

ARIMA RACE CLUB
RACE DAY REVIEW
DAY 17 SATURDAY 8TH MAY 2010

Record-breaking 'Bruce' still the boss

RACING over 1,200 metres for the very first time in his career, Bruceontheloose toyed with a high-class field to break the track record and become the leading money spinner in the history of local racing during the 17th round of the Arima Race Club's 2010 Season at Santa Rosa Park, Arima. Connections of the other top class horses must have thought that the Horse of the Year would be vulnerable over such a sharp trip in the Santa Rosa Dash. And they certainly were not alone as just one of the combined 11 tipsters in the Guardian and Express newspapers selected Bruceontheloose to win after more than 90 per cent of them had picked him to score the other eight times he raced since coming across from Jamaica in the middle of last year.

Even the punters were skeptical as after supporting him to such an extent that he was either the 1/9 or 1/5 favourite in his previous eight starts, the grey colt ended up the marginal 9/5 favourite over Sweet Alex, Storm Street and Bristling. Bruceontheloose proved that the blistering speed of Sweet Alex was not a problem and that the brilliant youngster Bristling is not yet ready for the master. And what a way to show who is still the boss as he lowered the record which had stood for more than eight years. On August 1, 2001, Asmira had covered 1,200 metres in 1:10 2/5 seconds and the great Sugar Mike equalled the record on June 20, '03. If 'Bruce' had been pushed out by first-time rider Ronald Ali, he would certainly have shattered the old mark, but the John O'Brien-trained four-year-old ended up only marginally eclipsing the elusive mark.

He stopped the clock in a hand time of 1:10.38 (1:10 1/5), while 1:10 2/5 is anything between 1:10.40 and 1:10.59 seconds. As usual, Sweet Alex, who could have broken the record in January when he trotted up in a Handicap 1 event by over nine lengths in a time of 1:10 3/5, was out of the gates in a flash in his quest to make all the running. The Stewards Cup runner-up was still in front when they turned for home, but it seemed only a matter of time as Bruceontheloose was breathing down his neck and had been poised to strike since the far turn. He easily relieved his stable companion of the lead in mid-stretch and cruised home by 3 ½ lengths in the \$150,000 contest. Sweet Alex held on to finish second for the third time in four starts on the main course since he returned from a ten-month break from injury in October. And racing for only the second time since he came back on Easter Monday (April 5) from a seven-month absence, 2008 Horse of the Year Storm Street, who had won this Grade II event by seven lengths last year, finished well to be third.

As he had done at odds of 40/1 in the First Citizens Gold Cup on Boxing Day (December 26), Honest Hero again finished fourth at very long odds, while Proud Kentuckian, the other Allan Madoo-owned horse in the feature, turned in a decent effort to end up fifth of nine on debut. Following the American-bred five-year-old home was the huge disappointment Bristling, who had won his three previous career starts and had been picked by five of the 11 aforementioned tipsters to deny Bruceontheloose and continue his unbeaten streak. However, the American-bred three-year-old did have an excuse as he reportedly bled. 'Bruce', who won all six of his starts in Trinidad - including the Republic Bank Derby, Caribbean Champion Stakes and First Citizens Gold Cup - last season and earned more than \$1million in the process, banked another \$90,000 this time for owners Tres Amigos.

Six weeks earlier he had collected \$60,000 for winning the Starlight Stakes and Bruceontheloose has now earned more than any other horse in the history of local racing with close to \$1,250,000 in the bank. The other millionaires are Sian's Gold, Chief Commander and Top Of The Class, who also collected a \$1million bonus for winning the triple crown (Guineas, Midsummer Classic and Trinidad Derby) as well as the Champion Stakes in 2003. 'Bruce's' incredible record was achieved in just nine starts and the only horse to have beaten the son of Wheelaway at Santa Rosa Park was also in action during the nine-race card. Connections decided to ignore the Santa Rosa Dash and keep Cactus Amour to staying, and he scored by 1 ¼ lengths in his very first start since beating Bruceontheloose into second in the Arima Race Club Cup on February 27.

This latest triumph was Cactus Amour's third straight and the American-bred four-year-old joined a host of horses who have completed hat-tricks for the season. Two of them were in this field and Tap To The Tune and Illusionist finished second and fourth, respectively in the 1,750-metre Allowance. Tap To The Tune has now finished in the first three in his last seven starts, while the Jamaican-bred Illusionist was actually going after a beaver-trick. Like Cactus Amour, Misshighoctane was also hunting her third straight triumph but the second favourite was squeezed out at the start and could only end up fifth. Santa Rosa Boy placed third in his very best performance since he won the 2008 Carib Brewery Guineas at odds of more than 80/1.

The Guineas is the first jewel of the local triple crown and Go For The Gold, who finished second to Treasure Hunt in his second career start last time out in the Flamingo Stakes on Easter Monday (April 5), will definitely be a major contender in this year's edition on May 31. Balkrishen Sagan Maraj's Jamaican-bred chestnut colt warmed up for the 1,800-metre contest for West Indian-bred three-year-old with a magnificent 17-length triumph over 1,750 metres. And getting back to the subject of hat-tricks, Cactus Amour was not the only one to make it three in a row on the day as ten-year-old Super Grey got up in the final stride to deny his Harold Chadee-owned and trained stable companion Be Nice in the \$25,000 Optional Claimer over 1,350 metres. The Jamaican-bred grey has now won 17 times and is a few dollars short of reaching \$500,000 in his grand career.

Racing continues on Saturday.