's Stand and Golden Jubilee Stakes in the same week at Royal Ascot in 2003.



A large crowd greets the Queen Mother at Trentham racecourse in New Zealand for that special fixture in February 1958. Photo: uhcl.recollect.co.nz

A race in Her Majesty's honour

This year, trainer Michael Pitman has brought Enzo's Lad from New Zealand for the G1 King's Stand, but, if successful, the gelding may not lay valid claims to being the first Kiwi horse to bask in Royal Ascot glory.

In fact, this is the 60th anniversary of one of the most extraordinary tales of Royal success at Ascot, and unusually, the horse in question, the New Zealander Bali Ha'i, carried the colours of HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, whose horses mainly ran over jumps.

To fully appreciate the story, let us go back to 1958, when the Queen Mother is attending a special race meeting at Trentham racecourse, outside Wellington, at which the St James (sic) Cup is run in her honour as a one-off.

The race is won by Bali Ha'i, a promising half-brother to the 1949 Melbourne Cup winner Foxzami, trained by Tom and Ray Verner, and ridden by New Zealand's top jockey, Grenville Hughes.

Bali Ha'i carries the colours of brewery tycoon Sir Ernest Davis, a former mayor of Auckland and four-times leading owner, who at the official presentation of trophies stuns the Queen Mother — and the crowd — by asking Her Majesty to accept the horse “as a gift from the sporting people of New Zealand”.

This set up an amazing Royal racing story featuring one of the first internationals from Down Under in the modern era.

On April 22, 1958, Bali Ha'i arrived at the Royal Docks, London, and was transported to Newmarket to join the stable of Sir Cecil Boyd-Rochfort.

Given time to acclimatise in his new surroundings, Bali Ha'i came into his own in 1959, running with credit at the Chester May meeting before winning at Sandown Park in the hands of top lightweight Willie Snaith.

'An element of danger'

Bali Ha'i was sent off 15/8 favourite for the Queen Alexandra Stakes, and, ridden by Harry Carr, he defeated three rivals for a famous Royal victory in the colours of the Queen Mother and a dream result for New Zealand.

Sir Michael Oswald, former racing manager to the Queen Mother, was fully aware of the gamble such an international adventure entailed in the late 1950s.

“Obviously, it was a long, long time ago, and in those days it was often a very difficult journey by ship to England lasting many weeks. Now, they fly horses all over the place and they seem perfectly happy when they arrive at their destination.

“Being publicly given a horse as a gift, I suppose there was an element of danger that the horse may have been no good, and that could have caused embarrassment. But Bali Ha'i did his part by winning the Queen Alexandra, the longest race at the meeting.

“Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, did not have many runners at Royal Ascot. She went in for steeplechasers and hurdlers, so she was more Cheltenham and Aintree. Most of her runners on the flat were horses getting ready for a jumping career,” he pointed out.

Bali Ha'i, however, never raced over jumps. He suffered a tendon injury in 1960, and, while he raced twice the following year, his best racing days were behind him. He was retired and repatriated to New Zealand, where the Queen Mother was able to see him on a subsequent visit to the country in 1966.

Phar Lap, the New Zealand-bred, Australian-trained 1930 Melbourne Cup hero, who won 37 of his 51 starts, became an international legend when he was shipped across the Pacific to Tijuana, Mexico, where on the March 20, 1932, he won the Agua Caliente Handicap, then promoted as the world's richest race.

He died 16 days later of arsenic poisoning.

Much was made of the remarkable achievement of the impressive chestnut trained by Paul Perry in New South Wales shipping halfway around the world to triumph in the two biggest sprint races at Britain's showcase fixture.

And rightly so. Choisir was a special horse, of that there is no doubt. He had been placed in the G1 Caulfield Guineas and won the G1 Lightning Stakes in Melbourne, and he then campaigned adventurously in Britain, winning twice at the Royal meeting before finishing second to Oasis Dream in an epic G1 July Cup at Newmarket. He deserved the accolades.

He blazed a trail also followed by Takeover Target, Miss Andretti, Scenic Blast, Black Caviar, and in an indirect way, So You Think and, more recently, Merchant Navy — all winners at the meeting with Australasian origins.

