

Greeff Off To A Flyer

The Alan Greeff machine maintained the momentum from last season with four winners at Fairview on Friday, including a gutsy win by the Twice Over mare Studio Blues in the non black-type R110 000 Wedgewood Handicap.

There isn't more form outfit in the country and the Greeff team delivered the goods again to get the new term off to a flyer.

Only eight runners faced the starter for the first feature of the season and Ridgemont Highlands rider Greg Cheyne rode a well-judged race on the favourite Studio Blues who was stepping up to the 2400m for the first time.

Ryan Munger slowed things down up front on the free-striding Flying Squadron, but Cheyne was stalking and aware and he released Studio Blues early with a winning effort.

With Flying Squadron fading late, it was the ever consistent Just My Style who ranged up dangerously down the inside.

But confidence is a winning tonic and Greg Cheyne had judged it perfectly as Studio Blues stayed on strongly to win by a half length in a time of 156,49 secs.

Just My Style is often a PA banker and she also plugged on well to grab second and three lengths ahead of longshot Exclusivity in third.

Studio Blues has won 5 of 20 starts with 7 places and stakes of R353 375.

A Daytona Stud-bred daughter of Twice Over (Observatory) she is out of the twice winning Six Blue Notes (Qui Danzig), who raced for Glen Kotzen.

Cheyne grabbed a Greeff double on the day with the Jackson colt Go Goodfellow winning the opener. Charles Ndlovu and Wayne Agrella each rode the balance of the champion yard's quartet.

Wedgewood Handicap (F&M) (NBT) 1400m

Winner Studio Blues (best handicapped) raced a handy fourth; moved up to 2nd entering home straight; led 400m; ran on strongly
Runner-up Just My Style lost 3 lengths at the start; raced at the back; ran on strongly; held by winner latter stages

Third Exclusivity (2nd best handicapped) was nervous in the pens and kicked the back gate; raced 5th; stayed on; outpaced by first two

Time: There was no pace early and the overall time was very moderate. A race to forget. We gave the winner (prev 85/83/80/80/89) 91 which makes the runner-up (prev 59/70/70/78 – has done 89) 87 and the third (prev 69/67/71/48/52) 68. A thumbsuck.

91	1	0.00	STUDIO BLUES	(8)	60.0	G Cheyne	47/20
5 b m Twice Over - Six Blue Notes (Qui Danzig)							
87	2	0.50	JUST MY STYLE	(6)	58.5	L Mxothwa	9/2
5 b m Irish Flame - Onawingandaprayer (Jet Master)							
68	3	3.50	EXCLUSIVITY	(2)	52.0	C Maujean	18/1
5 b m Oracy - Suvretta House (Western Winter)							
66	4	4.75	Data Link	(7)	52.0	K Zechner	31/4
70	5	5.50	Rocksette	(1)	54.5	M Yeni	18/1
64	6	5.55	Blue Sage	(3)	52.0	J Penny	28/1
74	7	7.30	Flying Squadron	(4)	54.5	R Munger	2/1
52	8	12.55	Silver Willow	(5)	52.0	X Ndlovu	28/1
Time: 156.49s (65.2s avg/1000m, or 55km/h) SP Total %: 110%							
1st T: AC Greeff O: Evanstan Investments (Pty) Ltd (Nom: Mr R D Hamilton)							
B: Daytona Stud							

Snaith's Done It Again!

The shock scratching of the boom 3yo big race favourite Hawwaam cast a cloud over Saturday's R4,2 million Gr1 Vodacom Durban July just minutes prior to 2018 champion Do It Again producing a herculean performance under top weight to become the first horse since El Picha in the year 2000 to achieve the double.

While the scratching of Mike de Kock's champion 3yo momentarily took the fizz and sparkle out of one of the biggest and most highly anticipated racing and social events in decades at the newly branded Hollywoodbets Greyville, the unleashing of the remaining sixteen runners at the historic 2200m mark quickly refocused the enthusiastic crowd on the action as Return Flight went up to lead at a fairly modest pace.

The 3yo filly was stalked by Head Honcho, with Juglall doing a great job from the wide gate to have the newly blinkered Twist Of Fate against the running rail in third.

Early on, Do It Again was about ten lengths back.

As the field swung for home, Fourie angled Do It Again out for a clear run in what was to be a match winning move.

With Twist Of Fate soldiering on and Rainbow Bridge taking a shorter route home, Fourie commenced that inimitable left-handed bounce as the defending champion charged for home amid roars from the crowd.

In a classic performance, Do It Again made light of his weight and powered clear to beat Rainbow Bridge by 0,40 lengths in a time of 135,04 secs.

For Richard Fourie, this was a second July victory – but his first opportunity of a joyful canter-past as his previous success in 2014 on Legislate was achieved in the stipes boardroom.

The last horse to achieve the double was El Picha in 1999/2000. Prior to that we have to go back half a century for the previous back-to-back victor.

