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TRC



World Horse of the Decade

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WINX

is your World Horse of the Decade

Chris Smith | December 19, 2019

Thoroughbred Racing Commentary is an international publication, and we pride ourselves on our coverage of issues and developments in all the major racing nations. Nevertheless, more than half our readers are based in the United States, which is why the odds seemed stacked in favour of American Pharoah, the only U.S. nominee, in our World Horse of the Decade vote, which closed yesterday (Wednesday).



Jockey Hugh Bowman salutes the adoring crowd who turned out in their thousands to watch Winx's final run at The Championships at Royal Randwick in April. She was an easy winner of the prestigious G1 Longines Queen Elizabeth Stakes, which she was taking for the third year in succession. Photo: Sharon Lee Chapman

Yet, while the superb 2015 U.S. Triple Crown winner and Horse of the Year polled slightly over a third of the more-than-2,000 votes the five contenders received from all over the world, he finished second in a poll whose result shows once again that there is no substitute for longevity in the best racehorses for building popularity in the sport.

In fact, the winner, Winx, is five months older than American Pharoah. She raced for the first time in June 2014 - two months before he made his debut in a maiden special weight at Del Mar - and for the last in April this year, by which time Pharoah's first 2-year-olds were beginning to appear on the racetracks of Europe and the U.S.

Indeed the son of Pioneer of The Nile closed his track career by winning the Breeders' Cup Classic, the leading all-aged weight-for-age race in North America, on October 31, 2015 - just seven days after Winx won her first Cox Plate, the leading all-aged weight-for-age race in the Southern Hemisphere. She retired having won the race four times.

Winx raced no less than 43 times in her five-year track career - more than three of the other four World Horse of the Decade

nominees put together (American Pharoah ran 11 times, Frankel 14 and Enable 15).

She won 37 of those, including 25 at G1 level, and she was unbeaten in her last 33. She now sits atop the list of leading all-time money earners worldwide.

Winx never raced outside Australia, but her fame and popularity spread across the globe during that time. Fans in the Northern Hemisphere were glued to TV sets every time she ran, and many made the pilgrimage down under to be sure to see her compete in the flesh at least once.

She won not only this TRC poll but also another significant international honour - the 2018 Secretariat Vox Populi Award. Created by Secretariat's owner, Penny Chenery, this recognizes the horse whose popularity and racing excellence best resounded with the general public and gained recognition for Thoroughbred racing. Winx was the top choice among U.S. voters as well as international fans representing 60 countries. She was the first non-American winner of the award since it was established in 2010.

TRC World Horse of the Decade poll result

1. **Winx** - 788 votes (38%)
2. **American Pharoah** - 689 (34%)
3. **Frankel** - 361 (18%)
4. **Black Caviar** - 155 (7%)
5. **Enable** - 83 (3%)

Some may be surprised at the relative paucity of support for the other three contenders, particularly Enable. Surely it would have been different had she been able to win her third Arc at ParisLongchamp in October.

Black Caviar's numbers were respectable considering it is nearly seven years since she retired at Randwick in April 2013 with an unblemished record of 25 wins from 25 races.

That was six months after the retirement of Frankel, arguably the greatest of all five in terms of sheer ability. Again, his share of the vote would probably have been a lot higher had his career been more recent.

One criticism often levelled at the great horse's connections is that he was never allowed to compete outside Britain. Yet the only two of these five who did actually race in more than one country - Black Caviar and Enable - occupy the bottom two positions.

FACTFILES

1. WINX

Born 2011, bred by Fairway Thoroughbreds in Australia (Street Cry - Vegas Showgirl)

Owner: Magic Bloodstock

Trainer: Chris Waller

Jockey: Hugh Bowman

Career earnings: £14,564,743

(current all-time world leader)

43 runs, 37 wins (25 G1s)

Highlights: unbeaten in her last 33 races; won the Cox Plate four years running; Longines World's Best Racehorse 2018 (joint with Cracksman).

2. AMERICAN PHAROAH

Born 2012, bred by Zayat Stables in USA (Pioneer of The Nile - Littleprincessemma)

Owner: Zayat Stables

Trainer: Bob Baffert

Jockey: Victor Espinoza

Career earnings: £5,531,104

11 runs, 9 wins (8 G1s)

Highlights: first horse to win U.S. Triple Crown for 37 years; won Breeders' Cup Classic to complete 'Grand Slam'. Longines World's Best Racehorse 2015.

3. FRANKEL

Born 2008, bred by Juddmonte Farms in GB (Galileo - Kind)

Owner: Prince Khalid Abdullah/

Juddmonte Farms

Trainer: Sir Henry Cecil

Jockey: Tom Queally

Career earnings: £2,998,302

14 runs, 14 runs (10 G1s)

Highlights: Longines World's Best Racehorse 2011, 2012. Highest-rated horse in the history of those classifications

4. BLACK CAVIAR

Born 2006, bred by R Jamieson in Australia (Bel Esprit - Helsing)

Owner: G J Wilkie, Mrs K J Wilkie Et Al

Trainer: Peter Moody

Jockey: Luke Nolen

Career earnings: £4,652,092

25 runs, 25 wins (15 G1s)

Highlights: world champion sprinter every year from 2010 to 2013;

Longines World's Best Racehorse 2013 (joint with Treve).

5. ENABLE

Born 2014, bred by Juddmonte Farms in GB (Nathaniel - Concentric)

Owner: Prince Khalid Abdullah/

Juddmonte Farms

Trainer: John Gosden

Jockey: Frankie Dettori

Career earnings: £10,411,973

15 runs, 13 wins (10 G1s)

Highlights: two Prix de l'Arc de Triomphes (2017, 2018); first horse to win at Breeders' Cup (Longines Turf in 2018) after winning Arc in same year. Currently joint highest-rated horse in the Longines World's Best Racehorse Rankings of 2019 (with Crystal Ocean and Waldgeist).

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Meet ‘Angus’, the horse who sits like a dog, has a large Facebook following - and is very lucky to be alive

Nancy Sexton | March 03, 2019

William ‘Buff’ Bradley knew it wasn’t good as he ran down the Fair Grounds stretch. Moments earlier, he had watched in hope as his fan favourite, The Player, had left the gate under regular pilot Calvin Borel as the 4/5 choice in the G2 New Orleans Handicap. Now he was running towards his horse, left stricken at the top of stretch by a pair of fractured sesamoids.

