

Longer For Lerena

Gavin Lerena has had his Hong Kong contract extended to the end of the season by the HKJC after he was originally scheduled to return home this week. While he has only ridden 5 winners from 76 rides, a far cry from his SA win strike rate in the high teens, he has continued to plug on in the hope that he can break through. The season will conclude at Sha Tin on Sunday, 10 July.



Sport Of Kings

The headquarters of British horse racing, Newmarket, celebrated its 350th anniversary this past weekend. Three and a half centuries ago, King Charles II journeyed to a small town in Suffolk. He commanded a course be created there for a race in his name. Modern horse racing was born. The King's three-mile, six furlong Round Course, the first "modern" racecourse, was first run in 1666. It marked the start of Newmarket's reputation as a horse racing Mecca, something that has endured even through two world wars.

Grey To Stay

Chautauqua, who stamped himself as the world's best sprinter with a brilliant last-to-first victory in Sunday's Gr1 Chairman's Sprint Prize (1200m) in Hong Kong, will not travel to England for the Royal Ascot carnival in June. The mighty grey was expected to pursue the US\$1 million bonus on offer for any horse that can win three legs of the Global Sprint Challenge in three different jurisdictions by targeting either the Gr1 King's Stand Stakes or Gr1 Diamond Jubilee Stakes, but connections have decided, instead, to take him home to Australia to prepare for the spring.

Chrome Home

The richest North American racehorse of all time, 2014 Kentucky Derby & Preakness Stakes winner California Chrome arrived back at trainer Art Sherman's Los Alamitos headquarters on Sunday after enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation at Taylor Made Farm near Kentucky, reports Blood Horse. "He looks great," said Sherman. "It feels so good to have him back." The 2014 US Horse of the Year is undefeated in all three starts this year after powering to a 3.75-length win in the US\$10 million Gr1 Dubai World Cup at Meydan racecourse on 26 March.

NO SHOW WITHOUT AZZ

Michael Azzie, Abashiri's trainer, came up with this poem during the post-race interviews. "First was the Guineas and they said he couldn't win the mile, and he did that with grace and style. Then came the Classic, and what he did there was absolutely jurassic. Today was the Derby, where I thought he would leave wobbly. Now for the July, where he is going to fly."



Run A Bath

Two stray ground staff suffered the fright of their lives at Bath on Monday when narrowly avoiding an on-track collision with runners in a 1700m handicap. As the runners turned for home, they were greeted by two members of the team assigned to tread down divots, who were in the middle of the track and apparently oblivious of the on-rushing cavalry. The duo realise their error and dashed for safety. Luckily no one was hurt during the incident.

RACING'S CHANGED!

A winning owner was forbidden from entering any other horses into an event's subsequent races, apparently to give others a chance at glory. "This was a beautiful rule, showing that unlike in the modern world, races back then were based on gentlemanly conduct," a professor was quoted as saying, after a 2000-year-old stone tablet located in central Turkey was found inscribed with the rules of ancient horse racing. Analysis of the writing on the tablet, which is in the ruins of an ancient stadium, suggests that there was a keen sense of fairness in the sport then.

Playing With Fire

There has been a worrying noticeable increase in contraventions relating to a failure to inoculate horses in terms of the NHA rules against AHS and Equine Influenza. The offenders includes trainers and breeders. While mistakes can happen, one PE based trainer had his licence cancelled after being found to have doctored (pun excused) his passports. This was overturned on appeal but he still had to pay a R40 000 fine – which seems ridiculously lenient.

Too Bad To Be Blue

Aidan O'Brien is considering giving Air Force Blue another chance to prove himself over a mile in the Tattersalls Irish 2000 Guineas at the Curragh on May 21. The triple Group One winner failed to make any impact on his first try over the trip on his seasonal return in the 2000 Guineas at Newmarket on Saturday.

The Z Factor

Zenyatta, the 2010 US Horse of the Year, was covered by Medaglia d'Oro on Monday. Zenyatta, a 12-year-old Street Cry mare who resides at Lane's End Farm near Versailles, Kentucky will be checked in 15 days to determine whether she is in foal. Medaglia d'Oro stands for a fee of \$150,000 at Darley outside of Lexington. Zenyatta's first foal, the Bernardini colt Cozmic One, and second, the Tapit colt Ziconic, are in training and racing in California.