Gavin Lerena gave Rainbow Bridge every chance but the former SA champion goes back to Gauteng having to wait another year to find his first July winner.

Nooresh Juglall did a great job for Joey Ramsden on Twist Of Fate. The R20 000 son of Master Of My Fate just doesn't know how to run a bad race and took his earnings to over R3 million at his fifteenth start to run a gutsy third from a diabolical draw.

Eyes Wide Open showed that his recent renaissance after haemoconcentration issues has brought out his true ability. The Cape Derby winner, who will stay in training next season, ran on strongly late for fourth, with the winner's fairer sex stablemate running out of her skin for fifth and 2,10 lengths behind.

Robbie Hill's valiant chestnut Camphoratus was the final runner to qualify for a tote place when a half length further back in sixth.

The fancied Barahin never got into the race and finished in eighth, and five lengths off the winner.

Former dual SA Horse Of The Year Legal Eagle ran just over seven lengths back, with only one behind him. Rising eight years of age, he has certainly earned a happy retirement as one of the great horses to have graced our tracks this century.

But, while Hawwaam's withdrawal was a cloud in the coffee, it was a terrific training performance by the Snaith Racing Team.

Do It Again had only one outing since his rather unlucky second in the Sun Met. That was when he beat Cirillo to win the Gr1 Gold Challenge at the same venue last month.

He also carried 6kgs more on Saturday than he did when winning under Anton Marcus last year. So the doubting Thomases had reason to find others and that left a value gap for the Do It fans – although Hawwaam's withdrawal would have impacted on the tote

A serious candidate for SA Horse Of The Year, Do It Again has now won 7 races with 5 places from 13 starts for stakes of R8 410 000.

The handsome gelding was purchased by John Freeman for R1,1 million at the 2016 National Yearling Sale

Bred by Northfields, Do It Again is a first crop son of Twice Over (Observatory), who last year became the first sire in the modern era to get a 3yo winner of the Durban July.

He is out of the six-time winning Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs).

The Hawwaam withdrawal would have initiated deductions on winning bets via the bookmakers but the scratching was a big blow in terms of refunds for the operator as the tote was flying up to that point.

But it's fair to observe too that the Saftote website also never faltered once that we observed – a massive improvement on past major days!

Mike de Kock said afterwards that the Vet had made the right decision as his charge was lame and had hurt himself in the gates.

He said that he felt sorry for his staff who had done the hard work and would have enjoyed a good payday had things worked out.

“Let's hope Hawwaam's incident isn't the headline. We still have a horse – he will be back. And let's not take the glory away from Do It Again's terrific win,” he said sportingly. A great day. A great race. There must still be hope for this great game.

Gr1 Vodacom Durban July 2200m

Winner Do It Again raced 11th entering the home straight; led 100m; ran on well

Runner-up Rainbow Bridge raced 8th entering the home straight; led 200m; no answer to winner

Third Twist Of Fate was drawn wide; raced third; ran on; jockey Juglall was fined R1000 for striking this horse more than 12 times

Time: Although comparatively the joint third fastest of the eight races on the turf, the race was slowly run before developing into a sprint in the home straight. We gave the fifth (prev best 104) 104 which makes the winner (prev 111/121/121/121/118) 125, the runner-up (prev 117/115/122/121/115) 124 and the third (prev 108/111/111/111/111) 113. This could well be rated optimistically.

125	1	0.00	DO IT AGAIN	(8)	60.0	R Fourie	71/20
4 b g Twice Over - Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs)							
124	2	0.40	RAINBOW BRIDGE	(3)	59.5	G Lerena	3/1
4 b g Ideal World - Halfway To Heaven (Jet Master)							
113	3	1.70	TWIST OF FATE	(14)	54.0	N Juglall	12/1
3 b c Master Of My Fate - Crescent Lily (Counter Action)							
106	4	1.95	Eyes Wide Open	(15)	53.0	W Kennedy	10/1
104	5	2.10	Miyabi Gold	(4)	52.0	S Khumalo	36/1
103	6	2.60	Camphoratus	(11)	52.0	G Wright	66/1
105	7	2.75	Roy Had Enough	(12)	53.0	M v Rensburg	36/1
105	8	2.80	Divine Odyssey	(13)	53.0	C Habib	28/1
103	9	3.70	Doublemint	(10)	53.0	C Orffer	13/1
105	10	5.00	Barahin	(5)	53.0	M Yeni	27/4
102	11	5.05	Lady In Black	(7)	53.5	S Veale	15/1
113	12	5.20	Head Honcho	(16)	58.5	K De Melo	36/1
100	13	5.30	Tilbury Fort	(1)	53.0	R Danielson	36/1
100	14	5.55	Made To Conquer	(9)	53.0	M Khan	13/1
101	15	7.30	Legal Eagle	(6)	55.0	L Hewitson	13/1
86	16	14.30	Return Flight	(2)	52.0	R Munger	28/1
Time: 135.04s (61.38s avg/1000m, or 59km/h) SP Total %: 124%							
1st T: J Snaith O: Messrs N Jonsson, B Kantor & Late W J C Mitchell							
B: Northfields Stud							

Again - And Again!