This is a normal pose for The Player - sitting upright on his haunches. All photos are from his Facebook page

“I knew it was bad as soon as Calvin pulled him up,” Bradley remembers. “I threw off my sports coat and ran towards him. It was devastating - it didn’t look good at all. Right then, my immediate thoughts were, ‘I’m going to quit training, I’m not going to do this without The Player.’”

“The state veterinarian was there, and I took hold of the horse and loaded him into the horse ambulance. I was riding in the back with him and I said to him, ‘buddy, I will do everything I can to help you.’ You know things like this can happen in racing, but it doesn’t make it any easier.”

The Player had just surrendered the lead rounding the final turn in the New Orleans Handicap when he lost his action and had to be pulled up abruptly. It is a sight dreaded at any racetrack; in The Player’s case it was compounded further by the circumstances surrounding the horse, one whose

quirkiness had prompted a huge fan base across social media and who was seemingly on the verge of a big 2018 campaign for his popular connections.

Remarkably, The Player did survive and now, almost a year on from that dark day in Louisiana, the son of Street Hero is embarking on a stud career at Crestwood Farm in Kentucky.

That he is even alive is testament to the horse's own personality, in addition to his connections' hope and persistence.

The Player is particularly special to Bradley in that he co-bred the horse with his father, Fred - fondly remembered as the owner-breeder of Brass Hat and Groupie Doll - and longtime partner Carl Hurst. Indeed, he was one of the last horses bred by Fred Bradley before his death in 2016. Thus, The Player had a great deal of sentiment attached to him even before he had even run.

The Player's original popularity, however, stemmed from his antics around the barn, much of which came to be portrayed on his popular Facebook page. While the majority of horses spend most of their time upright and mobile, The Player would often lie flat out in his stall with his head under the gate, sometimes eating hay without even a raise of his head. And, when he wasn't flat out, he would most likely be sat up on his haunches, in other words sitting like a dog.

"He was a character from day one," says Bradley of the horse known around the barn as 'Angus'. "My kids are very involved in the farm and what he would do as a foal was lie in the stall while Kim, my ex-wife, had the mare outside ready to go to the field. And the kids would be in there trying to get him up and he'd be like, 'I'll get up when I'm ready.'

"Even from an early age, he would sit on his haunches, sometimes doing a 360 just looking at everything around him. Kim kept saying 'we've got to send him to the clinic', thinking something was wrong. When he got there, Dr Bob Hunt just looked at him and said 'you don't need to send him here, that's just him'."

While acclaimed equine photographer Tony Leonard once snapped Secretariat in a similar pose at



The Player "is from a family of tough, honest runners," says Buff Bradley. "I think he was just coming into his own."

Claiborne Farm, it's by and large unusual equine behaviour. Yet, in The Player's case, it was something of a routine.

"He likes to observe everything," says Bradley. "Every day, he would lie flat out in his stall and put his head down outside of the gate and eat his hay. There were times when you thought someone would trip over him - I remember there was a big crowd at my barn on Kentucky Derby day and there he was, his head out under the stall with people all around him. He never once spooked, never once banged his head. It was a daily routine for him."

All the while, he was developing into a formidable performer on the track.

The Player's pedigree is one of tough, honest runners cultivated by the Bradleys and Hurst in the years following the private purchase of his great-granddam, Regal Export, in 1994. The daughter of Regal Classic foaled nine winners, led by Town Queen, who carried the colours of Hurst and Fred and Buff Bradley in the 2002 My Charmer Stakes at Turfway Park. In turn, her first foal was the triple-winning Gilded Time filly Hour Queen, herself dam of The Player.

"We started with his great-granddam, Royal Export. We bought her primarily as a broodmare, but she won for us shortly after we bought her. We were trying to upgrade our stock at the time and we just liked her pedigree," says Bradley.

"Town Queen was the first living foal that we had out of her, and she was actually the first stakes winner that we bred too. And then her first foal was Hour Queen. There are a lot of runners in the family - they're all racehorses, tough."

The Player took it to greater heights, however. Fourth on his only start at two, he broke his maiden at Churchill Downs the following May before falling less than a length short of G1 winner Cupid in the G2 Indiana Derby at Indiana Grand. He continued to progress thereafter, running second in the G3 Ack Ack Stakes en route to putting it all together when landing the 2017 G2 Fayette Stakes at Keeneland at the expense of Neolithic and McCracken.

The Player was impressive that day but he was arguably even more so the following February when the wide-margin winner of the G3 Mineshaft Handicap at Fair Grounds in a time not far short of the track record. That win earned him a 100 Beyer figure and thus, it was as the 4/5 favourite that The Player lined up for that fateful run in the New Orleans Handicap.

Bradley still has difficulty in talking of the moments immediately following the injury. With both sesamoids at the back of the fetlock fractured and the surrounding suspensory system in a state of collapse, the prognosis was bleak.

“The x-rays came through and it was then that Dr Bradford Bentz told us that the horse was a good candidate for euthanasia,” says Bradley. “We asked if he could be saved and he said, yes, let’s talk to Dr Charles McCauley [clinical assistant professor of surgery at Louisiana State University’s School of Veterinary Medicine]. Well only a month before, I had met Dr McCauley when he had come to my barn to do a dynamic scope on another horse - I had been really impressed with him.

“Dr McCauley saw the x-rays, called me and said, ‘Buff, I can do this, but it’s all going to depend on the horse,’ and then he listed all the possible complications - laminitis, infection etc.

“We weren’t thinking of a stallion career at all at the time and we made it very clear that we did not want him to suffer. We just felt we had to give it a go.”

The following Monday at the LSU Equine Hospital, The Player had 16 screws and a locking metal plate inserted by McCauley to stabilise the fetlock. Subsequent complications, which included the replacement of a screw, hindered his recovery but, after six long months, the colt was able to return to Bradley’s farm in Kentucky.

“I drove to LSU every day,” says Bradley. “I can’t say enough good things about LSU and their staff. Initially, we hoped he would be there 30-60 days, but it ended up being about six months.

