

Regional Success Stories

Examining the background of more top 10 sires

In last month's issue of *OBI*, I took a look at the racing performance of recent top ten sires on *The Blood-Horse's* General Sires List. Since nearly all of those stallions were based in Kentucky, I thought it might be instructive to look at stallions that topped the charts in the regional markets, namely California, Florida, Maryland/Mid-Atlantic, and New York.

For the Kentucky-based stallions, I went back 10 years and found that there had been 48 different stallions that had made the top 10 in terms of progeny earnings. Dealing with four regions, I was able to get a large enough sample going back only five years. That period of time yielded 76 different stallions that were among the top 10 in progeny earnings in the lists compiled by each of those four states.

Juvenile form

Going into this research, I made some assumptions that proved to be false. It seemed logical that there would be more stallions in the regional markets who flashed early talent, but for one reason or another did not train on. Therefore, I assumed there would be more strictly juvenile stakes winners this time around.

However, of the 32 stallions that were juvenile stakes winners, only three did not go on to win a stakes at three or older. So 90% of the regional top 10 stallions that were stakes winners at two went on to win another stakes as older runners. Of the 25 Kentucky stallions that were stakes winners at two, 80% did not win stakes later on.

I also thought I would find more stallions that were unraced or had race records devoid of any black-type. But of the 76 stallions that have made the top 10 in New York, California, Florida, and Maryland, only one, California's Bold Badgett did not run. Only two others, Carnivalay in Maryland and Smokester in California, failed to earn black-type of any kind.

So while 93% of the Kentucky stallions are stakes winners versus 84% of the regional studs, nearly all the stallions from both samples were at least stakes-placed. The percentage of black-type earners among the regional stallions is 96%, while the group from the General Sires List were 98% black-type earners. In other words, there were 124 stallions from both samples and only four failed to achieve at least stakes-placed status.

This was still surprising upon some reflection because sons of great stallions, from top female families, who for one reason or another weren't much on the track, seem to constitute a large portion of the stallion populations in states other than Kentucky. Furthermore, it seemed that these well bred stallions would have been given more of a chance by local breeders. It bears further research to see if these anecdotal assumptions are accurate.

Performance counts

There were other categories in which there were no surprises by any measure. As one might expect, the percentage of successful Kentucky stallions who were stakes winners is higher

than the regional stallions. Ninety-three percent of Kentucky top 10 stallions were stakes winners while 84% of the regional sires were.

There is a similar spread in terms of graded winners with 85% of Kentucky's top stallions winning such events in their racing careers compared with 73% for the crème of the regional crops. The differences in racing performance is even more pronounced in grade one ability. Sixty-six percent of Kentucky top 10 stallions were grade one winners versus only 38% in the regional markets. No surprises there.

The ages these stallions won their stakes follows a similar pattern with both the Kentucky and regional stallions. With both samples, the peak age for winning stakes was the sophomore season, with similar lower percentages as juveniles and older horses.

As noted last month, five top 10 general sires were winners of the Florida Derby and another five had won the Pennsylvania Derby. For the regional stallions, there are 10 races that were won three times. The Jockey Club Gold Cup and the Preakness are the two most prominent among them, as they've been grade ones ever since they've been grading races in North America.

Miner's Mark (who made the Mid-Atlantic top 10 as a Pennsylvania stallion after stints in Kentucky and Florida), as well as Flying Continental (California) and Waquoit (Maryland) all won Belmont Park's most important fall race for older runners. Hansel (New York), Deputed Testimony (Maryland) and Gate Dancer (Florida) all won the second jewel of the Triple Crown in their racing days.

Races that tell

Two races, the Suburban and the King's Bishop, that are grade ones now but weren't always so rated, have also produced three top 10 regional stallions. Silver Buck (Florida), Personal Flag (New York) and In Excess (California), all stalwarts of their respective regions, all also were Suburban winners.

Houston (California), Take Me Out (New York) and Housebuster (Virginia) were all King's Bishop winners before it achieved grade one status. Considering that the King's Bishop has produced several top five freshman stallions, it may be the best gauge of potential stallions going nowadays.

The 1996 running is the best example, as Honour and Glory defeated Elusive Quality with Distorted Humor back in third. Those three along with 1997 winner Tale of the Cat and 1999 winner Forestry have all ranked in the top five in their first seasons and it would be no surprise to find them among the General Sires List leaders in the near future. **JOB**

by
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