

COSTLY VETS

It is not only owners who fear Vets – punters are not far behind. If you backed Radisha at Fairview last Tuesday you did your cash in cold blood.

She broke loose from the start, spread both hind shoes, was caught, returned to the start sweating like crazy - and cleared fit to race by the Vet with no hind shoes. She was last throughout.

Her jockey was then questioned regarding his riding and explained, as we all clearly saw, that she did not raise a gallop. That is bizarre – point fingers at the jockey – but what about the Vet?

Only Human

Five winners on Monday's Flamingo Park ten-race programme is no mean feat and congratulations are due to trainer Bill Human and his front man Zietsman Oosthuizen, who dominated the meeting.

The tribute list and thanks from these colourful and passionate racing folk included Tanie Sarie, the sandwich lady. It is a different world and despite the difficulty of finding a winner in the Diamond Dustbowl, the racing is so entertaining.



Captain In Command

Reigning champion sire Captain Al had yet another great run of success this weekend. The seven times champion sire of 2yos was represented by no fewer than five individual winners, with this tally including a treble at Kenilworth, as well as a smart looking 3yo feature race winner at Turffontein. In the form of the Avontuur-bred Val Et Al.



Leader Of The Pack

What is the first thing that came into your head when you heard the recently announced Durban July fashion theme? For mature racegoers it could mean wearing motorbike leathers, rather than anything elegant. 'Leader of the Pack' was an iconic 1964 hit song for the girl group The Shangri-Las and was a popular cultural example of a 'teenage tragedy song'. It was refused airplay by the BBC due to its theme and some have speculated that it was considered likely to encourage violence between mods and rockers.



Captain Returns

Captain America will have his first race since finishing third in the J & B Met in a pinnacle at Turffontein this Saturday as he bids to repeat last year's HF Oppenheimer Horse Chestnut win. Brett Crawford told Michael Clower: "He is with the Mike de Kock yard in Jo'burg at the moment and goes in a 1 450m race on Saturday before running in the Horse Chestnut on April 2."

Life Of O'Brien

Irish jockey Joseph O'Brien will retire from riding to focus on a training career. The 23 year old son of famed trainer Aidan O'Brien was easing out of his role as a prominent jockey for Ballydoyle last year. He was twice the leading rider in Ireland and in 2013 he set a record for wins in a single season with 126. He is on target to receive his trainer's license next month and is already set up with a large string of horses under his care in Ireland.



NEAR MISS FOR CHRIS

Christophe Soumillon has narrowly avoided a ban covering the Dubai World Cup meeting after pleading guilty to attempting to weigh out with a non-approved safety vest at Meydan's Super Saturday fixture. The jockey's three-race meeting suspension covers Jebel Ali, Al Ain and Abu Dhabi between 18 and 20 March, meaning he is free to ride on the world's richest card on 26 March.

Jay Walks

Gold Circle's Jay Harrielall has been appointed General Manager: Racing Division of Phumelela Gaming & Leisure Limited with effect from 1 March 2016.

This appointment was made in light of the imminent retirement of current General Manager: Racing Operations, Stan Diesel at the end of March.

Jay has been around forever and as a true Durbanite, his biggest issue is probably going to be adjusting to Joburg. We wish him well.

TWO AMBULANCES?

The mini social media storm that erupted after suggestions of Kamikaze type riding at the Fairview meeting on 1 March appears to have abated. Collen Thabana fell off Knockout Johnny, while the only jockeys that were mentioned in the subsequent Stipes Report were the 7 day sanctioned Eldin Webber and Jason Smitsdorff. Let's wait and see what is done about it.

Stop That Horse!

English jockey Paul John has told a disciplinary panel that his former boss, trainer Jim Best, instructed him to pull up two horses in the space of four days. This follows an investigation into John's ride on Missile Man at Towcester on December 17 last year.

The jock stated that he had deliberately gone wide to "lose as much ground as possible" and both he and his mount "finished full of running and energy."

He also said that the trainer was angry with him post-race because he had "made it too obvious I was stopping the horse".