“We could all see that he had a will to survive, despite the ups and downs. His temperament was certainly a big factor in his survival, especially the fact that he was always lying down, taking weight off that leg.”

He adds: “When I went to collect him, I put something on Facebook and we had lots of requests from people offering to help, some of them offering a place to let him rest on the route back home.

“It was a long ride back home, and I rode in the back with him. We did stop at one place, with a lady and her husband who we had never met before, and they were kind enough to put us up too.”

With his ankle fused, The Player’s gait has obviously altered, although



Head out under the stall - another routine position for ‘Angus’

a recent Facebook video of the horse trotting in his field at Crestwood shows how he has adapted remarkably well. He remains shod on his good foot for support but that simple act also comes with its issues - or at least it would for a horse without such a penchant for lying down.

“At LSU, they got round it by shoeing him on the operating table when they had to open him up, but obviously, in a normal situation he would have to bear full weight on the bad leg to shoe him,” says Bradley. “Well, one day the blacksmith turned up and The Player was lying down and he said ‘let’s just see if we can do it here’. So he was shod while lying down.”

The Player flourished back in Kentucky in the company of Bradley’s G1 winner Brass Hat, progressing from turnout in a mobile pen to an arena.

“As he was recovering last autumn, McCauley said to us ‘you know, you can stand this horse’,” says Bradley. “We weren’t really thinking about it. But then we thought about it and really, the only people we wanted to take him on were the McLeans over at Crestwood Farm. They’ve always been good to us and we done good business with their stallions Get Stormy and Texas Red. They’re well thought of.”

The McLean family have been at the helm of Crestwood since 1970.

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Over that time, countless Graded stakes winners have come off the land, notably those outstanding fillies Serena's Song and Xtra Heat. All the while, the family has maintained a fine stallion roster, one that came to include successful sires Petionville and Storm Boot; today, it comprises a team of eight, including Breeders' Cup Juvenile hero Texas Red, Kentucky Derby runner-up Firing Line, emerging sire Get Stormy and G3 winner Tu Brutus, the first son of Scat Daddy to retire to stud in Kentucky.

"We try to keep the roster fresh," says farm manager Marc McLean. "I know Buff well and he had mentioned The Player a couple of times to me. Like any stallion, you have got to like them and their race record."

The Player arrived at Crestwood just before the New Year in time for the farm's annual open house during the Keeneland January Sale.

Within no time at all, the farm staff were treated to the horse's peculiar barn antics.

"I haven't really seen anything like it before," says McLean. "I had seen pictures of him doing it and then one night shortly after he had arrived, I went into his stable to give him his medication and there he was, just sitting on his haunches.

"The first day he was turned out here, he acted like it had been his paddock for ten years. He gets around great, surprisingly well in fact."

The McLeans have already been well exposed to the horse's powerful fan following. His Facebook page is closing in on 5,000 likes and its posts regularly prompt huge interaction; for instance, a video of him playing in his paddock recently attracted close to 4,000 views and 80 shares.

"I decided to do the page as if it were actually him, just because he's funny and people like him," says Bradley.



A more conventional look for The Player

Feelgood story

He adds: "I fully understand people saying 'I'm not going to put my horse through this' with such an injury. And I agree. But, of all my horses, I thought he'd be the one able to cope with it, what with his demeanour and quirkiness.

"It's a feelgood story - he did make it, horses can survive this."

The Player is priced at \$2,500 for his first season. Neither Bradley nor the team at Crestwood are under any illusion as to today's difficulties in making a stallion, particularly at the lower end of the market. But what they do know is that they are in possession of an extraordinarily tough horse who was on the cusp of breaking out at a higher level.

"I think he was just coming into his own," says Bradley. "Calvin eased up on him when he won the Mineshaft, otherwise I think he would have broken the track record. And that was his first time in blinkers. Before, he had been winning so we had no reason to change it. But then, in the Louisiana Stakes, when he was fourth, he was just playing around - he should have won and that's when the blinkers went on."

He adds: "We're trying to breed a racehorse, that's what I want people to know about The Player - he's from a family of tough, honest runners and he was just getting going himself."

The Player was bred at a time when the Bradleys owned around 12 mares.



'Angus' with Buff Bradley: "It's a feelgood story - he did make it, horses can survive this."

While that number has since dropped to four, plans remain in full throttle to support the horse.

"We have a couple going The Player's way," he says. "A few are coming from my owners and then Carl and I have leased a mare to go to him. There is a full sister to Brass Hat going to him."

Important year

Overall, it promises to be an important year for Crestwood as the first crop of Jack Milton, a G1-winning son of War Front, take to the track and those by Firing Line and Texas Red come under scrutiny at the yearling sales. Then there is the emergence of multiple G1 winner Get Stormy as a

stallion of real note thanks to four early Graded stakes winners, among them the Bradley-bred G3 winner Storm The Hill.

Firing Line, in particular, holds a special place at Crestwood as the product of their Sister Girl family, also responsible for G1 winners Sharp Azteca and Bowies Hero. Bred by Clearsky Farms, the son of Line Of David set a new track record when the wide-margin winner of the G3 Sunland Derby and later fell only a length short of American Pharoah in the Kentucky Derby. His first weanlings sold for up to \$60,000 at the winter breeding stock sales.

"Firing Line's granddam lives about 100 yards from where he is," says McLean. "We have high hopes for him - he was well supported at the sales.

"What is exciting about him is that he was a \$240,000 2-year-old himself and from Line Of David's first crop, who wasn't standing for very much at the time, so he must have been pretty good."

And what of The Player? For now, there is a sense of cautious optimism ahead of how he might fare in his second career.

"He was stepping up in class all the time and I think his last win was his best. I think he would have had a good summer," says McLean. "He's a little bit under the radar. But you know, this horse has proved a lot of people wrong already, many would have stopped with him after the injury, and he could do it again."



