

Final count

Mega crops see records tumble

by

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"Johannesburg's seven first crop juvenile stakes winners also set a new standard"

The final numbers are in on the first crop stallions of 2006 with 'numbers' being the operative word. The crop set several collective and individual records and it certainly helped that a record five 2006 freshman were represented by 100 or more two year-olds in their first crops.

Street Cry had 'only' 81 juveniles in his first crop, but he clinched the freshman sire title on the strength of his Eclipse Champion son Street Sense. Overall, Street Cry's 33 runners earned \$1,852,260, the second highest total ever amassed by a first crop of two year-olds.

Johannesburg's 141 juveniles were the largest first crop every by an American stallion. So it's anything but shocking that he also set the record for most ever first crop juvenile starters with 69 and that his 26 winners were the co-highest (along with Yonaguska) in his crop. His seven first crop juvenile stakes winners also set a new standard, besting his fellow 2006 freshman Officer (six stakes winners) and surpassing Red Ransom (1994), Elusive Quality (2002) and Successful Appeal (in 2004), who all had previously sired six first crop juvenile stakes winners.

Prize winner

Pure Prize deserves a quick aside here as his five stakes winners last year put him in rare company. Including those sires listed above, the Storm Cat son is among only ten stallions that have ever had as many as five juvenile stakes winners in their first crop.

A group/grade one winner on both turf and dirt, Johannesburg had four stakes winners on the grass, including the group winners Hamoody and Rabatash. Hopeful Stakes (G1) winner Scat Daddy was among his three main track stakes winners.

The plethora of Johannesburg babies racked up a total of \$1,764,294 in progeny earnings, not quite enough for the 2006 first crop title, but that figure ranks third all-time. The incomparable Danzig remains the only stallion with first crop juvenile earnings in excess of \$2,000,000 million, a mark that has stood since 1984.

Pure Prize (\$1,276,923), Officer (\$1,270,072) and Orientate (\$1,023,547) ranked directly behind Street Cry and Johannesburg on last year's first crop standings and 2006 was the first time as many as five first crop sires surpassed the \$1,000,000 mark in progeny earnings. Again numbers were a factor.

Prior to 2006 there had been a total of five stallions with 100 or more named first crop foals. In

2006, that figure doubled as Johannesburg, Orientate, sixth ranked Include and seventh ranked Yonaguska, along with Buddha (30th), all had at least 100 two year-olds to their credit for 2006.

Stravinsky, with a first crop of 107 in 2003, is the only stallion to parlay 100 or more registered juveniles into a freshman sire title. But of the other nine, all but two ranked in the top ten and five of those placed in the top five in their respective years. Aside from Buddha, Hennessy ranked outside the top ten, but just barely. He and his 109 named juveniles checked in eleventh in 2000. So the message is clear (if it wasn't before), a big first book, equals a big first foal crop, equals a big shot to make a big splash with that those all important first runners.

The 2006 top ten first crop sires were represented by a total of 840 foals, 447 runners, and 194 winners and 33 stakes winners. In all of those categories, save for stakes winners, the 2006 group far surpassed any other freshman ten this decade.

The 33 stakes winners is actually one below the 2004 crop that included Giant's Causeway, Fusaichi Pegasus, More Than Ready, Yes It's True and Successful Appeal.

The 2004 freshman top ten also was best this decade in terms of total stakes winners to total foals percentage (5%) and total stakes winners from total runners (8.7%). The stellar crop of 2002 (Distorted Humor, Elusive Quality, Awesome Again, Grand Slam, Tale of the Cat, etc.) ranks just behind with 3.7% total stakes winners from total foals and 8.2% total stakes winners from total runners.

Looking at the percentages, the 2006 freshmen compare rather favorably with the 2002 and 2004 sire crops. The 2006 class sired 3.7% total stakes winners from total foals and 7.3% total stakes winners from total runners.

So while the class of 2006 certainly had the numbers working for them, the percentages say there has been a good amount of quality produced so far and that this may be a pretty solid group of stallions in the long term. 



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