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Actually, this was one of Santa Anita's safer years. But saying that may not help

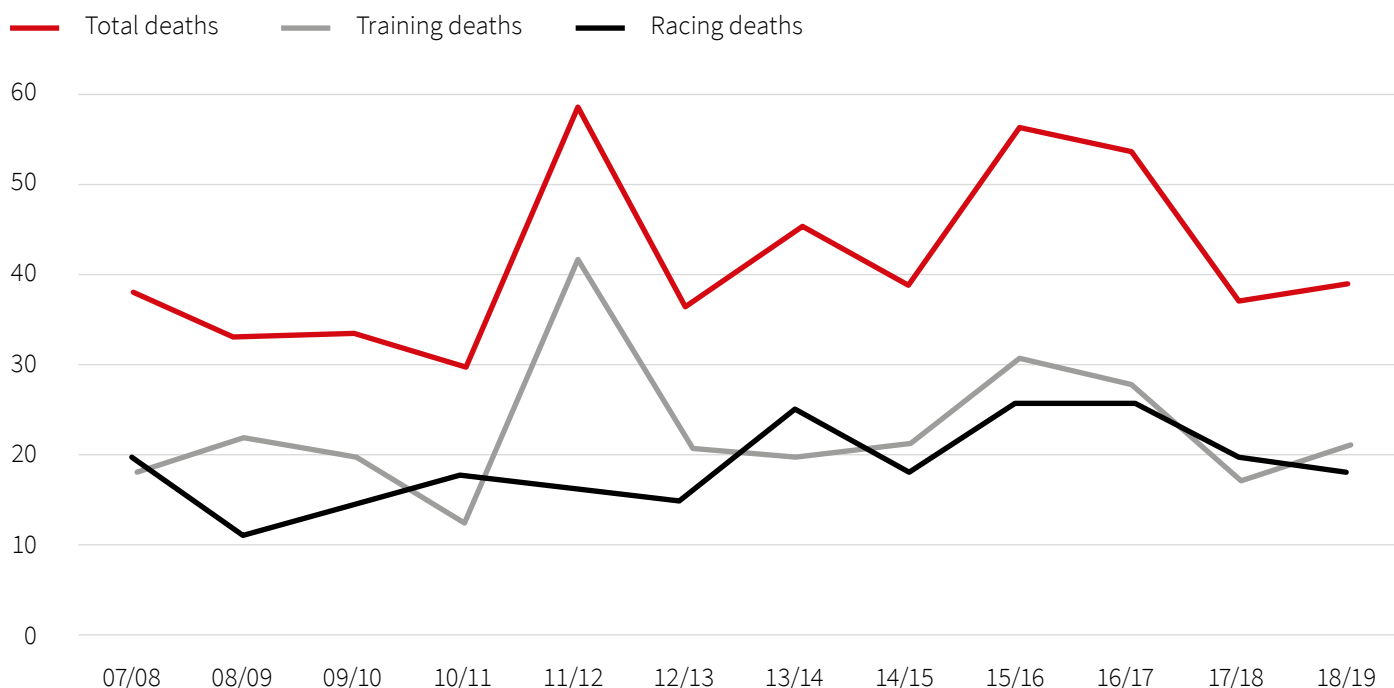
Paul von Hippel | June 26, 2019

When the 2019 spring meet ended on Sunday at Santa Anita Park, track accidents had killed 30 horses since Christmas. The deaths at Santa Anita precipitated a national scandal that led the track to suspend racing for three weeks in March. California's Governor and the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB) demanded an early end to the racing season in June, but Santa Anita's management, the Stronach Group, refused.

Santa Anita: it doesn't do any good to blame the media for magnifying the issue



Annual deaths on the Santa Anita track, 2007/08 to 2018/19



The irony of the scandal is that this has actually been one of Santa Anita's safer years. If you look at the 12 months from July through June — the period that CHRB uses for its annual summary of fatalities — Santa Anita's total number of track deaths in 2018-19 was just one more than the previous year, and down 30 percent from the two years before that.

Santa Anita's racing fatality rate, defined as racing deaths per thousand starts, was 2.2 in 2018-19 — down from 3.0 two years before. Though Santa Anita's fatality rate remains above the national average of 1.7, it is below the rate for some other prominent racetracks, including Pimlico and Churchill Downs.

So why did Santa Anita have a scandal this year? Why not last year? Why not Churchill Downs?