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BRITISH-BRED GROUP 1 WINS IN 2019

Lockinge Stakes
Oaks
Prince of Wales's Stakes
Commonwealth Cup
Eclipse Stakes
King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes
Falmouth Stakes
Sussex Stakes
International Stakes
Yorkshire Oaks
St Leger Stakes
Sun Chariot Stakes
Fillies' Mile
Fillies & Mares Stakes
Queen Elizabeth II Stakes
Irish Oaks
Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe
Prix de l'Abbaye
Prix de la Foret
Prix Vermeille
Prix de Royallieu
Prix Ganay
Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud
Grand Prix de Paris
Prix Jean Prat
Prix Maurice de Gheest
Prix Jean Romanet
Dubai Sheema Classic
Jebel Hatta
Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint
Northern Dancer Turf Stakes
Australian Guineas
H E Tancred Stakes
Ranvet Stakes
George Main Stakes

**22 INDIVIDUAL BRITISH-BRED GROUP 1 WINNERS RECORDED
AN IMPRESSIVE 35 GROUP 1 WINS ON THE FLAT IN 2019.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL BRITISH BREEDERS ON SUCH A SUCCESSFUL YEAR.



THE TBA



Why the Japanese breeding mindset is so much better for the long-term health of horse racing

Nancy Sexton | JUNE 11, 2019

Imagine a world where the aim is to breed the best athlete. One where soundness and longevity in the horse are celebrated.

Slow burner: would the 2010 King George winner Harbinger have had such success as a stallion anywhere other than in Japan? Photo: Shadai Stallion Station/J Fukuda

Unfortunately, many breeders in Europe feel they have to produce with the sale ring in mind if they are to survive. Shocking levels of prize money don't help; the faster horse with the ability to come to hand quickly is often the favoured target of middle-to-lower market buyers, many of them pinhookers. As such, our industry would rather cluster behind a series of cheap G3-winning sprinters at stud over a Derby winner such as Ruler Of The World.

Which is why it was so refreshing to visit Japan, a country where the idea of breeding a supreme athlete remains top of the agenda.

An in-depth knowledge of Japanese racing is not needed to appreciate the regard that the tough middle-distance horse is held in. Rarely will high-end breeders embrace a horse who retires after two seasons of racing. Instead it is a long career, one that invariably includes a strong performance over two miles, that is often influential in dictating a horse's popularity with breeders.

Overwhelming presence

There is probably no better example than the Shadai Stallion Station's Deep Impact, an overwhelming presence within Japan as his sire, Sunday Silence, was before him. Out of an excellent 12-furlong performer in Wind In Her Hair, Deep Impact's victories ranged from the Satsuki Sho (Japanese 2000 Guineas) over 10f to the Tenno Sho (Spring) over two miles. In between, he also won the Tokyo Yushun (Japanese Derby over 12f), Japan Cup (12f) and Kikuka Sho (Japanese St Leger over 15f).

The idea of mile-and-a-half G1 winners warranting a fair crack at stud is alien enough to many breeders in Europe, let alone ones able to carry their speed over two miles.

Now 17 years old, Deep Impact was priced at 40,000,000yen (£290,000) this year as he continues to remain Japan's answer to Galileo. Unfortunately, his season was cut short by a neck injury, but on the track it remains business as usual, with Roger Barows' victory in the Tokyo Yushun helping to ensure that his sire heads into the summer with a healthy advantage over his rivals as he goes in pursuit of an eighth consecutive Japanese sires' championship.

Among those poised to assume Deep Impact's mantle when the time comes is Almond Eye's sire, Lord Kanaloa, a different kind of animal, who excelled over 6f. Yet, in keeping with the Japanese desire to prolong a horse's career, he packed in 13 wins in 19 starts over the course of four seasons.

Lord Kanaloa's presence on the Shadai roster alongside Deep Impact underlines just how powerful the Yoshida machine has become.

Daiwa Major, who represents a fusion of two true Shadai forces in Sunday Silence and Northern Taste, remains the only stallion to break Deep Impact's hold on the leading 2yo sires' list and has a current star to his credit in recent NHK Mile Cup winner Admire Mars.

Another son of Sunday Silence, Heart's Cry, has forged an excellent domestic record while striking international notoriety as the sire of Woodward Stakes winner Yoshida - hopefully he will one day be available to Kentucky breeders. In the meantime, encouragement can be gleaned from the start made by an older son of Heart's Cry in Just A Way, another tough and versatile customer who has already

been showcased to an international audience via the American exploits of his first-crop son, Master Fencer.

The need for patience

That's just a snapshot of the power within the Shadai roster. And, although the farm has added American speedsters such as Drefong and Mind Your Biscuits in recent years, it is notable how many of the roster stay true to the Japanese ideal: big, strong middle-distance horses with the bone and action to go with it.

Naturally, however, such horses often require a need for patience, and the question has to be asked as to whether Harbinger would have been quite so effective elsewhere. The runaway King George winner of 2010, Harbinger was sold to stand at Shadai in a multi-million pound deal. By Dansili, he had been a later maturing middle-distance horse who had failed to run as a juvenile, none of which would have sat well within the commercial market further west, and, although he was Japan's leading first-crop sire by earnings in 2014, a first crop of 148 foals contained just three stakes winners.

Indeed, Harbinger was a slow burner; by the time his first crop turned five in 2017, he had just four stakes winners to his credit. Yet, for one reason or another, he has since enjoyed a major upturn in fortunes to the extent that his stud record today comprises five G1 winners, led by Deirdre and Persian Knight. Each of the quintet hail from his third and fourth crops, foaled in 2014 and 2015. Would the U.S. and European markets have been quite so forgiving? Maybe I'm being harsh, but I suspect not.

Of course, anyone connected with the industry worldwide is well aware that not every decision works out. For instance, a slew of Epsom Derby winners sourced during the 1990s, notably Generous, Dr Devious, Erhaab, Lammtarra and Oath, did little to enhance the Japanese Thoroughbred.

Against that, acquiring Sunday Silence back in 1990 was a masterstroke. However, that dark son of Halo is also proof that sometimes you can have too much of a good thing; look no further than the country's premier auction, the upcoming JRHA July Select Sale, in which approximately 80 lots catalogued carry inbreeding to the great stallion, up from 63 in 2018.

At the time of writing, six of his sons also sit within the top ten Japanese sires. Such domination, for all its value, does intensify the need for an outcross, and it is probably no coincidence that the outlying quartet - Harbinger and King Kamehameha alongside his sons Lord Kanaloa and Rulership - have plied their trade by working so effectively with Sunday Silence line mares. Lord Kanaloa and Harbinger are two excellent examples, having sired G1 winners Almond Eye, Saturnalia, Deirdre and Persian Knight out of such mates.

