

Big Guns Blazing

Promising starts for Fusaichi Pegasus, Giant's Causeway

by
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It's still early, but so far so good for the cream of this year's promising freshman sire class. Three of the top four highest-priced stallions in the crop (based on initial stud fee) have already sired stakes winners and, six of the G1-winning members of the class of 2004 have sired stakes winners before Labor Day.

At \$150,000 Fusaichi Pegasus was the highest-priced first year stallion when he took up residence at Ashford Stud in 2001. He is thus far the sire of seven winners from only ten starters and now has two stakes horses to his credit in Shady Well Stakes winner South Bay Cove and Colin Stakes third Killenaule. His promising Maiden winner Roman Ruler will likely be the favorite in the August 15 Best Pal Stakes (G2) at Del Mar as well. FuPeg is also showing versatility as a sire, with four winners on North American dirt tracks and three winners on European grass courses.

The other big gun from Ashford/Coolmore, Giant's Causeway, has likewise come out blazing. From far more starters (24) than his stud mate, the son of Storm Cat has sired seven winners. Those include G2-winner and current 2,000 Guineas favorite Shamdaral, Group 3 winner Maids Causeway and the unbeaten Italian stakes winner Aischa. Giant's Causeway was offered to European breeders in his initial season at stud, so it's little surprise we're still waiting for his first North American winner.

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Victory Chant

Breeders' Cup Mile winner War Chant (first year price of \$75,000) has gotten off to solid start with his European runners as well. Both of his early winners (from six starters) have come across the pond, including the Speciale who broke her maiden in the Prix Yacowlef at Deauville.

Two other G1 winners on the track, Dixie Union and Golden Missile have sired stakes winners now. In fact, the first two finishers in Monmouth Park's Colleen Stakes are daughters of the former. They join Comacina, third in the Astoria earlier this summer, among the five early winners from 14 for Dixie Union.

The aptly named Inspiring looks the class of the West Coast juvenile filly division after her score in the Sorrento (G3) at Del Mar. That's just fine with the folks at Adena Springs, home of her sire Golden Missile. A G1-winner at age five, the son of A. P. Indy could have been forgiven if his get needed more time to mature and that indeed may be the case overall, as Inspiring is his lone winner from five starters.

Despite the promise shown by the aforementioned stallions they are still chasing Successful Appeal for top Freshman Sire honors. The son of Valid Appeal,

who is bound for Walmac in Kentucky for the 2005 season, has added three more winners to his total in the past month. Yes It's True continues on in second and he sired another very promising maiden winner at Saratoga in Proud Accolade. In terms of winners, Successful Appeal, Fusaichi Pegasus, More Than Ready and the Texas-based Magic Cat all share the lead with seven.

Peaking Early

While the freshman sires account for half of the top ten stallions on the overall juvenile sire list, three veteran stallions, Wheaton, Tricky Fun and Peaks and Valleys have sired a pair of stakes winners thus far in 2004.

Peaks and Valleys sired the G2 juvenile winner Dollar Bill in his first crop and the NATC Futurity winner Tym Beau from his fourth. This year his Panorama Valley beat at 12-horse field in Arlington Park's Silver Maiden Stakes and Poor Iggy took the Edmonton Juvenile in Western Canada. Overall Peaks and Valleys has sired six juvenile winners thus far in 2004.

The Phoenix Stakes, the first Grade/Group 1 juvenile stake of the season, was run at The Curraugh on August 7. Of the seven runners, four were sons of Danehill and one a grandson. At the wire, however, it was the filly Damson, by Entrepeneur, who got the money. The Phoenix failed to attract any representatives from England for the first time in five years and it will be interesting to see how its form holds up as the summer progresses.

In the states, Afleet Alex remained unbeaten in the Sanford at Saratoga, the first juvenile G2 of the year in America. The Florida-bred son of Northern Afleet, finished over five lengths clear of fellow Florida-bred Flamenco. The latter, by freshman sire Dance Master, had won Woodbine's Victoria Stakes. in his prior start. Lunarpal, who had pulled off the "Favorite Trick" by winning the three spring juvenile stakes at Churchill Downs, finished a well-beaten sixth.

The first American G2 for fillies, Saratoga's Schuyler, was won by Carson City's Classic Elegance. She rallied from far back to overtake Angel Trumpet, who is by freshman Cape Canaveral, three-parts-brother to Cape Town, and stud mate to both he and Carson City at Overbrook Farm. While Classic Elegance was visually impressive in winning her second graded event, her performance nevertheless left speed figure followers a bit skeptical. Overall, Carson City has sired 10 juvenile winners and the additional juvenile stakes horse Limited Entry. 