Why now?

Timing and news coverage may explain how the scandal started, and why it has persisted.

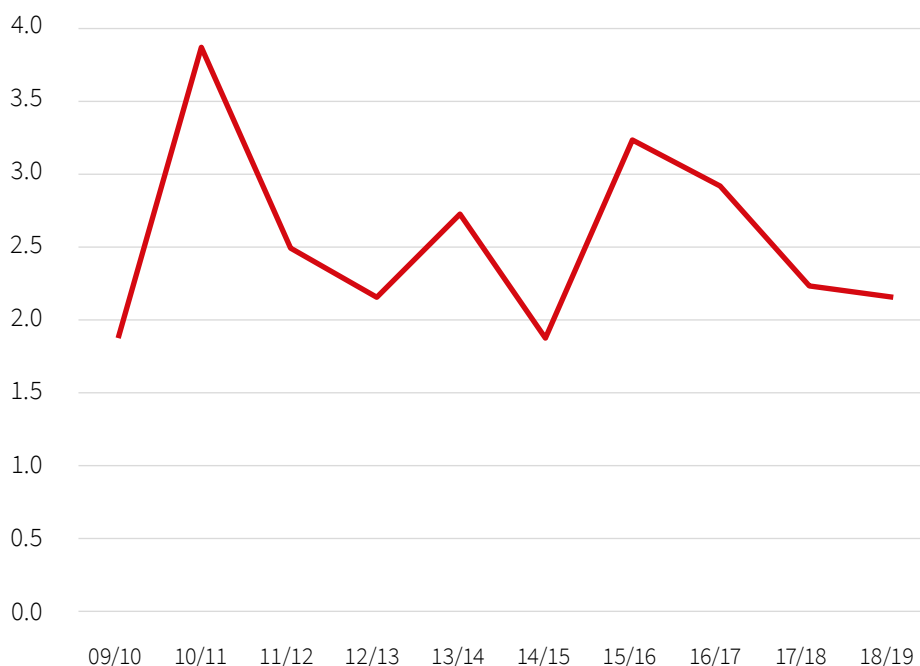
As the graph below shows, Santa Anita had a relatively tranquil fall meet in September-November 2018. Although eight horses died in training, only one died racing, and nobody took much notice.

But the two months after Christmas were a disaster. Eighteen inches of rain fell, and 19 horses died, including three in an 18-hour period on February 22-23. On February 23, Los Angeles Times racing reporter John Cherwa wrote that the "recent spike in horse deaths at Santa Anita stirs concern", and the story was picked up by national news outlets, including USA Today, NPR, NBC, CBS, and Fox News.

