



The accuracy of registrations and notes on the grass roots

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ON Saturday, we had eight meetings in UK/Ireland to keep an eye on, Greyville, Turffontein and Kenilworth ran simultaneously with the focus on the Vodacom July. The focus was so great, that systems around the country have adopted the great occasion on behalf of other venues.

In published results (Tabonline for example), Race 6 at Kenilworth and Race 7 at Turffontein were both the Vodacom Durban July. The race was also run at Greyville. Presumably this flows from an information feed connected to showing the race at those two other venues.

The triplication flows into the usually superb Formgrids

website. And gets tripled again. Solving for “Silvano”, MARINARESCO is shown as winning on the day nine times, three at each of the day’s racing venues. The same applies to other finishers in the race.

This is not originated by Formgrids. The operators of this excellent site are extremely responsive and will surely sort it out. But for surveying a stallion’s performances, their site and other databases do not need those glitches through outside input. It unlikely that the Belmont Stakes in the USA would show doubled or tripled up on results pages for other racecourses. So there is a glitch in the system with an absence of discerning human observation to correct it. In racing, there is no such thing as a weekend.

Does this matter? Yes. Not only is it a step or two away from excellence, but this kind of thing flows internationally – immediately and digitally. The culture of accuracy across a bloodstock industry is essential to maintain. More international bloodlines are finding their way into South Africa which can only be good. Part of our ambition is to have SA bloodlines, thus mixed and mingled, moving overseas more frequently in the achievement of actual recognition through high quality performance and involvement in good quality breeding.

To maintain our essential Part 1 status, the culture of accuracy is crucial. The fact that some horses in SA bear the same names as some in (say) UK and Ireland is not “wrong” because the different suffix saves *(to page 2)*

“Stakes races in Part I countries are given Graded/Group or Listed status by the International Cataloguing Standards Committee. The first three finishers in Part I stakes races receive “black type” and also carry the respective code of the race.”

DAVID ALLAN (..cont)

the day. (Although it is at least weird when the name is a high profile racehorse in those countries).

But we nowadays are seeing horses imported to SA having (say) an AUS suffix but the same name as another AUS suffixed horse in Australia. Other cases are showing up with the AUS progeny of a mare having been named and raced in SA but reported overseas as being unnamed, therefore unraced.

Occasionally, a particular son of a mare appears twice, once as a winner and once as unraced, due to registration confusion over north/south foaling dates. This is dangerous to status, not to mention fouling up the international records of mares with cataloguing consequences. We can see exactly how this arises and a colleague is putting in a lot of hours to help unravel.

[A general point in this involves the quality and quantity of young people coming into the horse racing sport and business. I have written extensively about this before and will not “bang on” again here.](#)

However, the fact is that the heart, soul, joy and *raison d'être* is the horse him or herself. The people at grass roots who join us in this brilliant theatre of operations are mostly motivated by being involved with him, her and all of them. They may be looking for an admin or commercial career or hands-on horse husbandry as their starting point.

On Saturday, at Chester, Newmarket, Windsor and York there were afternoon meetings as well as Newcastle where last week's featured team of Tom Queally and James Fanshawe won the historic Northumberland Plate before a big Geordie crowd. On the sunny evening north and south, they also raced at Doncaster and Lingfield. On The Curragh, there was the important matter of the Irish Derby. All had big crowds being encouraged to observe and recognise the hundreds of stable staff looking after the runners.

“Stable Staff Week” has started. The industry and sport makes a greater effort to recognise the individuals who make it all happen.



Best Turned Out Awards are increased in Stable Staff week.

They get up early, ride out in all weathers, muck out and groom. They live, eat, sleep and breathe around the handful of horses that they, alone, look after day in day out.

For many owners, the time they have with the person who looks after their horse is the best time of all. It often happens after exercise early in the morning when, dismounted and untacked, the horse is given a pick of grass and a good roll by his or her carer. Owners are encouraged to wander out to join in. It is a far less nervy time than being on the racecourse together.

Most grooms light up when the owner discusses the horse with them. So do the owners, knowing that their conversation partner would do this a million miles ahead of working in a neon-lit building packing or filing something or serving random members of the public.

[The catalyst is the shared experience and shared space with half a ton of generally pleasant, often magnificent animal who tries hard for you. Horses take these guys round the country and sometimes round the world.](#)

Having this week highlighting stable staff is a little self-serving because there is a shortage. Just as well-educated, eloquent Filipina nurses are the backbone of health services – by special UK visa arrangements overcoming the difficulty in employing non-EU citizens – so were rules established for Indians and Pakistanis to supplement UK racing yard workforces. Many of them were very good and good fun

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SA +27(0)21 828 9288 | SA mobile +27(0)72 740 9061
UK +44(0)1252 646611 | UK mobile +44(0)7774 697640
davidallan@allanbloodlines.com | www.allanbloodlines.com





Groom Kathryn brings Heartache into the winner's enclosure after the Queen Mary at Ascot.

but that loophole has been closed, at least until Brexit actually happens.

So those who are now increasingly stretched are being made a big fuss of. Good thing. From high profile ways in front of racegoers and TV audiences; to substantial awards for further education; to Willy Wonka Golden Tickets to be found around the courses with healthy shopping vouchers and other treats; to goodies from racecourses to take home. Plus free ice cream for them all at York! Plus lots of press.

Last week at Royal Ascot, Kathryn Kuczko-Roy turned (her own words) "into mush" as she brought her pride and joy HEARTACHE in from winning the Queen Mary (2yo fillies, Group 2). The ITV team hit exactly the right note in a joyful, teary interview. Lumps in throats all round, on and off the course.

On July Day, but at Doncaster in the evening, *AtTheRaces* cameras picked up on a jockey-sized young woman holding a lead rein bouncing up and down watching ART OBSESSION overhauling the leaders to win a sprint handicap, then sprinting herself to greet him and bring him in. The director got it right, sending the presenter to have a chat with her as she and her huge charge both blew hard, hugging happily in the Winner's Enclosure.

If viewers had not previously grasped the dedication, emotion and joy involved in doing that job, they most certainly "got it" after that conversation. - tt.



The hard work invariably happens behind the scenes.

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