After 3yo Cirillo had shown the way, Fourie darted down the inside rail with the good looking Do It Again, as they came for home and took on the pacesetter – all the while, Rainbow Bridge built up momentum behind them.

With Marcus deciding to stick to his chosen path, the gap between the front two closed and the Met winner had to be switched out in a ground sapping move. Such was Do It Again's momentum, it is pointless speculating what could have been – and Rainbow Bridge goes into the July a massive runner – with a score to settle!

The winning trainer was over the moon – even relieved.

“He is one of the most intelligent horses I have ever trained – he put his head to the side and was just getting annoyed. We had to get him to start and he went down with his pony. Thank goodness for our horse whisperer Malan du Toit. And what a comeback after almost five months off! Thanks to Gold Circle for being of such assistance to us. And to all of our owners, too. He has shown again that he is the best weight-for-age horse in South Africa!” said an elated Snaith who is enjoying his annual sojourn to the East Coast.

After a brief tussle with the game 3yo Cirillo, Fourie pushed Do It Again to the line and the handsome gelding won with something in hand to beat Cirillo by a half length in a time of 96,39 secs.

After switching in and having the gap close on him, Anton Marcus had no luck on Met winner Rainbow Bridge and after switching out for his run, he did reasonably well for third a further 1,25 lengths back.

Soqrat had some ground to make up but finished his race off well to run a nose back in fourth.

Richard Fourie said the pre race 'upset' had not bothered the star galloper, but that Do It Again then didn't want to load.

“The pace was on and I had so much horse underneath me. He made up the four lengths easily. He is a true champion. I didn't quite shine on him on Met day and I appreciate the team's support – and all the owners. He is a true champion,” he added.

Part owner Nic Jonsson said afterwards that Anton Marcus, whom we speculate could possibly ride Hawwaam or Rainbow Bridge in the July, has been telling all year that Do It Again is the 'best horse in the country'.

Marcus rode Do It Again to win the 2018 Vodacom Durban July.

A winner of 6 races with 5 places from 12 starts for stakes of R5 910 000, Do It Again was purchased by John Freeman for R1,1 million at the 2016 National Yearling Sale

Bred by Northfields, Do It Again is a gelded first crop son of Twice Over (Observatory) – interestingly, the first sire in the modern era to get a 3yo winner of the Durban July.

He is out of the six-time winning Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs).

Gr1 Rising Sun Gold Challenge 1600m

Winner Do It Again (2nd best handicapped) raced 5th; bumped 150m; ran on well to lead 20m from home

Runner up Cirillo set the pace 2 lengths clear; kept on determinedly; beaten 0,5 lengths

Third Rainbow Bridge (best handicapped) raced level with winner in 5th entering the straight; hanging out and shifted 150m; bumped 150m; ran on; beaten 1,75 lengths

Time: Although this might have been run a little faster, the pace was a fair one throughout and it was comparatively the second fastest of the eight races beyond sprint distances.

We gave the runner up (prev 103/110/98/113/111) 116 which makes the winner (prev 103/111/121/121/121) 118 and the third (prev 111/117/115/122/121) 115

118	1	0.00	DO IT AGAIN	(5)	60.0	R Fourie	15/4
4 b g Twice Over - Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs)							
116	2	0.50	CIRILLO	(6)	58.5	L Hewitson	20/1
3 b c Pomodoro - Miss Wordsworth (Lake Coniston)							
115	3	1.75	RAINBOW BRIDGE	(7)	60.0	A Marcus	18/10
4 b g Ideal World - Halfway To Heaven (Jet Master)							
113	4	1.80	Soqrat	(4)	58.5	R Simons	28/10
113	5	2.55	Undercover Agent	(1)	60.0	C Orffer	6/1
106	6	3.05	Lady In Black	(3)	57.5	S Veale	28/1
104	7	6.55	New Caledonia	(8)	60.0	G Lerenia	50/1
99	8	8.75	Matador Man	(2)	60.0	L J Ferraris	20/1
Time: 96.39s (60.24s avg/1000m, or 60km/h) SP Total %: 112%							
1st T: J Snaith O: Messrs N Jonsson, B Kantor & Late W J C Mitchell							
B: Northfields Stud							

Run Red Run

Cape lightweight jockey Anthony Andrews doesn't get a lot of quality opportunities but he showed his talent when maintaining his nerve and taking full advantage of a handy weight to win the R150 000 Selangor Listed Jet Master Stakes at Kenilworth on Saturday.

After Milton had led the way ahead of Ready Steady Go, the race was up for the taking, with the leader tiring and the challenges coming from all sides.

Just as Ready Steady Go looked set to go on with it, Andrews produced Run Red on the rail and he switched the chestnut before taking off for an easy win.