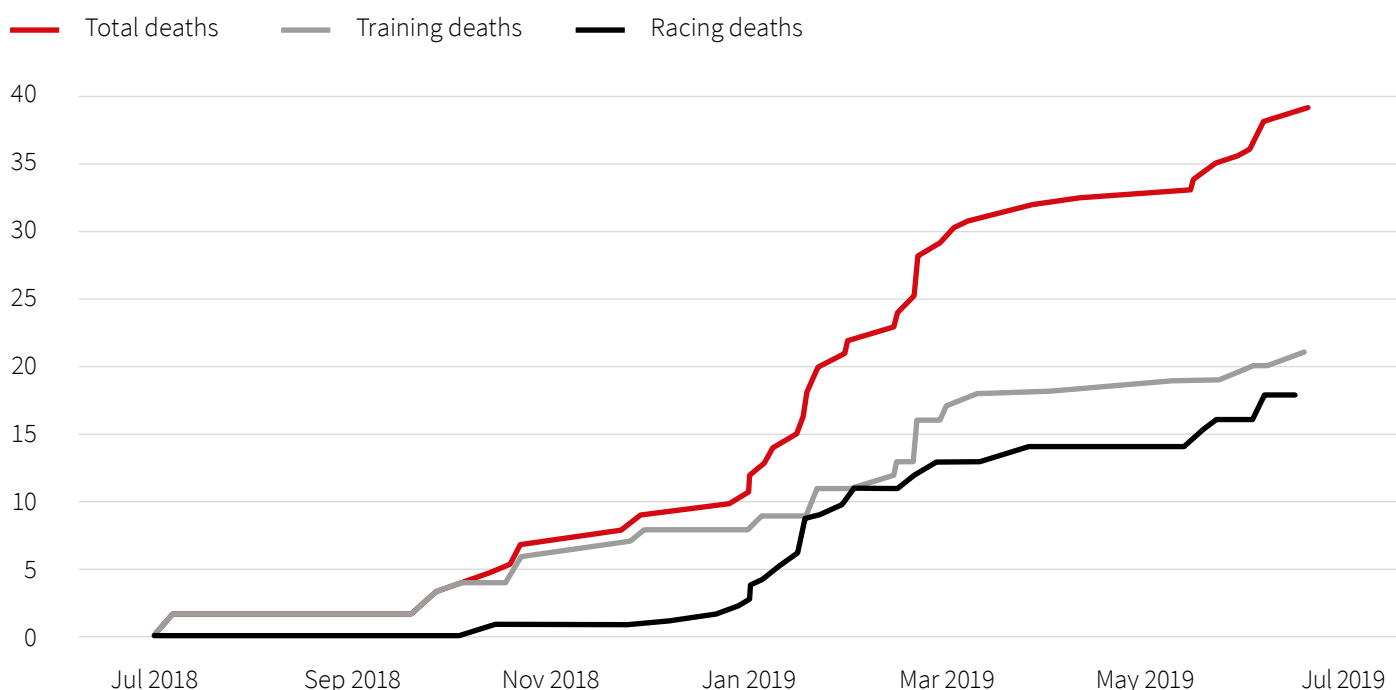
In response to the deaths and negative coverage, Santa Anita closed for three weeks in March. When it reopened, the death rate was much lower. Not a single horse broke down between April 1 and May 16. But the track got little credit, and, after the respite, each new fatality generated national media attention, especially in the LA Times and on CNN.

The media narrative had been set, and nothing was going to change it. Santa Anita had a problem.

Annual deaths on the Santa Anita track, 2007/08 to 2018/19



Cumulative deaths on the Santa Anita track, 2018/19 season



The horses are vulnerable, and so is the industry

Of course, it doesn't do any good to blame the media for magnifying the issue. Santa Anita really does have problems. Those problems aren't new, and they're not unique to Santa Anita, but the track, like many others, has not done everything it can to reduce equine fatalities. Reforms are overdue.

Some reforms that have been instituted during the scandal look like good ideas.

The state has finally banned pain medications in the day or two before a race — which should make it much harder to run injured horses who are vulnerable to breakdown. Of course, sportswriter Bill Nack and veterinary surgeon Greg Ferrarro called for this reform over 25 years ago, but I suppose late is better than never.

The Stronach Group has also purchased a \$500,000 PET scanner that can check horses' legs for hairline fractures — a valuable resource, though it is not yet clear when or how often it will be used.

So far neither Santa Anita nor the CHRB has spoken publicly about whether Santa Anita should replace its dirt track with a safer synthetic surface like the one that it used from 2007 to 2010. That conversation is overdue as well.

Reforms cannot be avoided. As the Santa Anita scandal shows, the industry is vulnerable to media campaigns. If reporters are willing to write about every horse that breaks down on the track — including undistinguished horses, in minor races, or on training runs — then scandals can persist indefinitely.

Every year nearly 500 horses break down in U.S. races, and a similar number break down in training. If the public stays interested, a breakdown story can be written every day. The industry can't just wait for the issue to blow over.

The reason breakdown stories are so effective is that much of the public is naïve about the risks of horse racing. Serious racing fans know that one start in 500 ends in breakdown, but the average CNN reader has no idea.

Someone who watches only a couple of big races a year may never have seen a fatal accident. Even a casual fan who saw Barbaro break down at the 2006 Preakness Stakes, or Eight Belles euthanized at the 2008 Kentucky Derby, may imagine that such events are once-in-a-generation tragedies. The idea that they happen to lesser horses every day is hard to accept.

And the industry has no language that can make it acceptable.

Official statements on equine fatalities often begin with the assertion that "one death is too many". And it's impossible to get from that statement to the idea that some number of deaths is unavoidable, or a cost of doing business. All the industry can do is prove that it is taking every step to reduce the breakdown rate and make sure that every preventable injury is, in fact, prevented.

