

ARIMA RACE CLUB
RACE DAY PREVIEW
DAY 21 SATURDAY 12TH MAY 2010

'Bruce' goes for revenge

BRUCEONTHELOOSE will get the opportunity to gain revenge on the only horse to have beaten him in Trinidad when horse racing continues at Santa Rosa Park, Arima, on Saturday. But the Eric "Colt" Durant Memorial is not only about "Bruce" versus Cactus Amour as the field is overflowing with talented and dangerous horses. Sikhara comes immediately to mind as this American-bred four-year-old has won her last five starts. Also in the line up defending champion Raging Halo, Perfect Circle, winner of the Caribbean Turf Championship, the out-of-form but brilliant Stewards Cup winner Blackstone Street and the very consistent Tap To The Tune.

The \$150,000 affair is scheduled to be contested at 4.07 p.m. on the turf, but all events have been switched from the lawn to the main course over the last two race days and it looks like this will be the case again as rain has continued to drench Santa Rosa Park this week. This should be wonderful news for the connections of Bruceontheloose and Cactus Amour as the two leading horses in the country have never competed on the grass before. However a switch could make the day's feature less competitive as connections of the other top horses must feel that they have a better chance against the top two on an untried surface. And if the 1,700-metre event is removed from a waterlogged turf course and run on the dirt over 1,750 metres, the field will be trimmed to nine as two-time defending Champagne Stakes winner Raging Halo and Dream Girl will not even compete.

Also, Perfect Circle will then have no more than an "eachway" chance, while The Welsh Wizard will have no chance as compared with a place chance on the turf. Sikhara is equally proficient on either surface, but although Zamin Meah-John's horse has not put a hoof wrong for the season, she still needs to improve considerably to challenge Cactus Amour and Bruceontheloose on the main course. Blackstone Street is better on the dirt, but he has not been the same horse that won six times last year so far this season and is further compromised by the heavy burden of 57 kilos. Despite a slipped saddle, Tap To The Tune only finished a little over a length behind Cactus Amour last time out. And the Dachin Racing Stables American-bred four-year-old, who has won three times and finished second three times in his last six starts on the main course, could be the horse to challenge the top two.

However jockey Richard Perez is not expected to catch the allotted weight of 49.5 kilos and any overweight could seriously compromise his chance for an upset. Tap To The Tune raced with three kilos less than Cactus Amour on May 8, but may carry more than his conqueror this time as Perez has not "caught" 51.5 kilos (Cactus Amour's weight) in the last few weeks.

Weight could also be the issue in the battle between Bruceontheloose and Cactus Amour. In receipt of 2.5 kilos, "Bruce" beat the American-bred horse in the First Citizens Gold Cup on Boxing Day (December 26). But Cactus Amour turned the tables on February 27 when he received three kilos in the 1,800-metre Arima Race Club Cup. His advantage this time will be 2.5 kilos and the distance will be 50 metres shorter. No matter how things turn out, it is clear that they are two very special horses. Cactus Amour is unbeaten from three starts this season and has five victories and four runner-up finishes from 11 career outings.

'Bruce' has been even more spectacular, winning eight of his nine races in Trinidad - including the Republic Bank Derby, Caribbean Champion Stakes and Gold Cup - for earnings of over \$1,200,000. And last year's Horse of the Year was at his very best last time out when he broke the 1,200-metre track record in the Santa Rosa Dash on May 8. The main bout is the sixth event of the eight-race card and comes two races after the second feature. Honest Hero, who finished fourth in the Gold Cup and "Dash", looks handicapped to win this 1,350-metre Starter Allowance. The American-bred four-year-old will tote only 47.5 kilos at 2.45 p.m. but his pilot Keiran Razack - son of veteran rider Fazal - has not yet entered winners' enclosure since commencing his career a few weeks ago.

Honest Hero is the property of champion owner Allan Madoo, who will send out Proud Kentuckian - the fifth-placed finisher on debut in the Santa Rosa Dash - in the "Durant Memorial." Among the six opposing Honest Hero are Mission King, last year's Derby runner-up who will be attempting to complete a hat-trick of wins, Misshighoctane, a winner of two of her last three starts, and the consistent Luca's Gold. HI-5 betting begins the race before with ten locally-bred maidens battling over a distance of 1,350 metres and this 2.08 p.m. contest has a single-winner HI-5 bonus of \$48,515.45.

There will also be HI-5 betting at 3.27 p.m. in the fifth - a 1,350-metre event which has attracted 11 \$7,500 Optional Claimers - and curtain event a Conditional Handicap C over 1,100 metres on the turf at 5.30 p.m. The Pick 6 gets going in the second race, a 1,350-metre affair with seven declared locally-bred \$15,000 Optional Claimers at 1.26 p.m.

Post time is 12.50 p.m.