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AllanBloodlines



The David Allan Column

Pure Sport in Kazakhstan - and an extra one-day Sale (Part 1)

AFTER a gruelling sales season leaving everyone staggering, one extra sale (at Ascot) added degrees of exhaustion. But it was the least we could do for such regular clients. And it was a fun demonstration of how a small no frills sale can work. More on the sale itself next week.

For many years, I have been buying for excellent Kazakhstan clients who long ago became our good friends.

Almaty was an early stop on Marco Polo's Silk Road from China to what is now Italy. Mrs Allan – a Silk Road historian when it comes to fabrics – has been Guest of Honour there,

declaring an Almaty Racing Season open, pictured with the obligatory owl. If your mental image of locations is blurred, Kazakhstan is the 7th largest country in the world.

Almaty is in the south-east, not far from the Chinese border. The new capital Astana is 2000 km north, closer to Siberia. There are only about 16 million people who are delightfully blind to their various centuries' old ethnic origins.

Some Kazakh owners race internationally. One races in France exclusively. Another, a tax exile, has bought an historic English stud farm. Long distance travel is second nature therefore taking advantage of German, Turkish and Czech racing is fine – and running for big prizes in Moscow is a Holy Grail.

Kazakhs enjoy going a few thousand km to Moscow to try to nick the big prizes from oligarchs.

Kazakhstan's national relationship with Russia is a-political, pre-dating the Bolsheviks by a couple of hundred years or more. Many "Russian" military statues are of Kazakhs who were heroes of the Red Army and before, conscripted or otherwise. Yuri Gagarin's launch in Vostok 1 was from Kazakhstan which



A race day (with no betting) at Almaty, Kazakhstan.

was also Russia's bread basket in Napoleonic and World Wars.

For Russia, we can pay the equivalent of 2 million rand for the right horse – difficult to find, given the racing surface.

At the recent Newmarket Horses in Training Sales for Kazakhstan we bought a dozen 2 year olds ranging from 6,000 to 30,000 guineas (ZAR 110 – 550,000) which would be typical. Less at Ascot –



The author, 16000 ft above Almaty.

see next week's article.

It is not cheap to import these horses. There are no quarantines at all, but the journey is long. The enterprise involved is remarkable. We can fly them directly from Amsterdam but are having to renegotiate the airfreight which suddenly went sky high if you'll pardon the expression.

These days most drive to Poland for a break first. That is an easy run across Germany but, from there, it takes 4-7 days on generally good roads in Poland, Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan with an excursion through Kyrgystan. Crossing the Ural Mountains in winter can be a bit dodgy.

Our Kazakh friends – the owners themselves - fly 7 or 8 hours to Poland to oversee their new purchases' welfare there, then back to Almaty in time to "see them in" after the long trip. Then back to Poland for the next load.

It is an equivalent, I suppose, of a European flying to Mauritius to see horses off the plane from SA, then again off the plane in UK or France. No doubt some do or would, but the difference is 90 days in Mauritius and 5 or 6 days resting up in Poland.

Another difference is temperature! In Poland through to Kazakhstan the winter temperature would rarely rise above zero, mostly a long way below. In southern Kazakhstan where internationals go skiing, the snows in the lowlands clear by April, not unlike Hokkaido, the centre of the Japanese breeding industry.

January foals in Kentucky can be born into snow, while it can be quite parky in UK and Ireland then. Foals arriving in a chilly Western Cape Winter do so in, relatively speaking, a hot house.

In Kazakhstan, there is regular racing on two levels.

An advertisement for TellyTrack.com. The top part features the text "WATCH LIVE RACING AND REPLAYS LIVE ...AS IT HAPPENS." in large, bold, blue letters. Below this is a photograph of several horses and jockeys racing on a green track. At the bottom, there is a blue banner with the text "ON ANY DEVICE" and icons for a monitor, laptop, tablet, and smartphone, followed by "DAILY AND MONTHLY PACKAGES AVAILABLE". To the right, it says "REGISTER NOW ON" and the TellyTrack logo with the website "TELLYTRACK.COM".

One is "National Racing", the centrepiece of weekly festivals out on the Steppes. Local bred and some thoroughbreds compete at a canter over 20-35 km distances on two or three km tracks, ridden by 12 year old boys bareback with Dad often cantering alongside, withdrawing runners along the way.

At these popular events, it could be a thousand years ago but for the lines of cars. Spit roasts fill the air, while the local Danny Zukos do not comb their quiffs to be cool while revving a hot rod, but trot about on ponies covered in vividly patterned drapery reminiscent of jousting horses. Just as in Grease, the girls giggle at them.



The racing for which we buy - that you and I know for thoroughbreds - is on an earthen surface. I call it turf without the grass.

There's a lot of dust at the back once the snows have cleared and the mud dries out, but it works in a rudimentary although generally horse-friendly manner.

AllanBloodlines' purchases have won every Group 1 equivalent including all the local "classics" and a lot more. Nowadays, the sons and daughters of fillies we have sent there are racing, some of them by stallions we have sent. We *did* move one stallion all the way from South Africa which is a story all by itself.