One of the strongest broodmare bands worldwide

Hopes obviously now run high that Deep Impact's legacy will be secured via his sons. While one of his first major names to stud, Derby winner Deep Brillante, has made a lukewarm start to his stud career, there are a series of other sons waiting in the wings, notably Kizuna, Real Impact (also a shuttler to Arrowfield Stud in Australia) and Spielberg, all of whom have first 2yos this year.

Real Impact is already off the mark, while there is seemingly a fine word for the progeny of the 2013 Derby hero Kizuna, whose first crop made up to 50,760,000yen (£370,000/\$470,000) at the recent Chiba 2YO Sale and was recently represented by his first winner on the JRA circuit.

Meanwhile in Europe, 2000 Guineas winner Saxon Warrior was understandably popular at a fee of €30,000 in his first season at Coolmore in Ireland.

It also can't be forgotten that decades of pursuing some of the best racemares to grace America and Europe have resulted in the accumulation of a seriously powerful collection of bloodstock. That in particular relates to the Yoshida family, whose farms are homes to surely one of the strongest broodmare bands worldwide.

Such animals, the result of determination and wealth, have obviously helped play a part in making Japan a world player. But I can't help thinking that, with their desire to see older horses race on over a variety of trips, they also have the right mindset for success. For instance, nowhere in Japan will you find a colt who has retired to stud at two.

Ultimately that has to enhance the breed while undoubtedly strengthening an already appreciative fan base, which, as anyone can tell you, are two vital components to the health of the sport.



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The FBI had information about 'shenanigans at Finger Lakes'. It turned out "there was no great amount of chicanery"

True story of an 'undercover' horse who won races for the FBI

Jeff Lowe | January 21, 2019

Uncle Sam has been a well-known, constant presence at American racetracks in requiring immediate taxation on certain big betting scores. But who would have guessed that Uncle Sam also has been a winning Thoroughbred owner?

2019 marks the 30th anniversary of a case involving the Federal Bureau of Investigation that centered on Finger Lakes racetrack in upstate New York, where the FBI actually campaigned an ‘undercover’ racehorse during much of 1989.

The horse, a 4-year-old filly named Zachregard, did not exactly blend in: she won her first two races after being acquired privately by the bureau in Ohio in April 1989 and shipped to Finger Lakes to race at the \$3,000 claiming level. Between May and November, Zachregard raced 15 times for an owner listed as ‘M Grace’, posting three wins and five placings and earning just shy of \$9,000.

‘M Grace’ was the alias for an undercover agent whose real name was Mike Glass, according to Dale Anderson, who supervised the FBI’s Rochester agency in that period. Now long retired and with sharp recall of what he considered to be a unique case, Anderson shared details about the operation for the first time publicly.

“We had a source in Syracuse that told us that there were some shenanigans going on at Finger Lakes, maybe some doping of some of the horses or jockeys holding horses back,” Anderson said. “We brought in Mike Glass to start hanging around Finger Lakes. He had done a lot of undercover work and he knew a lot about gambling.

“After about two or three weeks, he told us, ‘I think I

know the right guys, and they like me, okay, but I am kind of on the outside of their group. We talk trash and hang around the bar together and stuff, but the problem is that I need to have a reason to be there.’ That made sense, and there was an agent in Louisville who had a source to buy this horse for around \$3,000.

“Mike Glass told these guys at the track that he won the horse in a poker game in Las Vegas or somewhere. After that, it worked better because Mike had a reason to be hanging around. He was part of the ‘in crowd’. What surprised us is that the horse ended up being competitive. She won some races and was usually getting a check if she didn’t win, so we made a little money between racing her and then selling her at the end of the year.”

Robert Fieldhouse trained Zachregard for Grace/Glass but had no knowledge of the horse’s real reason for being there, Anderson said.

Lack of evidence

The investigation did lead to indictments against two other trainers and a jockey that federal prosecutors based on the performance of a horse named Shine Please, alleging that the 2-year-old colt was held in its debut race at Finger Lakes in September 1989. A federal judge threw out the charges at trial in July 1990, citing a lack of evidence.

Around the same time, the Boston Herald ran a report on the undercover operation and the

participation of an FBI-owned horse, which was picked up in newspapers around the country, although the bureau would not confirm details at the time, other than referring to the probe “as the first successful use of a horse in an undercover racetrack operation by the FBI”.

Today, Anderson says he and his agents concluded there was no widespread conspiracy to fix races at Finger Lakes.

“There was no great amount of chicanery,” he said. “It was a pretty straight-up deal. It was also true that occasionally there would be someone doping a horse or something like that, just like any other track probably, but it wasn’t any great ... conspiracy.”

Anderson worked for the FBI in various places, including the national headquarters in Virginia, over a 26-year career but said this was the only case he came across that utilized a racehorse.

“After it was finished, a good friend of mine who I worked with at headquarters was in the FBI director’s office and the director [William Sessions] wanted to know a little more about the case, so we got a photo of Zachregard and sent it to him, since it was the FBI’s horse,” Anderson said.

“Looking back, the whole thing is kind of amusing. Sports Illustrated even ran a short article about it. They had a cute little cartoon drawing of a horse standing on its hind legs, wearing a trench coat, with an FBI badge on it.”

“Mike Glass told these guys at the track that he won the horse in a poker game in Las Vegas or somewhere. After that, it worked better because Mike had a reason to be hanging around. He was part of the ‘in crowd’...”