The industry hasn't done that yet. If the Santa Anita scandal forces the issue, then something good may come out of it.

Paul von Hippel is an Associate Professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin. He tweets about horse racing at @equinometrics.

A note on sources: Annual reports of the CHRB provide fatality statistics for every year through 2017-18. The annual report for 2018-19 has not yet been published, but the date of every 2018-19 death at Santa Anita is published on the website HorseRacingWrongs.com. HorseRacingWrongs campaigns for the abolition of horse racing, which may raise concerns about the impartiality of its data, but the data come from freedom of information requests to CHRB, and dates and counts were cross-checked against accounts in the Los Angeles Times.



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Stamina is vital at ALL distances – are we really not smart enough to act on that?

James Willoughby | June 20, 2019

The result of the Prix de Diane Longines at Chantilly on Sunday illustrates once again a cold, hard fact about pedigrees, James Willoughby argues.

TRC SIRE OF THE WEEK

Computer power enables the modern sports analyst to review past events from a certain perspective. In terms of TRC Global Rankings, we can ask a

number of interesting questions about the data provided by the world's most important races in order to highlight new trends.

Channel's victory in the G1 Prix de

Diane Longines provided the impetus for one such question: what would be the ranking of the world's top stallions if only fillies and mares counted towards the results. Here is the answer:

Rank	Sire	Modal country	F&M	Wins	Runs	SR	G1	G2	G3	Index
1	I am Invincible	Australia	54	36	239	15	5	14	17	1040
2	Galileo	Ireland	69	54	315	17	27	10	17	1038
3	Dubawi	Great Britain	55	42	189	22	11	14	17	1036
4	Street Cry	Australia	46	35	155	23	24	6	5	1033
5	Mastercraftsman	Australia	45	24	165	15	10	5	9	1017
5	Not a single doubt	Australia	45	29	175	17	11	7	11	1016
7	Medaglia D'oro	USA	51	29	175	17	11	7	11	1016
8	Nathaniel	Great Britain	16	16	53	30	9	2	5	1013
9	Deep Impact	Japan	86	27	295	9	7	7	13	1012
10	Fastnet Rock	Australia	85	39	317	12	10	13	16	1009
11	Quality Road	USA	25	21	81	26	11	8	2	1008
12	Scat Daddy	USA	49	25	154	16	8	4	13	1007
13	War Front	USA	32	24	119	20	7	6	11	1005
14	Blame	USA	33	16	110	15	3	3	10	996
15	Curlin	USA	22	18	93	19	6	4	8	995
14	Frankel	Great Britain	33	14	108	13	3	3	8	995
14	Myboycharlie	Australia	12	11	51	22	6	0	5	995

A reminder here of some of the elements that drive Index, shown in the main tables as 'Points'. The key is always to make the best predictions for future competition, so TRC Global Rankings continue to measure something real – as opposed to other ranking systems, which are more arbitrary in their allocation of points or merely just an exercise in playing with numbers.

We will get to Nathaniel in a second. But, first a note as to why I Am Invincible ranks #1.

Allowing for the quality of the opposition, his fillies and mares have the best head-to-head record of any stallion in the world, weighted by recency and giving more credit to stallions with more different individuals in their portfolio. (All these factors are controlled by coefficients that change automatically across time as results accumulate.)

In fact, in head-to-head competition against all the other sires with Modal Country 'Australia' listed in the table

above, I Am Invincible is 144-118 (55%). We weight these head-to-heads by their significance and predictive power to arrive at the final value of Index.

By contrast, Galileo's fillies and mares are 62-82 (43%) against Dubawi's alone. The outstanding Galileo has a huge edge in terms of volume, making it nonetheless preferable to the algorithm currently to side with Galileo's fillies in clashes with Dubawi's. Every value of our points score Index which drives the rankings in a giant global network of interdependencies. Then the same rankings maths used in search engines and recommender systems is used to solve for the final order.

So, finally to NATHANIEL (+3pts, #28 from #31). The son of Galileo ranks much higher (#8) in this study of fillies and mares than in the main rankings simply because the preponderance of his winners has

been female runners, led by the dual Arc heroine Enable, of course.

But, the pride of Klaus Jacobs' Newsells Park Stud is no one-trick pony. Among his 17 Group winners, contributions have been made by God Given and Highgarden, Precious Ramotswe and Pilaster. These winners all stay well and, remarkably, are all female. Only the Italian G3 winner Chasedown has made a contribution among the males.

