

ARIMA RACE CLUB
RACE DAY PREVIEW
DAY 41 SATURDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2010

Derby winner comes out as turf is back

HORSES will return to battle on the turf and Derby winner Back On Top will make his grass debut when horse racing resumes at Santa Rosa Park, Arima, on Saturday following a one-week break. After doing extensive work on the turf course for the last 2 ½ months, the track looks a picture and the Arima Race Club (ARC) has scheduled racing on it for the first time since races were switched off the turf on September 11. The last event contested on the lawn was the Saturday before and that race was only one of a handful which was not switched to the main course since June 19. Rain has caused the problems with the track for many, many years, but the ARC is confident that the drainage problem has now been solved. The test will definitely come on Saturday as rain has been making regular visits to the centralised venue over the last week.

Four of the nine races have been billed for the lawn and they will be contested consecutively over a two-hour period until the penultimate event is run off at 4.20 p.m. The second-to-last race is usually the feature, but this will not be the case this time as the Turf Classic will be the sixth event on the programme and the second of the grass races. Ten locally-bred three-year-olds have been declared to run over 1,800 metres, but Back On Top and Grand Riviere are several notches ahead of the others. Neither of them has competed on the lawn before, but the same could be also said about almost all the others as Prado's Princess is the only runner in the field with turf experience. In fact, this daughter of Erewhon was victorious the first time she attempted grass and finished fourth in her only other try when going over two turns for the first time.

Still, Prado's Princess has been competing at a much lower level and will have to improve considerably to even get close to classic winners Grand Riviere and Back On Top. After scoring in her first six races of the season, Grand Riviere has finished "off the board" in both the NLCB Midsummer Classic and the Republic Bank Trinidad Derby. The Poon Tip Stud Farm-bred and owned daughter of A Great Team was thwarted by the "boys" in the final two legs of the triple crown, but had proved earlier that she could beat them when she won the opening leg - Carib Brewery Guineas - on May 30. Grand Riviere, who beat Back On Top over 1,300 metres to take the Royal Colours Classic in March, will be just \$3,000 short of \$800,000 in career earnings if she wins and collects the \$90,000 cheque. Handling the turf will definitely be the key to the outcome and connections of Grand Riviere are definitely keeping their fingers crossed that the John O'Brien-trained bay likes it more than Back On Top. This Junior Sammy-bred and owned son of Put It Back is definitely the leading West Indian-bred three-year-old in the country after producing brilliant performances in his last four races.

After winning over 1,750 metres in one of the fastest times ever recorded on the track in July, Back On Top then finished second in the "Midsummer", won the Derby and just lost second by a head when Horse of the Year Bruceontheloose won the Toyota Super Zero Caribbean Champion Stakes last time out on October 23. The Terrance Thomas-trained runner will go past \$500,000 in career earnings by finishing in the first two in the \$150,000 affair at 3 p.m. The only other horse in the field to compete more than once in the Triple Crown series was Kickupastorm, who finished right behind Grand Riviere in eighth in the Derby. This Shaffique Khan-owned and trained daughter of Storm Report also placed sixth in the Guineas and crossed the finish line third behind Grand Riviere in the last two legs of the fillies classic, the Gleneagle Stakes and Oaks Stakes.

Santa Rosa Classic hero Dionysus, who lost his jockey in the Guineas, is the only other horse to figure prominently in a top level event, but that \$100,000 contest which he won was over 1,200 metres and this speedy son of Unbridled Optimism may not appreciate the extra 600 metres. There will be a very intriguing Starter Allowance 40 minutes after the 3 p.m. Turf Classic. This looks like one of the most competitive events on the card with 14 horses declared to do battle over 1,600 metres on the turf. The field includes Champion Stakes runner-up Sound Of Thunder, Misshighoctane, Call Of The Wild, Sonata's Melody, Handsome Warrior, The Welsh Wizard, High Mass, Dream Girl, 2008 Stewards Cup runner-up Divine Bull and the top-weighted Cash It Back will also be involved if it is switched to the main course.

This is one of four HI-5 races on the card and HI-5 betting will get underway in race three with a Conditional E event involving 14 horses over 1,350 metres just after 1 p.m. The second HI-5 will be two races later and 18 horses have been declared for the \$7,500 Optional Claimer over 1,100 metres on the lawn at 2.22 p.m. The curtain will fall on the 40th round of the ARC'S 2010 Season with the fourth HI-5 betting race at 5 p.m. Three American-bred three-year-olds and nine American-bred juveniles have been declared for the 1,300-metre contest for maidens. Seven of the two-year-olds - Miss Rayana, Strikes Not Spares, Rock Movistar, Undulation, Schylers Gold, Lady Borrego and Destiny Train - will be facing the starter for the first time. There is a carry over in the Pick 6 of just over \$1,000 and this wager will begin in the fourth race - a \$20,000 Optional Claimer over 1,300 metres featuring nine contestants at 1.40 p.m.

Post time is noon.