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THE 1351 TURF SPRINT	4YO+	1351m (6 3/4f)	\$1,000,000	\$600,000	TURF
THE DIRIYAH DIRT MILE	3YO	1600m (1m)	\$800,000	\$480,000	DIRT
THE NEOM TURF CUP	4YO+	2100m (1m 2.5f)	\$1,000,000	\$600,000	TURF
THE OBAIYA ARABIAN CLASSIC	4YO+	2000m (1m 2f)	\$1,900,000	\$1,140,000	DIRT
THE RED SEA TURF HANDICAP	4YO+	3000m (1m 7f)	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	TURF
THE SAUDI CUP	4YO+	1800m (1m 1f)	\$20,000,000	\$10,000,000	DIRT

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How so many things in U.S. racing seem designed to harm the horse

Patrick Gilligan | NOVEMBER 25, 2019



Safer surface? Newcastle's Tapeta racetrack in North-East England is the largest synthetic racecourse in the world (a mile-and-seven-furlong oval). It stages up to 90 days' racing each year. Photo: Tapeta Footings

Patrick Gilligan, a former Newmarket racehorse trainer who moved to Kentucky five years ago, reflects on the state of American racing as he sees it.



Gilligan (above), who was a 'small-time' trainer in the UK for 15 years, moved to the U.S. so his son could pursue his goal of becoming a jockey. He wrote a book - Around Kentucky with the Bug - about their first year in the U.S. It was a 2019 finalist for the Dr Tony Ryan Award for the Castleton Lyons racing book of the year.

Gilligan, 54, who has an honors degree in equine studies, has just spent two years working as an assistant to Kentucky trainer Kenny McPeck. Meanwhile, son Jack, 23, who served his apprentice year with Sir Mark Prescott in Newmarket, is beginning to make a mark on the U.S. Midwest circuit, with 35 winners this year and prize money over \$1.6 million. He is currently in New Orleans preparing for the coming meet at Fair Grounds.



You don't need to be an expert in equine biomechanics to understand that horses – who are designed to run more or less in straight lines - are likely to be harmed by the repetitive, unrelenting galloping left-handed on a daily basis.

In some ways, 2019 has been an 'annus horribilis' for North American racing. The New Year brought a spate of racing and training fatalities at Santa Anita, and unfortunately the Breeders' Cup there ended with another. The Kentucky Derby winner was disqualified, and the Triple Crown never got going. But sometimes, when things have not gone well, it gives us pause to reflect, to reconsider, perhaps even to question ourselves.

I didn't understand when we first moved to the U.S. from Britain why people would ask me how I felt about my son doing such a dangerous job.

We don't think of being a flat jockey in Europe as a dangerous occupation. Jump jockey yes. Flat rider no. We know they can get hurt, we know it can be bad, but it is so rare that the risk seems remote.

Within a few months of being here, a 16-year-old boy was killed at a meet Jack was riding at.

I have been in North America for five years now, and I have known of jockeys being killed or paralyzed, of exercise riders being killed. In those five years, getting on for 3,000 horses will have died too - on the racetrack. And well over a 1,000 would die during training in the mornings.

Now I know what people are talking about when they ask me how I feel about my son doing this job.

Why is the injury rate in North America anywhere up to five times higher than where I came from in the UK? Having spent the past

couple of years working as assistant to a Kentucky-based trainer, I have some thoughts on the matter.

Horses 'likely to be harmed'

I don't really know how to put this, so I will be blunt. There is hardly anything done, either in the training or racing of the young Thoroughbred here, that is not seemingly designed to harm the horse in some way.

I have to start with the track - the strict diet of left-hand galloping, day after day, after day.

You don't need to be an expert in equine biomechanics to understand that horses – who are designed to run more or less in straight lines - are likely to be harmed by the repetitive, unrelenting galloping left-handed on a daily basis. And then they start breezing left-handed, flat out around a turn, placing more torsional stress on the pastern and cannon bone.

Studies done suggest up to 90 percent of catastrophic fractures showed evidence of pre-existing repetitive stress injury.

And they do all this left-hand galloping on dirt. Dirt is an early 19th-century innovation, and the horses who first raced on dirt tracks would undoubtedly have been coarser, more common, sturdier, slower and more mature animals than the evolved sleek modern 2-year-old Thoroughbreds being asked to race and train on it today.

'The horse has evolved to run on grass'

The dirt surface is at odds with the design of the Thoroughbred's lower limb. The horse has evolved to run on grass. To escape its predators

through swift flight over grassy plains.

Turf has a degree of elasticity, of recoil. As the horse's foot hits the turf at a full gallop, the turf gives, the hoof spreads fractionally, and the horse's fetlock lowers, almost touching the ground. The flexor tendons are extended and taut. And then the turf springs back, the hoof contracting, and the fetlock spring back aided by the tendons, the stored mechanical energy in the extended tendons suddenly released.

There is no bounce from a dirt surface, the horse's leg just hits it, time after time, two and a half times a second when breezing or racing, and the dirt does nothing to help the horse spring forward into its next stride at all.

I never had a single 2-year old tear a tendon in 15 years training in the UK. Serious tendon injuries in 2-year olds in Europe are virtually unheard of.

I have seen plenty of really nice unraced or hardly raced 2-year-olds finished due to tendon injuries in America. Finished before they ever even got going. I have seen more fractures also, and more serious fractures. More fatal fractures.

I am sure there will be considerable variability in injury rates across different trainers. Some seem better than others at spotting the early-warning signs of a horse possibly brewing up for a catastrophic injury.

But I also have little doubt that it is the dirt surface they train and race on that causes most of the harm.

*More than one trainer has told me bute “steps them up”.
You don’t want them to step up. There is no
competitive advantage, because every horse in the
race is treated the same.*

The production of dirt horses

I wonder what professional sports trainers in other disciplines would make of the mucky, waterlogged sludge the horses gallop through on a wet morning, what they would think when they saw what these million-dollar athletes train on.

There is an argument that the North American Thoroughbred breeding industry is predicated on the production of dirt horses.

Well, aside from the fact the U.S. turf program is growing rapidly anyway, the last two Triple Crown winners, American Pharoah and Justify, have been covering mares in Australia, where there are no dirt races. Kentucky Derby winner Northern Dancer is the most influential turf sire of modern times. American Pharoah is the sire of one of the UK’s top turf 2-year olds this year. In short, dirt sires are perfectly capable of producing quality turf runners.

So many dangers

Let’s move on. Toe grabs. They are unnecessary and dangerous if horses clip heels – quite probably the cause of that 16-year-old rider’s death. And studies and common sense say they probably predispose to injury.

Claiming races - there is moral hazard there. There is temptation for an unscrupulous trainer to run a horse with some injury as a means to try to sell it. Nowhere else does this temptation really exist. There is little incentive in any other racing arena I can think of to run an injured horse.