Pedigree analysts in horse racing seem very fond of making inferences from small samples. One could argue that this has to be their preoccupation in order to catch the latest trends in a fast-moving environment. But the vast majority of so-called 'nicks' (apparently prepotent combinations of sire and damsire, for example) turn out to be no more than noise. And the ones that persist (such as Galileo out of a Danehill-line stallion) are really a function of good-on-good made possible because they are an outcross.



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The same thing usually happens when it is assumed a stallion's results are sex-linked. Nathaniel's 17 Group wins is a tiny sample. Yes, one could express that the distribution is very unlikely to have happened randomly in terms of binomial ('coin toss') probability. But this is probably misleading. Across all stallions with only 17 Group wins so far, we would not find many with a horse as good as Enable who accounted for eight of them.

The fact that TRC Global Rankings has Nathaniel ranked #8 on the basis of just fillies and mares and #28 overall is not us saying that we think he is likely to produce more good distaffers than males in future. Our rankings (a probability estimate of a win next week, remember) have to account for the horses running around at present. And Nathaniel happens to have produced more of those who are female than male.

Nathaniel was a top-class racehorse (he won the G1 King George at Ascot and the G1 Coral-Eclipse at Sandown in separate seasons) with a tip-top middle-distance pedigree. In common with

every stallion with these credentials, he is very likely to produce very good runners if granted the mares of sufficient quality. Just look at the upper echelon of our sires ranking; it is dominated by stallions who exhibited strong stamina for a good reason – this works.

This is beautifully expressed in Nancy Sexton's excellent article on Japanese breeding, which is a must-read for people who really care about the future of this sport.

Breeding from solid, strong-running stock, rather than flimsy juveniles who were one-hit wonders, isn't just to allow tradition to persist. It has always been a better policy; it will always be a better policy. Because a measure of stamina is needed at all distances, which the great Italian breeder Federico Tesio stressed in his writing. Speed and stamina are not discrete entities. Rather, they are two sides of the same coin.

In general, if you know nothing else about two racehorses, the one who stays better is better. Stamina is sustained pace; speed is nothing without the capacity to endure. Sure,

there is a limit to this rule of thumb. Horses who need very long distances are competing in a sub-class of runners and probably don't need to be as special as the mile and a half runner on grass or the ten-furlong animal on dirt.

TRC Global Rankings express real-life probabilities of winning. And, when you look at the stallions who come out the best around the world, they were generally best at distances beyond a mile. It is not a coincidence.

Whether Nathaniel ever joins the truly elite depends on whether humans are smart enough to use stallions who are an influence for stamina with greater frequency than is the case right now. If, by some miracle, the folly is reversed, this is a stallion waiting to deliver more runners with the brilliant, brilliant ability of Enables. Including colts, as Dashing Willoughby's win in the G2 Queen's Vase at Royal Ascot was to show on Wednesday. (That results will not be included in the TRC Global Rankings until next week.)

Nathaniel's Group and Graded winners: a high-class collection of middle-distance runners

Date	Horse	Age	Sex	Race	Grade	Course	Country	Distance
16/06/19	Channel	3	filly	Pris de Diane Longines	1	Chantilly	France	10.5
04/11/18	God Given	4	mare	Premio Lydia Tesio Sisal Matchpoint	1	Capannelle	Italy	10
03/11/18	Enable	4	mare	Longines Breeders' Cup Turf	1	Churchill Downs	USA	12
07/10/18	Enable	4	mare	Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe	1	Longchamp	France	12
28/09/18	Highgarden	3	filly	Princess Royal Nayef Stakes	3	Newmarket	Great Britain	12
13/09/18	God Given	4	mare	DFS Park Hill Stakes	2	Doncaster	Great Britain	14.5
08/09/18	09	4	mare	188Bet September Stakes	3	Kemton (a.w)	Great Britain	12
02/08/18	Empire Maker	3	filly	Qatar Lillie Langtry Stakes	2	Goodwood	Great Britain	14
09/06/18	God Given	4	mare	Betway Pinnacle Stakes	3	Haydock	Great Britain	12
25/05/18	Precious Ramotswe	4	mare	Bronte Cup Fillies' Stakes	3	York	Great Britain	14
20/05/18	Chasedown	4	horse	Premio Carlo d'Alessio	3	Capannelle	Italy	12
01/10/17	Enable	3	filly	Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe	1	Chantilly	France	12
24/08/17	Enable	3	filly	Darley Yorkshire Oaks	1	York	Great Britain	12
13/08/17	God Given	3	filly	Prix Minerve	3	Deauville	France	12.5
29/07/17	Enable	3	filly	King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes	1	Ascot	Great Britain	12
15/07/17	Enable	3	filly	Darley Irish Oaks	1	Curragh	Ireland	12
02/06/17	Enable	3	filly	Investec Oaks	1	Epsom	Great Britain	12

