

ARIMA RACE CLUB
RACE DAY REVIEW
DAY 22 SATURDAY 19TH JUNE 2010

Bristling leads O'Brien Stakes sweep

BRISTLING bounced back in style and his trainer John O'Brien swept the three Stakes races on the Labour Day holiday card at Santa Rosa Park, Arima. The multiple champion handler was not the only one to score a three-timer on the nine-race card, however, as Prayven Badrie became the second two-kilo claimer in successive weeks to boot home three winners. But Bristling made hash of the opposition in the \$150,000 feature attraction to deliver the single most impressive performance of the day. Without being asked a serious question by multiple champion jockey Brian Harding, the American-bred three-year-old sauntered home to win the 3 Y.O. Sprint Stakes by six lengths in a snappy time of 1:21.20 seconds.

Treasure Hunt, the second favourite and only non-American-bred horse in the 1,350-metre affair, just hung on by a neck to deny Officer Ike the runner-up spot after disputing the early fractions with Rewardsinheaven and the eventual winner. The Jamaican-bred chestnut, who was runner-up behind Grand Riviere last time out in the Carib Brewery Guineas on May 31, has now finished in the top two in all seven of his career starts. Bristling, whose only defeat came last time out when he bled in the Santa Rosa Dash on May 8 and finished "off the board" is now also a four-time winner. The son of former Kentucky Derby third Congaree banked another \$90,000 for owner Michael Scott to sail past \$200,000 in career earnings. Last year's winner Blackstone Street was installed the favourite four races earlier in the Stakes & Lower Handicap. But the Stewards Cup winner had finished a game third behind Horse of the Year Bruceontheloose and Cactus Amour only seven days earlier over 1,750 metres in the Eric 'Colt' Durant Memorial and finished a non-threatening fourth.

Rain started to pour a few minutes before the 1,300-metre contest and it certainly helped Sweet Alex as the Stewards Cup runner-up made all the running. This latest comeback from injury has been tremendous for the American-bred six-year-old as he has finished in the top two in all seven of his starts on the main course since October. But this was only Sweet Alex's second triumph during this period and he turned the tables on Mister Kingston by 1 ¾ lengths after going down by the exact margin against the top-class locally-bred horse over 50 metres further on May 31.

After taking a very long time to get into stride, two-time Stewards Cup winner Storm Street started to motor at the far turn, but was unable to display his customary explosive kick in the homestretch and Mister Kingston outdueled him for the runner-up spot by a head. The 2008 Horse of the Year, recently back from a nine-month absence, seemed on his way back to his best when he finished third in the 'Dash' last time out and connections would have definitely been disappointed with this performance.

But O'Brien was certainly on top of the world with a one-two finish, right after doing the same thing in the Stud Farm Association National Stakes. For the second year in succession, Windjammer upset favourite Chief Commander to win the 1,800-metre contest. Last year O'Brien was denied by a whisker, but seven-year-old Windjammer, who spent the first few years of his career with the pilot, recently returned to O'Brien's barn from the stable of champion trainer Glenn Mendez. His margin of victory was 3 ½ lengths this time and Deo Maharaj's gelding became the fourth horse to win the 'National' for a second time. All four have done it in successive years.

Phantom Menace was the first in 2003 and '04 and Top Of The Class was then triumphant over the next two years. The other is Chief Commander, who has now finished in the top two four years in a row. Only five locally-bred horses competed this time and long-time leader Regal Honour broke down and threw champion jockey Ricky Jadoo at the far turn. Santa Rosa Boy looked a clear winner at that stage, but last year's winner of the Guineas at odds of over 80/1 got tired in the stretch and finished ¾-length behind Chief Commander in third. After his very first two-turn event, the injury-prone but very talented Regal Honour, who had scored four times and finished second on three occasions from ten previous career starts, was euthanised.

Windjammer earned \$54,000 for winning the \$90,000 contest and pushed his career earnings past the \$600,000-mark. It was the 15th triumph from 62 career starts for the son of Freshly Squeezed and he has not tasted defeat in the four times that Badrie has been aboard this season. The youngster had gotten off to a flyer two races before, when he brought Hurricane Lee from way back at the far turn but still managed to win the opener - a 1,600-metre turf contest for \$7,500 Optional Claimers - by seven lengths. And Badrie ended the day just as he had started it when Visible Wind thundered down the homestretch to beat a bunch of locally-bred three-year-old maidens by 5 ½ lengths in a 1,200-metre contest. Badrie, who has now third in this year's jockeys' standings with 20 wins, followed in the footsteps of Ryan Hasranah, who scored three times the Saturday before.

Racing continues on Saturday with the 23rd round of the Arima Race Club's 2010 Season.