



*From the Executive Corner*

# High Fives All Around

by DOUG BURGE

The recently concluded Breeders' Cup World Championships held during this year's 41st Oak Tree Racing Association meet at Santa Anita Park proved to be not only successful for racing (with the significant increases in on-track handle and attendance as well as the brilliant victory by Zenyatta), but also a huge success for the California Thoroughbred breeding industry. As depicted on the cover, California-breds Dancing in Silks and California Flag both won Breeders' Cup races on this international stage. Plus another Cal-bred, The Usual Q. T., capped off the two-day event with a victory in the grade II Oak Tree Derby. In these trying times, racing really needed something positive. And that certainly occurred not only on a national level, but on a regional level as well here in California. Any questions or concerns about the quality or importance of horses bred in the state were quickly answered. These performances couldn't have come at a better time.

Over the 26-year history of the Breeders' Cup, Cal-breds have had limited success with victories by Tiznow (the only two-time winner of the Classic) and Thor's Echo, as well as a few placings in some of the races. The positive result of the recent running of the event now doubles the number of Breeders' Cup winners bred in California. Also, a large percentage of the Cal-breds competing on the Breeders' Cup cards utilized the California Cup day races as prep races. While the overall results of Cal Cup (attendance, handle, field size) were disappointing, it was successful in providing the opportunities to run and thus prepare for competition in the Breeders' Cup World Championships.

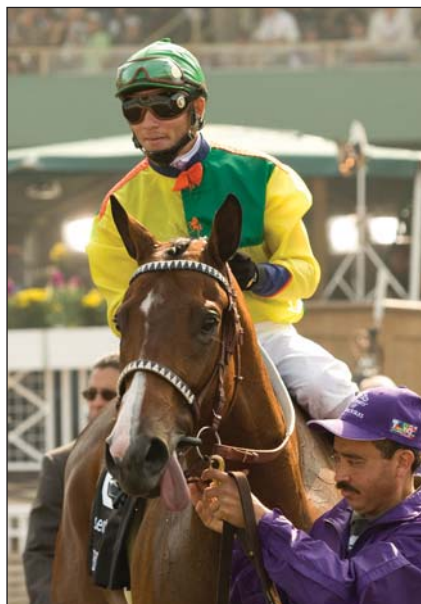
Along with savoring the success of Breeders' Cup, the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA) continues to focus on providing more incentives, opportunities and awards to those horses making up the daily fields in both Southern and Northern California. The new maiden bonus program continues to be very well received. In fact, not only are we hearing positive comments from

rewarded owners, but also reports of mare owners booking to stallions because of the lucrative bonus they recently received as an owner/breeder.

Some individuals in Northern California have questioned why their bonus is not equal to the amount of the Southern California bonus. The reasons are: 1) the bonus is generated from handle, with the South signal generating significantly more than the North; and 2) the reward is also to a certain extent a percentage of the average maiden purse available. We wanted to create an equitable program that would not harm the Southern or Northern California racing industries.

One area of concern with Northern California racing is the lack of restricted maiden special weight and first condition allowance opportunities. The inventory shortage to offer both open and Cal-bred allowance horses has traditionally been the justification for the lack of these races; because of this situation, Cal-breds do get the advantage only in Northern California to compete in the open first condition allowance race twice. Plus, the 30 percent bonus in open company also applies. With that said, the CTBA will continue to discuss and work with the racing offices in Northern California, and in Southern California, to encourage restricted allowance opportunities. We understand the importance.

One final thought regarding this recent year. As all of us in this business continue to fight the battles and press on for a sport and industry that we all love, so let's try to remember and reflect on the reasons we are so passionate about racing. For me, it was standing in the winner's circle with longtime owner/breeder Keith Card, who was leaning against his cane and smiling brightly at his home-bred California Flag who had just conquered the best turf sprinters in the world. After years and years of experiencing the highs and lows of racing, he finally experienced one of the ultimate highs, and all of his friends were there to celebrate with him. 🐾



*Dancing in Silks*



*Zenyatta*



*California Flag*

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