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INTO MISCHIEF

What They're Thinking

Johnny Weatherby: the threat of gene manipulation must be tackled head-on

Q&A interview | June 18, 2019

Weeks don't get much more significant than this for Johnny Weatherby. As Her Majesty's representative at Ascot, he is the vital link between The Queen and arguably the most famous race meeting in the world. Mind you, making a success of crucial jobs in the industry is all in a day's work for Weatherby, who is also chairman of the 250-year-old family firm that bears his name and is both the secretariat and banker to British racing.

Who do you believe is the most important figure in the history of racing around the world?

Her Majesty the Queen is a commanding global presence. A tremendously successful owner and breeder, hugely respected for her knowledge and experience.

The Queen takes a great personal interest in Ascot Racecourse and particularly in the international side of Royal Ascot.

She has really enjoyed meeting all the overseas competitors and there is no doubt that her presence at the meeting – it is wonderful that The Queen has not missed a single day since the Coronation - helps to make it the most international meeting in the world.

Which is your favourite venue and race (anywhere in the world)?

It has to be Ascot Racecourse, having been involved there as a trustee since 1997 and as chairman for ten years. A lot of investment has gone into the venue since it was built, and we try to improve the facilities every year. The track is very fair and of course the races take some winning!

Little Horwood comes a close second - the location of my first point-to-point winner on my mother's Battle Run in 1991!

My favourite race has to be one of over 100 races we sponsor each year - the Weatherbys Super Sprint at Newbury in July. We've sponsored it for over 25 years and it

was one of the first races of its kind to give the smaller owner with more reasonably priced horses a big prize and a day to remember. There's always a great story around each winner - including Lyric Fantasy, Risky, Mrs Danvers and many more.

What is your fondest memory in racing?

I've had many tremendous days at Ascot but one that stands out is Frankel spreadeagling the field at the Royal meeting in 2012, to win the Queen Anne Stakes by 11 lengths.

The Queen's Estimate winning the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot is another wonderful memory. We all hoped it might happen and when it did the whole racecourse was euphoric.

Ryan [Moore] looked up at the Royal Box and gave his traditional understated nod and salute, while John Warren [the Queen's racing manager] was dancing. The sport could not have planned a better outcome and the photographs of the Duke of York presenting the Gold Cup to the Queen were brilliant.

In recent years, I've taken great pleasure following the few horses I've bred or owned.

The best so far is Presenting Percy, who we bred at home, out of our winning point-to-point mare Hunca Munca. Watching him win twice at the Cheltenham Festival and become one of the top National Hunt horses in Britain and Ireland has been brilliant.

Top Wood has been thrilling over the last couple of seasons. He was placed in the two most recent runnings of the Foxhunters Chase at the Cheltenham Festival and then won the Randox Health Foxhunters' Chase at Aintree's Grand National Festival this year.

Kelly Morgan, who trains a handful of horses for me at home, has done a superb job with Top Wood and trained three other individual winners for me in the last six months. Top Wood is 12 years old now and Kelly produces him spot-on for the big days. He has the heart of a lion and so deserved to win at Aintree - a race that I will never forget.



Watchful eye: Johnny Weatherby (left) looks on as The Queen makes a presentation to Aidan O'Brien after Coolmore's Merchant Navy won the Diamond Jubilee Stakes at last year's Royal meeting. Photo: Zuzanna Lupa/Racingfotos.com

What do you see as the biggest challenge racing faces today?