The lightly raced 4yo gelding went past Ready Steady Go to win by 1,25 lengths in a time of 97,88 secs.

Trained by Andre Nel at Rondeberg, Run Red was bred by La Plaisance Stud and is a son of Twice Over (Observatory) out of the four-time winner Foxtrot Baby (Lizard Island).

He has won 3 races with 7 places from 12 starts and took his stakes earnings to R303 400.

Jet Master Stakes (L) 1600m

Winner Run Red raced 3rd last; improved into 8th entering the straight 7 lengths behind the eventual runner-up; ran on well to lead 100m; won well

Runner-up Ready Steady Go raced 2nd; led 250m, no chance with winner

Third Silva's Bullet raced 3rd entering the straight; ran on

Time: Comparatively this was the fastest of the six races around the turn. We gave the runner-up (prev 87/90/58/90/90) 89 which makes the winner (prev 74/68/84/78/78) 87 and the third (prev 78/89/87/88/83) 87

87	1	0.00	RUN RED	(6)	51.5	A Andrews	15/1
4 ch g Twice Over - Foxtrot Baby (Lizard Island)							
89	2	1.25	READY STEADY GO	(9)	54.0	G Behr	15/1
4 b g Gimmethgreenlight - Teresina (Jet Master)							
87	3	2.50	SILVA'S BULLET	(3)	54.0	K De Melo	10/3
4 b g Silvano - Boston Tea Party (Jallad)							
86	4	2.70	Man About Town	(1)	54.0	G Cheyne	9/1
102	5	2.75	Milton	(5)	61.0	C Orffer	15/1
85	6	3.25	Earth Hour	(2)	54.0	M Byleveld	9/1
97	7	4.00	Platinum Prince	(10)	60.0	R Fourie	27/4
76	8	4.40	Orakal	(4)	51.0	S Mbhele	15/1
73	9	7.40	Gyre	(8)	52.5	R Munger	22/1
83	10	7.80	Brave Move	(7)	57.5	A Marcus	71/20
81	11	8.10	Our Mate Art	(11)	57.0	A Dornmeyer	11/1
Time: 97.88s (61.18s avg/1000m, or 59km/h) SP Total %: 116%							
1st T: A Nel O: Mrs S Plattner B: La Plaisance Stud							

Just Do It

The Snaith 4yo Do It Again outpointed the gallant Cape Guineas star Soqrat to join Mike Bass gallopers Trademark and Pocket Power as one of only three horses to achieve the July – Queen's Plate double this century.

After Hat Puntano lost many lengths at the gate, Greg Cheyne sent the widely predicted pacesetter Amazing Strike out to ensure an honest gallop, ahead of Undercover Agent, Soqrat and Snowdance, with Legal Eagle and Infamous Fox stalking the second group.

At the 400m, Do It Again still only had two behind him as Amazing Strike had cried enough and the cavalry charge fanned out in the gallop for glory.

Randall Simons slipped Soqrat, positioned at one off the rail, into a narrow lead as Richard Fourie set Do It Again alight, with Legal Eagle grinding away down the middle.

The race developed into a match between Do It Again and Soqrat, and after being straightened out confidently by Fourie, it was the 4yo who asserted his authority to win with something in hand by 0,30 lengths in a time of 97,29 secs. The Green Point Stakes on 8 December last year was run in 98,92 secs!

Soqrat, bidding to become only the second 3yo to win the race in 45 years, put in a gallant effort and Mike de Kock has an exciting prospect on his hands as the son of Epaulette ran the race of his life.

Rainbow Bridge got the pace today but was running on when it was all over and was beaten 2,75 lengths further back in third.

The reigning champion Legal Eagle was in touch all the way but had nothing to offer when called upon and shaded Undercover Agent out of fourth. He should not be written off and could well bounce back in the Highveld season.

Snowdance is another who had every opportunity but was well beaten into sixth, with the slow starting Hat Puntano, Infamous Fox and Amazing Strike in another race.

A winner of 5 races with 4 places from 10 starts for stakes of R4 285 000, Do It Again was purchased by leading stallion manager John Freeman for R1,1 million at the 2016 National Yearling Sale

Bred by Northfields, Do It Again is a first crop son of Twice Over (Observatory), the first sire in the modern era to get a 3yo winner of the Durban July.

He is out of the six-time winning Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs).

