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The David Allan Column



So then, why don't you go racing?

YOU – a racing person - might reply “Of course I go racing”! But you would be one of relatively few who populate our South African racecourses.

This is not new news. But we find that people of any background –who can afford in all senses to go to sports events – think it is all about gambling and “don't want to know”.

Horses as beautiful athletes participating in sports competition do not seem to “grab” the potential fan base. Prawns grab. Such initiatives are very worthy efforts. But not promoting the racing itself.

When looking at the UK situation for some sort of perspective, we must not compare apples with oranges. That is there and this is here. Yes. But horse racing is horse racing. And not only for the big days.

Over six million people went racing in UK in 2015. That is an average of 4,250 people at each race meeting – 7 days a week, several per day, all within a small, heavily populated country - ranging from tens of thousands on major days to less than a thousand on a dull Wednesday at a little track where fans have nevertheless paid the equivalent of 350-600 rand just to get in.

Summer weather – contrary to popular barb – is usually a gorgeous accompaniment to the Great Day Out culture. In the winter, small racecourses that operate jumping only are often packed to the rafters with overflowing car parks.



Chepstow Racecourse in South Wales—just another race day.

Their patrons may be getting very wet (but only on the outside of rain clobber) or are wearing their favourite winter coats, scarves and gloves and downing a hot whisky.

But for much of the year in South Africa, it is seriously hot. Wandering around outside for more than a few minutes at a time is not everyone's first choice activity. Air-conditioning is preferred whether in easy-access betting halls and refreshments outlets or in boxes and restaurants. Huge grandstands absorb people behind glass, with or without a balcony and compartmentalise them in boxes.

All the more joyous, then for the South African new to racing to be able to go into the Parade Ring with hosts, or with racecourse guides or to stand alongside it and take in the magnificence of our equine athletes, and their vividly clad riders who may in-

clude a star jockey or two or three. Some of them will become owners or members. Some of them will make the next generation that we so badly need right across the industry.

How about incentivising existing owners to bring at least three guests every time they race?

But for now, taking the family racing or having your hen party on a racecourse or just rocking up with a bunch of friends is not high on lists of preferred recreations.

Why? Is it really because it is conceived to be all about gambling? If so that's a shame. It is a brilliant sport with equine and human participants each with their story, competing much as human athletes do whether that be in a major stadium or at a local event.

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But nobody takes their seat in an athletics stadium and contemplates an each-way bet on the 5,000 metres. If the slogan at your local athletics stadium were "Track and Field - It's a Rush" what would that signify?

The notion that less than half the people on UK racecourses have a bet is probably flawed. But even if it is 75-80%, we can be sure of three facts: (i) the other 20-25% don't bet (ii) plenty of the 75-80% don't bet on every race, or only do a Jackpot or Placepot with friends while they concentrate on enjoying the day and the sport and – most significantly (iii) most of the 75-80% only ever bet when they go racing. In other words they treat it as part of the fun on the day, to take or leave.

That fun is in looking at the horses in the parade ring and making up your mind – whether actually betting or just predicting or willing your own favourite to win. For some, shopping around in the betting ring for the difference between 3/1 and 11/4 is also part of the fun, as well as important to professional gamblers who are rarely to be sighted but are "there". While most racing professionals don't care a hoot about exact odds, arithmetic ability in punting and getting better odds than your mate can feature in contrast to the relatively mindless "whatever" odds that result from computerised betting.

Terrestrial TV broadcasting of a whole afternoon's racing at one, sometimes two, courses is the biggest single "introducer" of people to racing. The satellite/cable channels do a different job with a stronger betting focus, dodging around from track to track with few frills and less opportunity to broadcast atmosphere. They are not free-to-air and are therefore out of reach of the majority who anyway would not subscribe.

Mind you, Tellytrack has a better position than (say) Racing UK being "included" in many DSTV packages and we know that its managers are looking to broaden the appeal of its broadcasts.

A top, highly respected trainer recently called for ITV – to which terrestrial racing broadcasting is returning with more live days' racing to be shown than any other live sport in the country - to drop all betting coverage from its broadcasts. He was exaggerating to make his point which was/is that it is a turn-off for many sports fans. The bookies squealed but a surprising (but minority) amount of support was expressed.

As it is, betting has a limited "expert" slot before each race and graphics will show starting prices, but the focus on the horses and their people goes way beyond the number cloth and a set of odds. –tt.



At the races: Goodwood.



KLAWERVLEI  STUD



CTS Ready To Run Sale: 24/5 November

Photo Album by Brent Abrahams



It was all rainy at the CTS R2R Sale last Thursday and Friday, but buyers came in droves and the sale turned over just short of R35-million. Photos: At the top Andrew Fortune, Dean Alexander and Hylton Odendaal; left auctioneer Graeme Hawkins, middle James Goodman and Sandra D'Oliveira; bottom Adrian Todd of CTS and below lot 220, an Ideal World filly knocked down for R160,000. Todd said: "This has been a wonderful week for us, we thank our clients for their ongoing support!"