Race-day medication, specifically Bute and Lasix. Horses are trained left-handed day after day on an unforgiving surface, and there is sometimes incentive to run them even if they are so injured the trainer knows they cannot win. Strong painkillers complete this toxic fatal cocktail. And these are strong painkillers.

I have been surprised, shocked even, at what effect pre-race administration of anti-inflammatories has on many horses. How good it makes them feel. How they now really want to run. That is not good. It is not good at all to add a nitrous oxide injection to a \$5,000 car with a wonky chassis. It may briefly hit 130mph on the highway. But, by the time it gets back to the garage, it will be a smoking wreck with its wheels hanging off.

More than one trainer has told me bute “steps them up”. You don’t want them to step up. There is no competitive advantage, because every horse in the race is treated the same.

‘Bleeding in horses is not a problem that requires fixing’

In fact it is worse than that. It actually only really provides an advantage to the trainer who brings the horse to the race in a poor condition. That horse’s performance will benefit more from pre-race painkillers than one brought sound and feeling well. How is that good? But still, they all run a bit harder, further increasing their chances of a sudden injury. And they come back often sorer than they would have been if they hadn’t been treated, if they hadn’t pushed themselves quite so hard.

Lasix is a diuretic used to lessen the severity of bleeding. It eliminates

water in the horse, lowers its weight and, whether through that mechanism or another unknown one, studies suggest it can increase a horse’s racing time by one second (around seven lengths). See previous paragraph as to why that is a problem.

I have said before that bleeding in horses is not a problem that requires fixing. I trained a horse that first bled as a 3-year old. It won a Graded stakes as an 8-year-old. He ran 69 races for me. He is 26 now. I never medicated him for bleeding, for racing or training.

He is grazing in a paddock in Kentucky now. He has cost us an arm and a leg and remains in rude health.

Minor bleeds are not a serious health or welfare issue. If the horse bleeds to an extent it negatively impacts performance, tough. That animal is not fit for purpose. Retire it, find it another life. Do not breed from it. The old adage is breed the best to the best and hope for the best - not breed the unsound bleeder to the unsound bleeder and find some stronger meds.

The combination of Bute and Lasix treatment has another consequence, - ironically one they were introduced to combat.

They were brought in to keep horses racing more regularly and so help maintain field sizes. Lasix dehydrates the horse, and both drugs tend to enable the horse to run harder and faster than it would without those drugs. Add in the often very hot conditions horses run in the USA and it is perhaps not surprising that starts per year per horse have declined ever since pre-race

medication was introduced.

It takes horses longer to recover from their races, because they have run harder on a tough surface and are dehydrated.

And the public looks on with mistrust and distaste, and now I have to say, to the Stronach Group, to Churchill Downs Inc, to CHRB (California Horse Racing Board), to KHRC (Kentucky Horse Racing Commission), to NYRA (New York Racing Association), what don't you get?

Race-day medications should have gone long ago. For the perception of the sport. For the short-term welfare of horse and rider. For the long-term integrity of the Thoroughbred breed.

Racing's duty of care

Tapeta is becoming recognized as perhaps the safest of all racing and training surfaces. When technology comes along that can make something dangerous a lot safer, it should be adopted. Tapeta was developed by a lifelong horseman; Michael Dickinson was a champion jump jockey and trainer in Europe who went on to become a Breeders' Cup-winning trainer in North America.

He is a compulsive man who has made it his mission to develop the safest and best racing surface possible, a man who exports his surface to racetracks and training centres around the world. He is here, in our backyard, and is virtually ignored.

It was just over a year ago when exercise rider Odanis Acuna was killed along with the horse he was

riding at Churchill Downs. This will be his children's second Christmas without their father, his wife's second Christmas without her husband. All their Christmases to come will be without him. In my opinion, he would probably be alive now if Churchill Downs had a synthetic surface then.

I don't know how badly that weighs on the mind of Churchill execs. I hope it does. It should, if for no other reason than there is nothing to say that something like that can't happen in the Kentucky Derby. And that, as they say, would be pretty much that.

Racehorses are big, strong animals with very small brains. We have a duty to watch out for the welfare of these creatures we ask to do so much for us. We have a duty to watch out for the riders too.

Let the new coalition not be merely a PR exercise

I hope, for all these reasons that the recently formed Thoroughbred Safety Coalition is more than the public relations exercise some are concerned it is. I genuinely hope it is going to be a determined force for good. But I worry.

All the statistics show synthetic is vastly safer than dirt, and studies and common sense tell us to eliminate pre-race medication. Anyone with a basic knowledge of the horse's anatomy should be able to work out that running around in circles on dirt will harm them.

Yet there are rumblings already from top horsemen in Californian racing that this is what they want to keep doing, in spite of being in the

heart of the storm, watching horses, trainers and jockeys leaving California, watching field sizes and purse money and attendances dwindle.

I understand concerns regarding previous issues with synthetics in the California heat, but they are safe, and they are better now. And I know in one sense I am committing heresy even suggesting dirt racing could be abolished in North America. Suggesting slavery should end started a war. You would be surprised at the changes that people will rail against. It doesn't mean they shouldn't happen.

The reintroduction of racing on the newer improved synthetic surfaces and the elimination of race-day medication could cut catastrophic injury rates by two thirds, studies and statistics suggest (and possibly more than that - the latest Tapeta tracks installed in the UK are recording catastrophic injury rates that are virtually zero).

Fewer injured horses and fewer exhausted horses means more horses in trainers' barns, more training fees, fuller fields, more gambling, more money to purses. And fewer dead horses.

It also means jockeys and exercise riders are kept safer.

With all the purse money that can be won by good horses in the U.S., I don't see why any owner would want to risk their elite athletes on an inferior surface when a superior, safer alternative exists.

Yes, all this would change North American racing. It would be slightly different, but it would be modernized, more progressive, more sanitized, and more virtuous than it is now.