Gr1 Queens Plate 1600m

Winner Do It Again was slow into stride and raced in the rear early; was 7th entering home straight; ran on strongly to lead close home Runner-up Soqrat raced in fourth, and led 200m out; piped late Third Rainbow Bridge was slow into stride; raced second-last early; was 8th entering home straight; was with winner 400m out but no extra late

Time: Run at a brisk pace early on, this comparatively was the fastest of the seven races around the turn. We gave the winner (prev 89/100/98/103/113) 113 which makes the runner-up (prev 87/92/95/95/101) 109 and the third (prev 85/91/95/103/109) 107

113	1	0.00	DO IT AGAIN	(6)	60.0	R Fourie	9/2
4 b g Twice Over - Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs)							
109	2	0.30	SOQRAT	(3)	55.0	R Simons	5/1
3 b c Epaulette - Elizeeza(AUS) (Hussonet)							
107	3	3.05	RAINBOW BRIDGE	(4)	60.0	B Fayd'herbe	32/1
4 b g Ideal World - Halfway To Heaven (Jet Master)							
105	4	4.05	Legal Eagle	(7)	60.0	A Marcus	3/1
104	5	4.10	Undercover Agent	(5)	60.0	C Offer	9/2
97	6	5.10	Snowdance	(8)	57.5	L Hewitson	11/1
79	7	15.85	Hat Puntano	(9)	60.0	D Dillon	50/1
66	8	21.60	Infamous Fox	(1)	60.0	R Danielson	50/1
0	9	99.99	Amazing Strike	(2)	60.0	G Cheyne	100/1
Time: 97.29s (60.81s avg/1000m, or 59km/h) SP Total %: 115%							
1st T: J Snaith O: Messrs N Jonsson, B Kantor & W J C Mitchell							
B: Northfields Stud							

Tumble...Then A Treble!

Richard Fourie got Sun Met entry Doublemint up to catch the free-striding Kampala Campari in the shadow of the post in the R400 000 Gr2 Peninsula Handicap.

Aldo Domeyer had Kampala Campari out front from the jump in the 1800 contest and he led Magnificent Seven, Ballad Of The Sea and The Slade.

In the run for home Kampala Campari continued to gallop powerfully and found himself up against the outside rail and not looking like stopping.

Fourie was working on Doublemint, who had been loping along back of midfield about ten lengths off the pace, and the son of Twice Over (yes, another one!) started picking them off as he got the leader in his sights.

Under a top ride Doublemint found Kampala Campari in the shadow of the past for a last stride win by a neck in a time of 110,86 secs.

Longshot Man About Town plugged away smartly for the R40 000 cheque in third a further 2,25 lengths away, with stayer American Landing improving again in fourth.

Last year's winner and favourite Eyes Wide Open, plodded late and could do no better than a 4,55 length sixth. This talented colt, the 2018 Investec Cape Derby winner, is becoming a frustrating horse to follow. Gelding seems the obvious course of action.

A winner of 5 races with 5 places from 12 starts, Doublemint was another winner for Observatory stallion Twice Over, who enjoyed a memorable day, also siring the winner of the L'Ormarins Queen's Plate.

The winner was bred by Alec Foster out of the one-time winner Nepeta (Tale Of The Cat). Doublemint races in the familiar Foster scarlet and gold.

Gr2 Peninsula Handicap 1800m

Winner Doublemint raced 8th , some seven lengths off the pace; ran on strongly to get up very late

Runner-up Kampala Campari (best handicapped) set the pace; skipped clear early in the home straight; piped very late

Third Man About Town raced fitted with blinkers; raced midfield, some six lengths off the pace; ran on

Time: Just 0.25 seconds separated the winners of the three 1800m feature events of which this was the fastest. We gave the runner-up (prev 95/83/86/85/102) 102 which makes the winner (prev 83/83/88/91/92) 97 and the third (prev 75/78/65/79/79) 84

97	1	0.00	DOUBLEMINT	(3)	55.5	R Fourie	9/2
4 ch c Twice Over - Nepeta(NZ) (Tale of the Cat)							
102	2	0.20	KAMPALA CAMPARI	(2)	58.0	A Domeyer	113/20
5 b g Querari - Kwitizina (Captain Al)							
84	3	2.45	MAN ABOUT TOWN	(1)	52.0	M Winnaar	22/1
4 b c Gitano Hernando - Ethnic Beauty (Leopard Strike)							
81	4	3.70	American Landing	(10)	52.0	S Veale	28/1
81	5	4.45	Ballad Of The Sea	(6)	52.5	R Munger	22/1
102	6	4.55	Eyes Wide Open	(5)	62.0	G Lerena	63/20
81	7	4.75	Magnificent Seven	(8)	53.0	S Khumalo	27/4
84	8	6.75	Platinum Prince	(7)	56.0	L Hewitson	9/2
78	9	9.25	The Slade	(4)	55.5	K De Melo	18/1
79	10	14.75	Elusive Silva	(9)	61.0	B Fayd'herbe	13/1
Time: 110.86s (61.59s avg/1000m, or 58km/h) SP Total %: 113%							
1st T: J Snaith O: Mr A N & The Hon Mrs G R Foster B: AN Foster							

Goodbye To Grant

After an emotional hangover that probably lasted most of the week following the Vodacom Durban July, Hong-Kong bound Grant van Niekerk bade his Kenilworth home base a fond farewell at his final racemeeting at the Southern Suburbs venue this season.

He produced a polished ride aboard the Justin Snaith-trained Doublemint to win the R250 000 Gr3 Highlands Winter Derby.

