



Pedigree perspectives from the Breeders' Cup World Championships

by Rommy Faversham

A small collection of stallions, both current and from the past, emerged from last weekend's Breeders' Cup World Championships with their reputations enhanced, thanks to the multiple appearances they made within the pedigrees of the winners.

Indeed, it will be hard to surpass the most recent accomplishments of the 15-year-old stallion Smart Strike, who was already enjoying a dream season at stud.

Only 4½ weeks ago, Smart Strike became the first sire to ever have three Grade 1 winners at the same track on the same day.

This unique treble at Belmont Park on September 30 began when Fabulous Strike captured the Vosburgh Stakes (G1), continued with English Channel's victory in the Joe Hirsch Turf Classic Invitational Stakes (G1), and was capped by Curlin taking the Jockey Club Gold Cup (G1).

In the course of less than an hour on Breeders' Cup day on October 27 at Monmouth Park, Smart Strike became the first to ever sire the winners of North America's two richest races in the same afternoon, with English Channel winning the John Deere Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) and Curlin annexing the Breeders' Cup Classic Powered by Dodge (G1).

Smart Strike not only guaranteed his first national sire title but with 2007 progeny earnings of \$13,832,225 through October 30, he also passed the single-season worldwide earnings record of \$13,542,612, established by Danehill in 2001.

Remarkably, Smart Strike's sire, Mr. Prospector demonstrated his omnipotence by appearing within the four-generation pedigrees of all 11 of this year's Breeders' Cup winners, six of those in tail-male line.

While Smart Strike becomes the hottest Breeders' Cup stallion, Awesome Again remains the most consistent. His daughter, Ginger Punch, winner of this year's Emirates Airline Breeders' Cup Distaff (G1), represents his fourth Breeders' Cup win in the last four years.

Several stallions from past generations distinguished themselves with their multiple appearances within the pedigrees of the latest Breeders' Cup winners.

Claiborne Farm's imported French champion *Herbager was a valuable source of stamina during the 1960s and '70s when siring 64 stakes winners, nearly 15% of his foals. He appears in the fourth and fifth generations of five of this year's winners—Maryfield, Nownownow, Indian Blessing, Kip Deville, and Lahudood (GB).

It is nice to see *Herbager's grandson Vigors, a real fan favorite on the Southern California circuit during the 1970s, serving as a valuable maternal influence in the Breeders' Cup. He is the sire of Kip Deville's grandam as well as the source of the Mile winner's gray coat. Vigors is the broodmare sire of Old Trieste, sire of 2005 Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1) winner Silver Train.

Olden Times, winner of the 1964 Metropolitan Handicap and a good sire (9% stakes winners), was also prominent this year, appearing in the fourth and fifth generations of the pedigrees of Midnight Lute, Ginger Punch, and English Channel.

The most influential, thought-to-be-obscure ancestor from this year's Breeders' Cup is Wise Exchange, a multiple stakes winner by Promised Land who appears as the sire of both Ginger Punch's grandam and Curlin's



Tony Leonard photo

SMART STRIKE

third dam.

Now that War Pass has established himself as the most likely champion two-year-old male following his dominant 4¾-length victory in the Bessemer Trust Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1), the question that inevitably gets asked is, Does he have a pedigree conducive to winning next year's Kentucky Derby?

Alas, I will have to play one of the contrarians this winter and suggest not.

War Pass is from the ninth crop of 1994 Sprint winner and champion sprinter Cherokee Run, who is yet to sire the winner of an important race run at a classic distance. A good source of sprinters and milers, Cherokee Run would figure to need a considerable dose of stamina from his mare to sire a Kentucky Derby (G1) winner.

On the contrary, War Pass's immediate female family has distinguished themselves through precocity and speed.

His dam, the Mr. Prospector mare Vue, won three times at six and 6½ furlongs. A half sister, Oath, by Known Fact, won the 1996 Spinaway Stakes (G1) at seven furlongs. Another half sister, Vision of Beauty, by Danzig, was graded stakes-placed and a four-time winner at six and seven furlongs.

War Pass's pedigree does demonstrate some stamina influences farther back, but they seem too few and far away to overcome all of the speed up close.

From this angle, the Derby could be a bit of a stretch for War Pass.

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AWESOME AGAIN