One of the key issues being tackled by Weatherbys, the International Stud Book Committee and others is the threat of manipulation of the heritable genome, or gene doping, of the Thoroughbred. The real danger of gene manipulation is to the integrity of the Thoroughbred breed. With all stud book authorities as the gatekeepers of the breed, stud books have a responsibility to tackle this threat head on.

We are working on closer collaboration to increase industry awareness and education of the threats of gene manipulation and introduce strong initiatives to prevent it. We cannot disrupt 300 years of selective breeding, through gene manipulating now.

If you could change one thing in racing, what would it be?

Technology is key, and Weatherbys, where I have worked for 40 years, has a responsibility to play a leading role in the development and adoption of solutions that will drive the industry forward.

Crucially, we must educate and engage a wider audience that may previously not have been enthusiastic about the sport. Nowhere is this more keenly felt than in the breeding world, where our Stud Book division is at the forefront of the technology drive. In the coming months and years we would like to see nearly all those involved in the industry using Weatherbys developed digital solutions.

This will include the Digital ePassport, which will offer improved bio-security, traceability, data collection, vaccinations and ownership recording. We are currently in a live test environment with a vaccination app and, separately, a movement app, which will be rolled out to the industry later this year.

The trick for racing is to combine its heritage with a modern outlook and relevance. Be proud of the history but constantly ambitious and determined for the future.

TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS

The Thoroughbred Racing Industry's ranking system

Available at thoroughbredracing.com

Thoroughbred racing has its rankings of the world's leading horses and the world's best races, but the sport is devoid of meaningful classifications of the humans involved, the jockeys, the trainers, the owners.

After two years in development, Thoroughbred Racing Commentary (TRC) filled that void with the creation of TRC Global Rankings. Updated weekly, this is the only system in the world that assesses the accomplishments of every jockey, trainer, owner and sire.

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TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



30 June 2019

Jockeys

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Ryan Moore	Great Britain	1094
2	Frankie Dettori	Great Britain	1072
3	Mike E Smith	USA	1061
4	Christophe-Patrice Lemaire	Japan	1060
5	Zac Purton	Hong Kong	1051
6	Hugh Bowman	Australia	1049
6	William Buick	Great Britain	1049
8	Mirco Demuro	Japan	1040
9	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1033
10	Javier Castellano	USA	1031
11	Joel Rosario	USA	1030
12	Flavien Prat	USA	1028
13	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1027
14	Anton Marcus	South Africa	1024
15	Joao Moreira	Hong Kong	1019

Trainers

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	1081
2	Chad C Brown	USA	1072
3	Aidan O'Brien	Great Britain	1061
4	Bob Baffert	USA	1059
4	John Gosden	Great Britain	1059
6	James Cummings	Australia	1025
7	Saeed bin Suroor	UAE	1023
8	Andre Fabre	France	1022
9	Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	1020
10	Chris Waller	Australia	1018
11	John Moore	Hong Kong	1013
12	Darren Weir	Australia	1011
13	John Size	Hong Kong	1009
14	Steven Asmussen	USA	1006
15	Mike De Kock	South Africa	1003

Owners

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Godolphin	Australia	1084
2	Coolmore Partners	Great Britain	1070
3	Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum	Great Britain	1050
4	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	Great Britain	1035
4	Magic Bloodstock Et Al	Australia	1035
6	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1022
7	WinStar Farm Et Al	USA	1019
8	China Horse Club Et Al	Australia	1018
9	Madaket Stables Et Al	USA	1014
10	Klaravich Stables Et Al	USA	1010
11	Michael Dubb Et Al	USA	1008
11	Silk Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1008
13	U Carrot Farm	Japan	1006
14	Head of Plains Et Al	USA	1005
14	Lloyd Williams Et Al	Australia	1005

Sires

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Dubawi	Great Britain	1087
2	Galileo	Ireland	1063
3	Frankel	Great Britain	1050
4	Scat Daddy	USA	1041
5	Deep Impact	Japan	1040
6	I Am Invincible	Australia	1038
7	Sea The Stars	Great Britain	1035
8	Street Cry	Australia	1030
9	Teofilo	Australia	1029
10	Lord Kanaloa	Japan	1028
11	Curlin	USA	1026
12	Quality Road	USA	1025
13	Candy Ride	USA	1019
13	More Than Ready	USA	1019
13	Not A Single Doubt	Australia	1019