

A Huge New Incentive



From the Executive Corner

by DOUG BURGE

As depicted on the cover of this issue of *California Thoroughbred*, the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA) is pleased to announce the Golden State Series. This new 27-race stakes program, scheduled to begin in 2012, provides an additional \$2.325 million in restricted purses for two-year-old and three-year-old horses bred or sired in California.

It was through the financial commitment of the entire racing industry that we are able to provide such lucrative advantages to those breeding and racing California-breds and California-sired runners. Funding has been provided by the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC) through the purse account, the California Marketing Committee (CMC) through an annual allocation, and through the nominators of two-year-olds that see the tremendous opportunities that will now exist. A one-time voluntary \$300 nomination fee by owners makes their two-year-olds eligible for all races.

This new series is a great addition to the Cal-bred racing program and a natural extension of the very popular Maiden Bonus Program that has been in place the past two years. Initially, we will provide significant boosts to the purses and number of races available for two and three-year-olds to continue the quick return to owners and breeders. Over time, and with success, it is our goal to also expand the purses and opportunities for older horses as well. The purses for the new stakes series range from \$100,000 to \$300,000 with races at all the major tracks in the state. Two of the new races (and the only additions on the turf) will be held at Golden Gate Fields, providing horsemen in Northern California with more lucrative restricted opportunities.

As mentioned earlier, the idea behind this new program was to build on the success of the maiden bonus offering. Currently, when a Cal-bred or Cal-sired horse breaks their maiden, there is a huge financial return for the owner or owner/breeder. However, in order to create a market for Cal-breds and give breeders more financial justification to breed while providing more incentives to own,

we needed to expand on the maiden success. The new earning potential now provided through the Golden State Series will make it so people cannot afford to not race Cal-breds. These opportunities offered to owners after the maiden bonus win should most definitely put a premium on Cal-breds/Cal-sireds.

The news of this new series in fact had an immediate positive impact on the recent October Yearling Sale at Barretts Equine Ltd. The opening selected night session yielded a 44 percent increase in average with the median doubling last year's first session. At the conclusion of the second day, the sale had an overall average increase of nearly 20 percent.

The joint sale-topper was a son of Unusual Heat, purchased for \$100,000 by trainer Eric Kruljac on behalf of Class Racing Stable. Joe Masino, the manager of Class Racing Stable, stated after bidding, "With the California incentive program changes, it's time to start getting some Cal-breds and supporting Cal-breds." We are optimistic that this trend will continue.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the efforts of Martin Panza, Vice President of Racing at Hollywood Park, the California Marketing Committee and the TOC for all their support and efforts in making this series a reality. With Cal-breds making up over 50 percent of the field sizes in the state, everyone realizes the importance of a strong state-bred program which provides the necessary racing inventory.

Further details of the Golden State Series appear on pages 23 and 24. ■



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