

In a Hurry

Finally! The first 2yo 800m scurry of the new season will be run at Fairview on Friday. Only 6 fillies line up and 4 qualify for the BSA Added Value Bonus of R40 000. They are Miss International, Sail Into Spring, Supa Smart and Watsonia. The latter is a first runner for Highlands exciting young Gr1 winning sire, Potala Palace.

Tough Choices

The R6 million yearling Silver Coin, who set an all-time SA record for a thoroughbred yearling at auction on the first day of the 2016 Cape Premier Yearling Sale, has been gelded. The Drakenstein bred son of Silvano from National Banker won his debut in scintillating fashion last term but three disappointing efforts since have no doubt forced Joey Ramsden and his illustrious owners to reconsider any hopes of a stallion career for the smashing specimen. He could yet have a bright racing career ahead of him.



CHAMPION LEADS

Lope De Vega (Shamardal), sire of Gary Alexander's eye-catching Turffontein Sunday debut winner Radiant Splendour, is at 7th on the national sires' leader board after seventeen weeks of the 2017/18 Aussie racing season. Arrowfield Stud's incumbent Champion Australian Sire Snitzel is still coasting along quite comfortably at the top of the national sires' leader board with progeny earnings in excess of \$12.8 million. Occupying second position is Coolmore's ill-fated High Chaparral, who made a significant move up the leader board after the wins by Rekindling in the Melbourne Cup and Ace High in the Victoria Derby.

JOCKEY SERIES

New Zealand-based jockey Mark Du Plessis will join the new 'All Stars' team for the UBET 2017 Origin Jockey Series. Zimbabwean-born Du Plessis will partner with our own Robbie Fradd to take on Queensland, New South Wales, New Zealand, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania over three days from December 8-10.

BRAIN DRAIN



NHA Eastern Cape Chief Stipe Mike Jones bowed out after 33 years service at Fairview on Friday. Other than being accorded the honour of having a race named after him on the afternoon, the veteran disappeared in a puff of smoke – with no news of who will replace him. With experience lacking in the ranks, the NHA is under enormous pressure to source the right people. Unfortunately, the best guys for the job – former top jockeys – never seem to find their way into the Stipes boardroom.

Happy Days

Three jockeys who celebrated their birthdays recently rode winners to celebrate the occasion. Richard Fourie rode a hat-trick on his 32nd birthday at Kenilworth on Saturday. Mathew Thackeray turned 21 on Sunday and rode a double at Kimberley on Monday. Morne Winnaar rode a shock winner in the final race at Kenilworth on Saturday – and celebrated his birthday 48 hours later.



Racing For THE RHINO

Last Friday's night meeting at Kranji played host to a worthy cause not often heard of at the races in Singapore – saving the rhinoceros in Africa. Racing for Wildlife in partnership with the African Society of Singapore got behind this worthy event in aid of Rhino conservation to raise awareness of this important issue.



Striker?

Michael Owen, the former England striker, finished second on his debut in the saddle in a charity race at Ascot last Friday. Owen, who also starred for Liverpool, Real Madrid, Newcastle and Manchester United in his football-playing days, was one of 10 amateur riders to take part in the 1400m contest.

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Drakenstein Stud's champion sire Trippi celebrated four individual winners this weekend, including Friday's November Stakes winner, Miracle Bureau. The son of End Sweep is well represented in the Kenilworth features this Saturday.

Tickets & Cracks

There were angry scenes at Kenilworth on Saturday when Tote punters found they could not get paid from race two onwards. One tackled journalist Michael Clower, saying: "You speak to the Tote people – you might get more sense out of them than I can," while another had to be restrained from tearing up a winning ticket in a show of public protest. Why no announcement on course?