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WHAT IS BLACK-TYPE? WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

We often write about horses earning Black-type in stakes races. This term and the levels of importance indicated by it, is often confusing to those new to the sport. Black-type indicates a runner has won or placed in a select race of importance.

When a horse wins a stakes race, the information is added to the racing databases of The Jockey Club, Equibase, BrisNet and other companies that produce racing and breeding reports for their clients. When a horse goes to an auction, a catalogue page is generated from the database and published for use at the sales. Also, when broodmare owners plan a mating, they often use a catalogue-style report to assess a mare's quality in order to select an appropriate stallion.

But how are the important races determined? Who decides which races are the important ones? A bit of background at this point is necessary. Let's start with the sales catalogue.

Thoroughbred auction catalogues, the most valuable tool for buyers and breeders, list the accomplishments of horses in the family of the particular horse on offer. Prior to 1952, buyers at horse sales were faced with the daunting task of reviewing a list of race names on the catalogue pages and trying to figure out which ones were important and which were not.

The page on the right is from the January 24, 1928 catalogue of the New Zealand Thoroughbred Yearling Sales. This chestnut colt, purchased by Harry Telford for 160 guineas, was later named Phar Lap. Note that horse names were shown in bold type, but the list of race names indicates no level of quality.

In 1952, the Fasig-Tipton auction company began using bold-face type in their catalogues to indicate races of importance as an aid to buyers and breeders.

In 1960, Keeneland Sales Company adopted the same practice.

In 1963, *The Blood-Horse* magazine published the first edition of Cataloguing Standards for foreign racing. The magazine published this for two years until it was taken over by The Jockey Club Statistical Bureau.
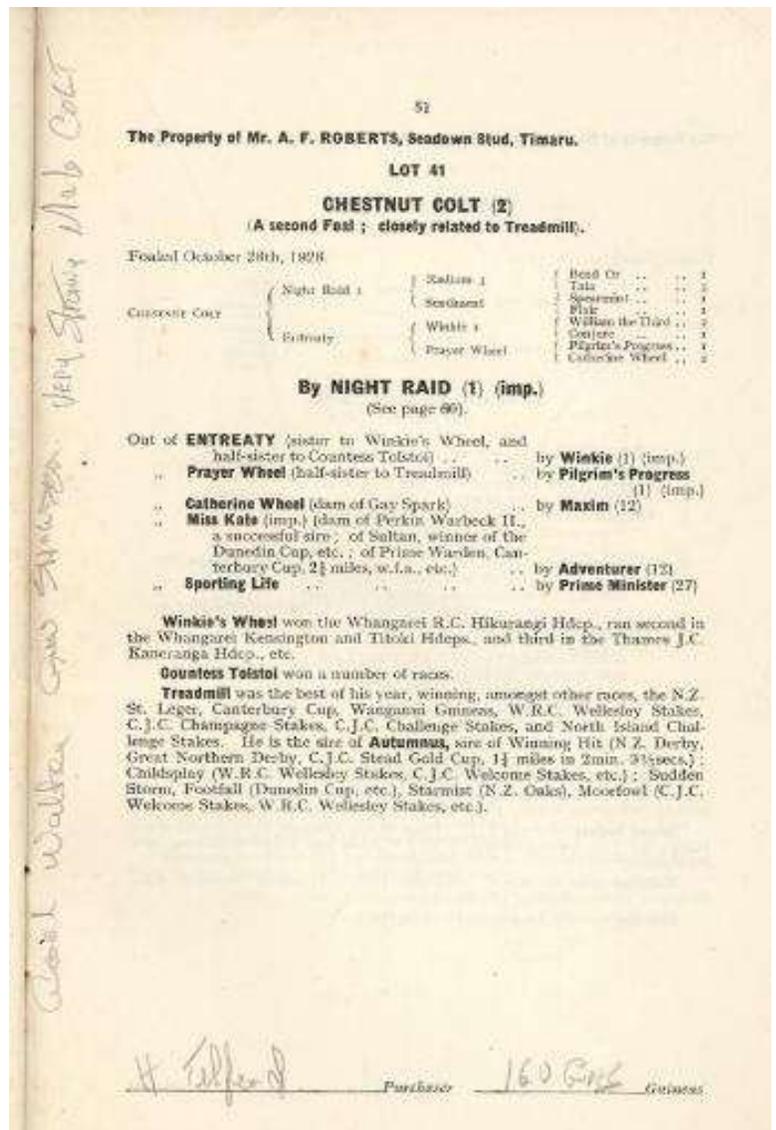
In 1971, the European Pattern Race system was initiated. The committee, comprised of the senior racing officials of England, Ireland and France, developed a more comprehensive list of European races, eventually adding representatives from Germany and Italy. For the first time Pattern races under their direction were grouped into specific levels of importance, so designated by the use of Group numbers 1, 2 and 3.