Van Niekerk flies out on 4 August with Callan Murray to fulfill his Hong Kong Jockey Club contract, which is scheduled to last six months.

And he will be pleased with his feature success as Klawervlei stallion Twice Over followed up his big victory in the Vodacom Durban July with the 3yo Do It Again.

The Foster family bred Doublemint, winner of the 2018 Politician Stakes, stormed clear of his field in the final 300m to register a facile win.

The SA Jockey Academy may want to consider revisiting the syllabus for the all important subject of pace before the year is out, with riders in the 2400m final leg of the Highlands Cape Winter Series again hanging on for dear life when the stalls opened with nobody keen to go.

Given the heavy going, there would probably naturally be concerns amongst the jockeys to conserve energy. But if pace makes the race, why is there always such an issue with it?

In the end it was the proven stayer Rock My Soul who carted Spring Man and Power Tower along at a fair gallop.

Van Niekerk rode a confident race from midfield and when he produced Doublemint at the 350m pole it was race over.

The smart chestnut strode away to win by 3,25 lengths in a time of 154,56 secs.

It was the Snaith Racing team's third consecutive Winter Derby success after African Night Sky (2017) and July third-placer Elusive Silva (2016).

Spring Man was thereabouts for a long way and the son of Marchfield stayed on for a well beaten second, with Australian-bred Ballad Of The Sea another half length away in third.

The rest plodded in the stamina sapping underfoot conditions.

Doublemint, who has won 4 races with 5 places from 10 starts for stakes of R482 750, had been placed in the first two legs of the series, which were won by the absent Rainbow Bridge.

The winner was bred by Alec Foster and is by Twice Over (Observatory) out of the one-time winner Nepeta (Tale Of The Cat).

He should be an interesting SA Champions Season prospect in 2019

Gr3 Winter Derby (3yo's) 2400m

Winner Doublemint (best handicapped) raced 6th; led 250m out; won going away

Runner-up Spring Man led until 1200m; raced 2nd entering the straight; outpaced final 250m by winner

Third Ballad Of The Sea raced fitted with blinkers; raced fourth; hanging out from the 300m; held every chance

Time: The slowest of the seven races on the actual bend, the field was very tightly bunched entering the straight, and the race developed into a sprint. We gave the runner-up (prev 84/76/84/83/84) 84 which makes the winner (prev 77/78/83/83/88) 91 and the third (prev 63/72/72/76/74) 83

91	1	0.00	DOUBLEMINT	(6)	60.0	G v Niekerk	2/1
3 ch c Twice Over - Nepeta(NZ) (Tale of the Cat)							
84	2	3.25	SPRING MAN	(2)	59.0	C Orffer	5/1
3 b g Marchfield - Diorella (Fort Wood)							
83	3	3.75	BALLAD OF THE SEA (1)	59.0	R Khathi	22/1	
3 b g Teofilo - Sea Song(AUS) (Fasliyev)							
79	4	6.00	Love Happens	(9)	59.0	R Fourie	5/1
75	5	8.25	Man About Town	(3)	59.0	G Cheyne	44/1
74	6	8.75	Ancestry	(5)	59.0	B Fayd'herbe	113/20
71	7	10.50	Pacific Chestnut	(4)	59.0	R Munger	44/1
70	8	11.25	Rock My Soul	(7)	59.0	D Dillon	15/4
56	9	19.50	Power Tower	(8)	59.0	A Domeyer	44/1
Time: 154.56s (64.4s avg/1000m, or 56km/h) SP Total %: 114%							
1st T: J Snaith O: Mr A N & The Hon Mrs G R Foster B: A N Foster							

Snaith's 1-2-3!

Justin Snaith saddled the top three home in Saturday's R4 250 000 Gr1 Vodacom Durban July at Greyville on Saturday.

The field got away on terms and there was no pace on early – despite our assurances to the contrary from two top jockeys earlier last week! After White River had led for the first 500m, Jeff Lloyd started making a move to take up the running. But the Australian-based rider, bidding to win his first July at his 26th and final attempt, was overtaken by Grant van Niekerk, who took the favourite African Night Sky up to lead.

The son of Dynasty turned for home ahead of Made To Conquer, as Anton Marcus urged Do It Again to run from six lengths off.

Made To Conquer hit the front and looked to be going well enough into the final stages.

But all the jets were powering on the 9-1 Guineas winner Do It Again and Anton Marcus swept into the lead as he charged away to beat Made To Conquer by 1,25 lengths in a time of 135,20 secs – the slowest time in the last four runnings.

Snaith rounded off a rare trifecta with comeback hero Elusive Silva showing that his heart is far bigger than two tendon injuries, as he battled on for third a further 4,25 lengths back, to confirm his recent Betting World 1900 victory.

Dubai-bound Majestic Mambo (6,75 lengths) made up lengths in the straight to bank fourth. This is not his ideal course and we will follow his overseas progress with interest.

