



PRIME DISPATCH

EDITION 226 – 01/02/2019

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Super One / Wild Soiree Filly from Gold Coast Magic Millions
Patrick Payne to train!!!

What looked like being a pretty good week turned into anything but that with the unexpected raids on Darren Weir's Stables turning our industry on its head. I was shocked at the practices that are alleged to have been occurring. Darren has been a shining light in our industry over the past few years when some of the biggest trainers in Australia have had their reputations ruined through breaking the rules of our game. He now looks like joining this inglorious list.

I know he was held in the highest regard by many of our owners who have had horses with him and his results set records that probably only he could have broken. He was very generous with his time with the visit to his training centre at Maldon on Father's Day last year being an absolute highlight for our clients. Now all this is gone, his reputation tarnished forever. Currently I only have three horses in work with Darren and I am waiting to see what RVL comes up with today. Banachek is down to

run at Sale on Sunday. I hope the powers to be allow the horses that have accepted run. The owners have been placed under enough stress without further financial stress with some of his runners at Caulfield tomorrow being amongst the very best horses in Australia.

In my opinion the Integrity Department at RVL has received some unwarranted criticism in recent years. RVL has 10 stewards in the field visiting stables on a regular basis to make sure trainers and their staffs are doing the right thing. This high level of surveillance and commitment to maintaining the integrity of the industry has seen some of our biggest trainers caught and dealt with. I'm certain this level of activity is not occurring in other jurisdictions. I am sure everyone involved in racing is keen to see the Darren Weir situation finalised with this sad saga put to bed as soon as possible.

Weather

In many ways racing is a waiting game with patience a virtue not many of us have. Currently we have some of the harshest weather we have encountered in this country and our sport is impacted more than most by the hot, dry conditions most of Australia is currently suffering through.

In the past week I have been travelling around getting a feel for the yearlings that will be on offer in the coming weeks at the upcoming sales. The dry conditions I have been witnessing are as bad as I can remember. Tasmania is sitting on a tinder box and if the state doesn't get relief from cooler temperatures and more importantly good rain, I hate to think what the consequences could be.

I drove down to Fulmen Park on the Mornington Peninsular on Monday to inspect our spellers. A similar story to what I witnessed in Tasmania last week. Potentially catastrophic conditions exist with blistering weather and hot winds predicted in the coming days. Again, a potent recipe for disaster.

I was in Sydney last week for a couple of days. You only have to look at the sad pictures of thousands of fish perishing at Menindee to get a glimpse of just how critical the situation is in NSW. On Wednesday I drove through the Gold Coast hinterland past Canungra. I know this area well having been posted to the Land Warfare Centre at Canungra for four years. The area looks as dry as I have seen it.

These incredibly dry, hot conditions are having a serious affect on our sport with many tracks simply being too firm due to the unrelenting hot weather. This is causing us to race on tracks that are far too firm. It is easy to blame the track managers but the excessive heat is causing evaporation which is sucking whatever irrigation is being put on the tracks out almost as fast as it is being delivered.

February is traditionally a month where states such as Victoria receive low rainfall. Hopefully this isn't the situation this year.

Our trainers are monitoring our horses progress and if there are any signs their charges are not coping then we are being conservative and backing off and spelling them. We are taking the long, term approach which I'm certain is the only reasonable thing to do.

Finally

I am working though where we are at with our Magic Millions yearling purchases. The Sizzling filly with Darren Weir is likely to go to Patrick Payne but I will confirm this in the coming days. Enjoy your weekend.

More Winners – More Often – More Fun