In 1973, America developed its own version of the Pattern Races with the creation of the American Graded Stakes system.

In 1983, the newly formed International Cataloguing Standards Committee (ICSC) published the first International Cataloguing Standards Book. It listed the important races worldwide which were recognized by the committee. That year also saw formation of the Society of International Thoroughbred Auctioneers (SITA).

SITA and ICSC work together to promote uniformity between countries in the criteria for black-type races and prevent imbalances in the designation of their most important races.

For instance - when the black-type system was just beginning, some nations submitted long lists of important events, amounting in some cases of up to 15 percent of their overall race schedule. This resulted in far too many horses in those countries earning undeserved Black-type. The maximum allowable percentage of races carrying black-type nowadays is only 3 percent. Nations which cannot bring their stakes lists into line with this guideline are not allowed to be published in the ICS book. And SITA will not include those nation's races when publishing sales catalogues.
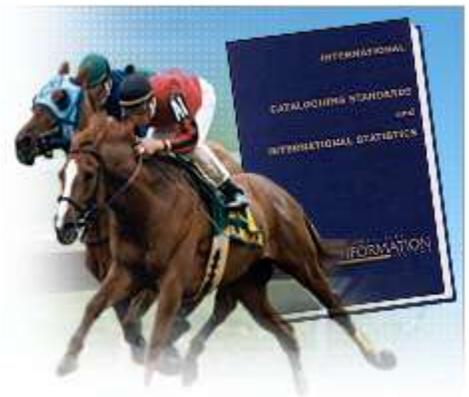
International Cataloguing Standards book, also called "The Blue Book."

Race Value	Example
Grade 1 / Group 1	*Kentucky Derby, Dubai World Cup, Japan Cup*
Grade 2 / Group 2	*Hawthorne Gold Cup, Early Times Manhattan S.*
Grade 3 / Group 3	*Gotham, Jaipur, Poker, Nashua Stakes*
Listed	*Appalachian S., Junior Champion S., Chou Croute H.*
Allowance	unnamed
Claiming	unnamed
Maiden	unnamed

By way of example, we will use Team Valor's Grade 1 winner Summer Soiree to illustrate why Black-type is important.

Hip No.
314

SUMMER SOIREE
Bay Filly; foaled 2008

Barn
18

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                            ┌ Danzig ──────────┌ Northern Dancer
           ┌ War Front ─────┤                  └ Pas de Nom
           │                └ Starry Dreamer ──┌ Rubiano
SUMMER SOIREE                                  └ Lara's Star
           │                ┌ Mazel Trick ─────┌ Phone Trick
           └ Mazel Tov ─────┤                  └ Mazatleca (MEX)
             (2001)         └ Flying Honors ───┌ Silver Hawk
                                               └ Quick Honors
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By WAR FRONT (2002). Black-type winner of $424,205, Alfred G. Vanderbilt Breeders' Cup H. **[G2]** (SAR, $124,920), etc. Sire of 3 crops of racing age, 184 foals, 132 starters, 13 black-type winners, 88 winners of 189 races and earning $7,295,856, including The Factor ($922,180, Malibu S. **[G1]** (SA, $180,000), etc.), Data Link ($501,335, Maker's 46 Mile S. **[G1]** (KEE, $180,000), etc.), Summer Soiree ($458,680, Del Mar Oaks **[G1]** (DMR, $150,000), etc.), Soldat **[G2]** (4 wins, $617,360), State of Play **[G2]**.