African Night Sky's exertions told in the final 300m and he hung on for fifth (7,25 lengths). Van Niekerk may have a few questions to answer for a strange decision on a horse who has won over a mile.

Do It Again has won 4 races with 3 places from 8 starts for stakes of R3 307 500.

He was knocked down to John Freeman for R1,1 million at the 2016 National Yearling Sale

Bred by Northfields, Do It Again is a son of Twice Over (Observatory) out of the six-time winning Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs).

Gr1 Vodacom July 2200m

Winner Do It Again was positioned 6th entering the straight; led 290m; ran on strongly

Runner-up Made To Conquer raced 2nd; led 450m; ran on

Third Elusive Silva was slow into stride; raced 9th 2 lengths behind the winner; ran on but was beaten over 5 lengths, by far the largest margin between winner and 3rd finisher in the last 20 years of the July – illustrating just what a farce this year's renewal was.

Time: With no pace on early, the field was very tightly bunched, with a number of horses refusing to settle. As a result of this positions changed considerably in the running and a number of horses that usually race from off the pace were sighted towards the front. Slowly run and decided in a sprint for home, where the first two finishers were flattered by their margin at the finish. Reliably rating the race is not possible, and we can do no more than take a conservative approach. Certainly not a result to rely on for future events. We gave the third (prev 96/90/84/90/99) 99 which (with an arbitrary additional adjustment) makes the winner (prev 89/85/89/100/98)

103 and the runner-up (prev 74/76/78/87/88) 95							
103	1	0.00	DO IT AGAIN	(15)	54.0	A Marcus	9/1
3 b g Twice Over - Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs)							
95	2	1.25	MADE TO CONQUER	(11)	53.0J Lloyd	31/4	
4 b g Dynasty - Festive Occasion (Casey Tibbs)							
99	3	5.50	ELUSIVE SILVA	(13)	56.5	B Fayd'herbe	14/1
5 ch g Silvano - Esprit (Fort Wood)							
95	4	6.75	Majestic Mambo	(17)	54.0	C Murray	9/1
97	5	7.25	African Night Sky	(9)	57.0	G v Niekerk	71/20
92	6	7.35	Rocket Countdown	(4)	53.0	S Randolph	50/1
90	7	8.10	Fiorella	(7)	53.0	M Khan	25/1
86	8	8.15	Tilbury Fort	(18)	53.0	L Hewitson	18/1
102	9	8.20	Coral Fever	(3)	60.0	M Yeni	16/1
92	10	8.70	Liege	(16)	56.0	R Danielson	45/1
85	11	8.85	Dark Moon Rising	(2)	53.0	W Kennedy	25/1
86	12	8.90	Matador Man	(14)	53.5	S Khumalo	16/1
87	13	9.05	Secret Potion	(10)	52.0	M v Rensburg	55/1
88	14	9.55	Yakeen	(6)	53.0	R Simons	16/1
89	15	9.80	Star Express	(8)	55.5	A Domeyer	18/1
86	16	10.55	White River	(12)	53.0	C Orffer	15/1
95	17	11.55	Gold Standard	(5)	59.5	C Zackey	30/1
0	18	77.55	Abashiri	(1)	58.5	P Strydom	10/1

Time: 135.2s (61.45s avg/1000m, or 59km/h) **SP Total %:** 120%

1st **T:**J Snaith **O:**Messrs N Jonsson, B Kantor & W J C Mitchell

B:Northfields Stud

Snaith Does It Again

Just as things looked to be turning pear-shaped, Justin Snaith pulled the SA Champions Season launch on Friday evening out of the fire with an exciting win by his Twice Over gelding Do It Again in the R600 000 Gr2 Daisy Guineas.

The precautionary withdrawal of stable star Oh Susanna with a bruised heel from the Guineas early on Friday morning, was followed by an uncomfortable showing by Copper Force (not enjoying the conditions) in the Drill Hall Stakes, and then a heart-stopping narrow defeat for their dual Gr1 winner Snowdance in the Daisy Fillies Guineas.

But the Daisy Guineas victory for the handsome son of Twice Over righted the ship and set the foundation for a big season.

After Wonderwall had shown the way and local hope Sniper Shot had slipped into the lead at the 300m, Do It Again was seen making massive strides and he hit the front at the 200m to win going away by 1,25 lengths in a time of 96,03 secs.

Sniper Shot ran a game race in second and held off the Gr1 Cape Guineas winner Tap O'Noth who looked in need of the outing.

Do It Again has won 3 races with 2 places from 5 starts for stakes of R707 500. He was knocked down to John Freeman for R1,1 million at the 2016 National Yearling Sale

Bred by Northfields, Do It Again is a son of Twice Over (Observatory) out of the six-time winning Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs).

Described as the best horse he trained by Phillipi trainer Riaan Van Reenen, the slightly built Sweet Virginia is out of the Royal Prerogative Millie Bovana. She was victorious in the 2005 Gr3 Final Fling Stakes, and walloped the boys in the Gr3 Winter Classic and Winter Derby – a feat not matched by her own sex since.