*Race-day medications should have gone long ago.
For the perception of the sport. For the short-term welfare
of horse and rider. For the long-term integrity of the
Thoroughbred breed.*

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What They're Thinking: **Luca Cumani: how I'd kill off the whip issue at a stroke**

Nicholas Godfrey | August 27, 2019

Family business: Luca Cumani is interviewed on ITV by his daughter, racing presenter Francesca, at Doncaster last year. Photo: Dan Abraham/focusonracing.com



Dual Derby-winning trainer Luca Cumani retired at the end of last year after a 43-year career.

One of the most respected figures in British racing, the son of champion Italian trainer Sergio Cumani moved to Newmarket in his early 20s to work for Henry Cecil before moving out on his own in 1976 at Bedford House in Newmarket. He went on to train a multitude of high-profile horses, among them seven European Classic winners, highlighted by Derby victors Kahyasi (1988) and High-Rise (1998).

Revered as an international-racing pioneer, Cumani has saddled notable winners on four continents, among them Barathea, who won the Breeders' Cup Mile in 1994, Japan Cup hero Alkaased and renowned globetrotters Falbrav and Presvis. He trained G1 winners in 11 different countries altogether, first coming to international prominence via Tolomeo's victory in the Arlington Million in 1983.

Now 70, Cumani runs Fittocks Stud in Newmarket alongside his wife, Sara.

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

As an Italian, who would you expect me to say? What Federico Tesio achieved in his lifetime was remarkable – especially as he was owner, trainer and breeder of all those horses [among them 22 Derby Italiano winners, headed by unbeaten champion Nearco; Tesio died just before the debut of his masterpiece, the great Ribot]. It is hard to think of a more influential figure; he influenced the breed worldwide.

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

For the race, I'd have to say the Derby at Epsom. Winning the Derby is still what every aspiring trainer, jockey, owner or breeder dreams of. I think it's still the number one race everybody wants to win.

The venue is more difficult because the world is a big place so I have four answers. In England, I cannot split Royal Ascot and York. Everybody around the world knows Royal Ascot but York is also unique.

Abroad it is Santa Anita – when they get the surface right – and Flemington, despite all our near misses in the Melbourne Cup! It is the biggest racing event in the world, and it's fantastic to witness the enthusiasm and anticipation

for the whole of Australia. Santa Anita is a wonderful setting: the weather's always glorious and the backdrop of mountains is spectacular.

3. What is your fondest memory in racing?

I'm lucky enough to have so many wonderful memories, but if I must pick one it's my first Derby with Kahyasi (see video below). He was the Aga Khan's second string and when you're considered the underdog, there's more satisfaction when you win – though I've always tried not to consider myself the underdog. You have to be positive in this game.

Winning my first race as an amateur rider aged 13 at Treviso was also something I'll never forget, and obviously the first winner with my name in the trainers' column, which was the Duke of York Stakes in 1976 with a strangely named horse called Three Legs.

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

Staffing levels are the biggest problem for training yards – we are definitely near crisis point – and that is directly related to the funding of racing [in England]. Obviously the ability of trainers to look after their staff more is related to the

amount of money they have at their disposal, whether that pays for free time because they can employ more people, or housing, all things that cost money. The money's got to come from somewhere, so we're talking about prize money and it all gets passed down.

It is really very difficult to recruit and retain staff given the amount of work we ask them to do and the amount of money we pay them. As in anything, you get what you pay for.

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

I would kill the whip issue in one stroke. It's been going on for far too long and attracts negative publicity; it's to kill it off by making the jockeys responsible for it because they're the only ones who can change it.

The only answer is harsher punishment for jockeys who break the rules: the first time they break it, they get a one-month suspension; the second time, they get two months; the third time, three months. They'd soon stop doing it, that's for sure. At the moment the punishment is not a sufficient deterrent but it would be absolutely unjust to punish the owner, trainer and staff who look after the horse [via disqualification] because they haven't broken the rules. According to natural justice, you never condemn an innocent man.



22 December 2019

Jockeys

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Frankie Dettori	Great Britain	1096
2	Ryan Moore	Great Britain	1083
3	Christophe-Patrice Lemaire	Japan	1071
4	Joel Rosario	USA	1045
4	Mike E Smith	USA	1045
6	William Buick	Great Britain	1044
7	Zac Purton	Hong Kong	1041
8	Hugh Bowman	Australia	1038
9	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1037
10	Javier Castellano	USA	1031
11	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1028
12	Flavien Prat	USA	1025
13	James McDonald	Australia	1022
14	Mickael Barzalona	France	1021
15	Pierre-Charles Boudot	France	1019

Owners

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Godolphin	Australia	1084
2	Coolmore Partners	Ireland	1060
3	Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum	Great Britain	1050
4	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	USA	1045
5	U Carrot Farm	Japan	1029
6	Silk Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1028
7	Madaket Stables Et Al	USA	1022
8	Magic Bloodstock Et Al	Australia	1020
9	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1019
9	White Birch Farm / Peter Brant Et Al	USA	1019
11	Klaravich Stables Et Al	USA	1014
12	Danox Co Ltd	Japan	1009
13	Michael Dubb Et Al	USA	1006
14	Peters Investments Et Al	Australia	1005
14	WinStar Farm Et Al	USA	1005

Trainers

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	John Gosden	Great Britain	1083
2	Chad C Brown	USA	1078
3	Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	1076
4	Bob Baffert	USA	1051
5	Aidan O'Brien	Great Britain	1050
6	Andre Fabre	France	1026
7	James Cummings	Australia	1021
8	Steven Asmussen	USA	1020
9	Chris Waller	Australia	1018
10	Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	1017
11	Saeed bin Suroor	UAE	1015
12	Brad H Cox	USA	1009
13	John Size	Hong Kong	1006
14	John Moore	Hong Kong	1004
15	Jamie Richards	New Zealand	997

Sires

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Dubawi	Great Britain	1082
2	Galileo	Ireland	1064
3	Sea The Stars	Great Britain	1048
4	Shamardal	Great Britain	1046
5	Frankel	Great Britain	1044
6	Lord Kanaloa	Japan	1038
7	Deep Impact	Japan	1037
8	Scat Daddy	USA	1030
9	Pierro	Australia	1029
10	I Am Invincible	Australia	1027
11	Curlin	USA	1024
12	Lookin At Lucky	USA	1022
12	Zoustar	Australia	1022
14	Lope De Vega	Australia	1021
15	Teofilo	Australia	1020