LOT 220	USD	11 3
MAURITZPONTEN STUUD - GUY MURDOCH	GBP	9 1
TALITHA BOREALIS	EUR	10 5
Bly by IDEAL WORLD (USA) x SWEET SEQUEL		
ZAR 160 000		
Cape Thoroughbred Sales		
0 000	LOT 211 ZAR 40 000	LOT 212 WITHDRA





Top left: Father and son team of Chesney and Gavin van Zyl; left middle are John Koster, Dean Alexander and Grant Knowles, middle right Gavin Almanza with his wife Shireen and David Hepburn Brown of Hemel N Aarde Stud. Left is Lot 25, a VAR filly that topped the sale, sold on Thursday for R1,2-million. Below are Knowles, Micaela Cross and Vicky Minott.





Chase Maujean, becoming an ace big-race rider, victorious on Singapore Sling.

Singapore Sling (13-1), loved the mile - too good for Heavenly Blue in Dingaans

THE result of the Gr3 Graham Beck Stakes over 1400m on Charity Mile Day at Turffontein pointed to a straight march between Doosra and Heavenly Blue in Saturday's Gr2 Dingaans over 1600m, but Singapore Sling (third in the Graham Beck), came to "spook" them.

While he did finish right alongside the much-vaunted pair, Geoff Woodruff's three-year-old appeared held on the Beck formline, especially as he had the additional burden of a wide draw to contend with in the Dingaans, but jockey Chase Maujean rode a patient and well-timed race.

Singapore Sling (13-1) delivered a powerful finish to win going away from Heavenly Blue (11-10 favourite) and Bold Rex (7-1), with Doosra (9-2)

beaten over four lengths over the extra 200m.

"It's the mile, he loved the mile," responded Woodruff when asked how Singapore Sling turned the form around. "He had a good 400-to-finish in the Graham Beck, was beaten under half a length that day and had every chance to reverse the form as he'd improved from that run. Chase rode a good race!"

Singapore Sling is a R225 000 Cape Premier Yearling Sale Book 1 graduate, owned by Dave and Tiaan Shawe.

Bred by Drakenstein Stud, he is by Philanthropist (who scored his first SA stakes success with She's A Giver in the Starling Stakes three weeks earlier) out of the three-time winning Western Winter mare, Sing Dixie Sing. - **tt**.

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TWICE OVER (GB)



Like father, like son

EVERYONE who sees this photo says, "Aaahh... so cute!"

It's none other than two-year-old Ashton Lerena, son of jockey Gavin Lerena, who bagged his third Summer Cup at Turffontein on Saturday aboard Geoff Woodruff's Master Sabina.

Granddad Tex tells us: "Ashton goes to the races with Gavin and Vicky, of course he is very proud of his dad and he likes to dress up beforehand. He's a true racing fan in the making!" (This photo was taken on Summer Cup morning).

Young Ashton's going to enjoy a most exciting time growing up as cucumber-cool Gavin is just getting better as a rider every day.

The former SA champion told Sporting Post that there was little doubt in his mind that he would win the Summer Cup going into the final 400m.

"Master Sabina was full of running and when the gap closed, the fact that he was going faster than the scrum was the clincher. Many horses of lesser character would have shirked – thrown their heads up or dug their toes in. Not him. He has no fear and is hungry to win!"

Gavin and Tex leave for Hong Kong next Monday, 5 December. He will be defending his title at the Longines International Jockeys' Challenge, Happy Valley Racecourse, on Wednesday, 7 December. - **tt.**

First \$1-million winner Illuminator dies of colic

ILLUMINATOR, the inaugural winner of the CTS Million Dollar in January 2016, died of complications from colic on Tuesday last week.

He was found thrashing around in his box last week and swiftly attended to by his groom in the early hours of the morning. Illuminator sustained cuts to his head and leg, and was operated on by 9am. According to distressed part-owner Ian Robinson, the surgery could not save him. "Most of his intestines were black and, after cutting, there was not enough healthy gut to re-attach. Eventually, we took him to Glen Puller's farm, gave him a shot of morphine where he passed away."



Illuminator only raced six times, starting his career by winning with a flashy closing burst at long odds in September 2015. He won his next start easily enough down the Kenilworth straight before finishing under a length behind Hard Day's Night in the Selangor Cup and three lengths off Noah From Goa in the Grade 1 Guineas. That was followed by a second place finish in the Sophomore Sprint before his heroics in the CTS Million Dollar over 1400m. - *Tab News.*