Gr2 Daisy Guineas 1600m

Winner Do It Again lost 2 lengths at the start; raced at the back of the eight; hard ridden to lead 200m won going away

Runner up Sniper Shot (3rd best handicapped) raced 7th; ran on and challenged 150m; outpaced latter stages by winner; beaten 1,25 lengths

Third Tap O'Noth (2nd best handicapped) lost one length at the start; positioned sixth entering the straight; ran on; beaten 2,25 lengths

Time: Run 0,3 seconds slower than the Fillies Guineas, the race slowed rounding the turn and very tightly bunched entering the straight developed into a sprint

100	1	0.00	DO IT AGAIN	(8)	60.0	B Fayd'herbe	31/4
3 b g Twice Over - Sweet Virginia (Casey Tibbs)							
98	2	1.25	SNIPER SHOT	(7)	60.0	K De Melo	14/1
3 ch g Judpot - Seven Veils (Rich Man's Gold)							
96	3	2.25	TAP O' NOTH	(3)	60.0	M Byleveld	18/10
3 b c Captain Al - Wintersweet (Western Winter)							
94	4	2.75	White River	(4)	60.0	C Orffer	26/10
93	5	3.50	Mardi Gras	(5)	60.0	R Danielson	71/10
92	6	4.00	Kazaar	(1)	60.0	R Fourie	12/1
89	7	5.25	Wonderwall	(2)	60.0	S Khumalo	8/1
71	8	13.25	Premier Show	(6)	60.0	C Murray	45/1

Time: 96.03s (60.02s avg/1000m, or 60km/h) **SP Total %:** 115%
1st T:J Snaith **O:**Messrs N Jonsson, B Kantor & W J C Mitchell
B:Northfields Stud

Fort Knocks

The Fosters could well have an Investec Cape Derby back-up on their hands after Doublemint's impressive R250 000 Gr3 Politician Stakes score at Kenilworth on Saturday.

A two-time winner, with a victory over the boom 3yo Talk Of The Town to his credit, Doublemint was not expected to be quite ready to win a Gr3 at his first try at 1800m.

But the race panned out perfectly, with the son of Twice Over relaxed in third and tracking The Sun Also Rises and Run Red.

Van Niekerk gave Doublemint the sign at the 350m marker and he strode on past the pacesetter like a smart horse to hold The Sun Also Rises – who found a second breath late – to a 1,50 length win in a time of 111,73 secs.

Steel Rose ran a gutsy, albeit well beaten, third a further two lengths back.

Trainer Justin Snaith labelled Doublemint an 'arrogant type of horse who doesn't enjoy getting beaten.' He admitted modestly that there was no real plan and the race had just come up. He may now be thinking about further options for the handsome chestnut.

Doublemint, who has won 3 races with 3 places from 7 starts for stakes of R289 000, was bred by Alec Foster from Klawervlei sire, Twice Over (Observatory) and is out of the one-time winner Nepeta (Tale Of The Cat).

Gr3 Politician Stakes R250.000 1800m

Winner Doublemint raced handy, running on to account for the pace setter

Runner-up The Sun Also Rises made the pace; ran on but was out-paced by winner

Third finisher Steel Rose was never nearer than at the finish, well beaten

This was the slowest of the three 1800m races, although only marginally slower than the false run Paddock Stakes. The quality of this Gr3 race is debatable and the ratings give little encouragement for future to the featured horses. We gave the runner-up (61-68-69-73-76-80) 80, which makes the winner (71-59-75-79-77-78) 83 and the third horse (76-75-85-82-72-79) 79

83	1	0.00	DOUBLEMINT	(7)	55.5	G v Niekerk	13/2
3 ch c Twice Over - Nepeta(NZ) (Tale of the Cat)							
80	2	1.50	THE SUN ALSO RISES	(10)	55.5	P Strydom	13/2
3 b g Trippi - Hawker Hunter (Jet Master)							
79	3	3.50	STEEL ROSE	(1)	57.0	P Botha	11/1
3 b g Gitano Hernando - Single Rose (Joshua Dancer)							
78	4	3.90	Opera Royal	(2)	57.0	R Fourie	4/1
73	5	4.65	Visigoth	(5)	55.5	L Hewitson	15/1
83	6	4.75	Ancestry	(3)	60.0	B Fayd'herbe	9/2
72	7	5.05	Big Parade	(9)	55.5	A Delphech	5/1
76	8	5.10	Big Pleasure	(4)	57.0	D Dillon	13/2
69	9	6.60	Orakal	(8)	55.5	M Byleveld	36/1
67	10	7.85	Run Red	(6)	55.5	A Domeyer	15/1

Time: 111.73s (62.07s avg/1000m, or 58km/h) **SP Total %:** 118%
1st T:J Snaith **O:**Mr A N & The Hon Mrs G R Foster **B:**AN Foster