This is pure sport. There is no betting. Almaty attendances are in and out but at the track at Pavlodar near Astana, there are full houses. Except for some major races, there is little money for owners to win but trainers are paid, vets are employed and premises are maintained.

The next Monday Column will tell you about that "extra" one-day sale at Ascot: a professional but absolutely no frills affair.

We set those purchases up as an import and sell-for-a-profit. But, businessmen though they are, our friends have already fallen in love with some of the new purchases and will keep them.



I Have No Time (by Refuse To Bend), a dual Grade 1 winner bought by AllanBloodlines for racing in Kazakhstan.



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New highs at “astonishing” HK Longines race meeting



A pyrotechnic display lit up the night sky following the last race at Sha Tin in honour of the 2016 Longines HKIR champions to bring the curtain down on a spectacular day of racing.

A vibrant and vocal crowd of 100,710 turned out at Sha-Tin in Hong Kong on Sunday to savour the four Group 1 races at the end-of-year showcase, the annual HK\$83 million Longines Hong Kong International Races. It generated an electric atmosphere. That figure was a new high for the event and 17.4% up on the previous year. Turnover for the 10-race card came in at HK\$1.518 billion.

“This was one of the most astonishing days of international racing we have seen in Hong Kong,” said Mr. Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges, the Hong Kong Jockey Club’s Chief Executive Officer.

“It’s the highest turnover ever for this day, and an increase of 4.7% on last year,” Mr. Engelbrecht-Bresges said. “But the attendance was even more pleasing, with a record for the day of more than 100,000 people, combining Sha Tin and Happy Valley. The atmosphere on course was outstanding.

“Our commingling figure was an increase of more than 40% on last year, with a figure of over HK\$72 million, which accounts for 4.8% of the day’s total turnover. This shows again that we think our strategy of world class racing, including beaming the races around the world, giving customers the opportunity to bet into the largest per-race tote pools in the world, is the right strategy.

“To give some context, 10 years ago, this meeting had turnover of just HK\$930 million and a crowd of 56,000. Our commitment to excellence and to promoting the international element of the sport has clearly been well-received by our customers, both here in Hong Kong and around the world.”

A total of 53 horses competed in the four Longines HKIR contests this year, 26 from overseas, and a total of 23 G1 winners. - *hkjc.com*.

HKJC funds Chinese Medical Centre

Partially funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust with a donation of HK\$1.3 billion, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Medical Centre will be the first in Hong Kong to offer fixed-price treatment packages that will benefit local residents, particularly the middle class.

Due for completion early in 2020 and full operation later that year, the Medical Centre will complement the Prince of Wales Hospital in providing practical training and clinical attachment for students of CUHK’s undergraduate and postgraduate medical education programmes, also healthcare professionals from other tertiary institutions.

Some 250,000 people are expected to benefit each year from the inpatient, outpatient and training facilities of the teaching hospital.

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Whyte slapped with 1-month ban

HONG Kong-based jockey Douglas Whyte was handed a one-month suspension for failing to ride out Scales Of Justice to the line in the Group 1 Kingston Town Classic more than a week ago.



Despite the support of Scales Of Justice's trainer Lindsey Smith and managing owner Chris Wells, the South African-born superstar was handed the heavy sanction on Friday, six days after the race was won narrowly by Stratum Star.

The penalty is set to begin on 18 December. The 45-year-old, who has 13 jockeys' titles to his name in Hong Kong has been advised of his rights of appeal.

Sun Met Betting is open

BETTING World has priced up for the 2017 Sun Met and are betting as follows:

- 17-10 Marinaresco
- 22-10 Legal Eagle
- 10-1 Heavenly Blue
- 14-1 Bela-Bela, Whisky Baron
- 16-1 Master Sabina
- 18-1 French Navy
- 20-1 It's My Turn, The Conglomerate
- 25-1 and upwards, others.

Fourie, Marcus making moves on SA Jockey Log

AS reported last week, the SA National Jockeys Log is shaping up to be an exciting race between a number of top jockeys in the 2016/17 season, and it's going to be worth following closely.



Richard The Great. Chasing his first title.

After the weekend, Greg Cheyne hangs on to his lead by a single winner over Andrew Fortune, but both Richard Fourie (8 winners last week) and Anton Marcus (6 winners last week), have moved up the table into strong challenging positions, while Anthony Delpech broke his collarbone and will be dropping down the log over the next few weeks.

Lyle Hewitson (36 winners), holds an easy lead on the Apprentice Log, seven winners clear of Callan Murray, who is riding in Australia and finished fourth on his first mount today.

The latest Top 10

- Greg Cheyne (63)**
- Andrew Fortune (62)
- Anthony Delpech (59)
- Craig Zackey (59)
- Richard Fourie (57)
- Anton Marcus (53)
- Gavin Lerena (52)
- Muzi Yeni (49)
- Randall Simons (44)
- JP van der Merwe (42) - tt



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