

Stormy Whether

Will Storm Cat's grandsons extend the sire line?

by
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With the opening of the Keeneland Spring meeting, the two-year-old racing season swings into gear. That means, of course, that we will be seeing the offspring of this year's freshman sires in competition for the first time. And, as always at this time of year, there are more questions surrounding these sires than answers

How far will the Storm Cat sire-line extend?

There is no more debating Storm Cat's sire of sires status with the likes of Giant's Causeway, Forestry, Hennessy, Tale of the Cat and Forest Wildcat. Menifee was the first grade one winning Storm Cat grandson to have runners and he has been solid, with nine stakes winners from his first three moderately-sized crops. Now we have the multiple champion Johannesburg, by Hennessy, and the grade one winning sprinter Snow Ridge, by Tabasco Cat. The Ashford-based Johannesburg is represented by 148 juveniles in 2006, the most of any in his crop. Snow Ridge stands at Padua in Florida and has 61 two-year-olds heading towards the races.

Will Unbridled's Song continue to emerge as a sire of sires?

Last year, Unbridled's Song's G1-winning son Songandaprayer ranked first in stakes winners, second in winners and fourth in progeny earnings among the 2005 first crop stallions. Unbridled's Song's other grade one winning son, Buddha, will have his first crop run in 2006. Out of a Storm Cat mare, Buddha has 133 named juveniles working for him. The Florida-based Unbridled Time, Unbridled's Song's very first stakes winner, also has a first crop of 51 foals running in 2006.

It will be interesting to watch a few others from the Fappiano sire-line in 2006. Preakness winner Red Bullet, by Unbridled, and Blue Grass Stakes (G1) winner Millennium Wind, by Cryptoclearance, have first juveniles in 2006. Two other sons of Unbridled will also have their offspring debut in 2006, the Kentucky based grade three winner Malabar Gold and the listed winner Wheelaway, who stands in New York.

Rosy future?

Can the Blushing Groom sire-line survive in North America?

Only two sons of Blushing Groom remain in Kentucky, the 21 year-old Rahy and the 27 year-old Runaway Groom. The Runaway Groom son Cherokee Run has been reasonably successful and his best son, Yonaguska, will get his chance in 2006. Winner of the Hopeful Stakes (G1) at two, Yonaguska is one of five first crop stallions with over 100 juveniles in his first crop.

The Blushing Groom grandson and Eclipse Champion Sprinter Orientate, by Mt. Livermore, is another. His crop of 117 current juveniles ranks third among his freshman peers.

Will yet another In Reality-line stallion sit atop the Freshman Sire standings at year's end?

Beginning with Honour and Glory in 2000, four In Reality-line stallions have been crowned Leading First Crop stallion this decade. That trend has a good chance of continuing in 2006 with multiple juvenile stakes winner Officer. He traces tail-male to In Reality through Bertrando, Skywalker and Relaunch and will be represented by 85 juveniles in 2006.

The Texas-based Valid Appeal son Littleexpectations will also have his first runners hit the races this spring. A stakes-winning full brother to 2001 Leading Freshman sire Valid Expectations, his runners figure to be particularly precocious, but his crop size (39 juveniles) and the regional mare pool which he bred will limit his chances to make a national impact.

Broadly speaking

Can Broad Brush be a sire of sires?

The very good stallion Broad Brush is the sire of four G1-winning colts and two of them will have their first runners in 2006. Pimlico Special (G1) winner Include appears to have the best chance to carry on

for his sire. He is been based in Kentucky at Airdrie Stud, home of such recent successes as Forest Camp and Indian Charlie (not to mention current Leading Sire, Slew City). Include hails from a family full of black-type and has a first crop of 107 juveniles.

Donn Handicap (G1) winner Mongoose, also has first runners this year. However, the Florida-based stallion has a first crop that numbers only 30.

Who will be the next Songandaprayer, Yes It's True or Successful Appeal?

Mongoose is one of seven grade one winners based in Florida who will have first runners in 2006. Red Bullet, Forbidden Apple, Scorpion, Snow Ridge, Outofthebox and Honor Glide are the others.

Freshman Sires of 2 YOS by Winners

RNK	STALLION	FOALS	STRS	WNRS	SWNRS
1 - -	-Imperial Cat	6.....	2	1.....	0
1 - -	-Invincible Spirit(IRE) 31.....	3	1.....	0	
1 - -	-Redback (GB)	16.....	2	1.....	0

This is not an especially precocious group, though. Only Mongoose was a stakes winner at two and that was in the two turn Cradle at River Downs. If any of the Florida freshman break out early it may be Snow Ridge. He was a grade one winning sprinter and was graded placed as a juvenile. Padua was responsible for developing Yes It's True and they had two stallions, Exchange Rate and Delaware Township among the top ten first crop sires in 2005. That's not to say that some of the others, especially the Frank Stronach supported Red Bullet, won't make their way to Kentucky, but it may be later rather than sooner. **JOE**



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