1st dam
MAZEL TOV, by Mazel Trick. Winner at 3, $26,761. Dam of 6 registered foals, 4 of racing age, 3 to race, 2 winners—
SUMMER SOIREE (f. by War Front). Black-type winner, see record.
Benestar (g. by Yankee Gentleman). 5 wins, 2 to 4, $186,090, in Canada; placed at 5, 2012 in N.A./U.S. (Total: $183,738).

2nd dam
FLYING HONORS, by Silver Hawk. Winner at 3, $32,320. Dam of—
MIL KILATES (f. by Gold Alert). Winner in 2 starts at 2 in Panama; 10 wins, 3 to 6, $630,098, in N.A./U.S., Pimlico Distaff H. **[G3]**, Affectionately H. **[G3]**, Turnback the Alarm H. **[L]** (AQU, $48,330), 2nd Ladies H. **[G2]**, 3rd Ruffian H. **[G1]**, Delta Air Lines Top Flight H. **[G2]**, etc. Producer.

3rd dam
QUICK HONORS, by To the Quick. Winner at 3, $12,275. Dam of—
FORCING BID. 3 wins at 3, $298,998, Busher Breeders' Cup S. **[G3]**, National Jockey Club Oaks **[L]** (SPT, $90,000), 2nd John A. Morris H. **[G1]**, Go for Wand S. **[G1]**, 3rd Michigan Budweiser Breeders' Cup H. **[L]** (DET, $11,358). Granddam of **SUGINO ENDEAVOUR** (Total: $1,721,539, TV Nishinippon Corporation Sho Kitakyushu Kinen **[G3]**, 2nd Chunichi Sports Sho Falcon S. **[G3]**, Yodo Tankyori S., 3rd Kokura Nisai S. **[G3]**, etc.).

4th dam
NALEES HONOR AWARD, by Arts and Letters. Winner at 4, $8,219. Half-sister to **MENEVAL, NALEES FOLLY, NALEES MAN, Nalees Rialto, Nalee's Fantasy, Nalees Knight, Take Warning, Pretty Fancy**. Dam of—
Winfield Honor. 4 wins at 4, $51,591, 3rd Grassland H.-L. Producer.
RACE RECORD: At 2, one win, 3 times 3rd (Blue Hen S. **[L]** (DEL, $8,250)); at 3, four wins (Del Mar Oaks **[G1]** (DMR, $150,000), Boiling Springs S. **[G3]** (MTH, $90,000), Bourbonette Oaks **[G3]** (TP, $58,900)), once 2nd (Matriarch S. **[G1]** (HOL, $50,000)) in 7 starts; at 4, 2012, once 3rd (Ballston Spa S. **[G2]** (SAR, $25,000)) in 1 start. Totals: 5 wins, once 2nd, 4 times 3rd. Earned $458,680.
Engagements: NTRA, Breeders' Cup.
Foaled in Kentucky. (KTDF).

The catalogue page for Summer Soiree currently looks like this.

The page typically shows 3 to 4 generations of production. The first dam of Summer Soiree is Mazel Tov. Note her name is not in bold-type, indicating that she did not win or place in a stakes race. Her foal Benestar is not a stakes winner or stakes-placed, so he also has not earned black-type.

Under the fourth dam, you will see that some horse names are in capital letters and some are in lower case letters. The capital black-type names indicate stakes winners. The lower-case black-type names indicate stakes-placed horses.

Summer Soiree herself is in capital black-type letters and by looking at her race record at the bottom of page one can determine the best of her stakes victories came in a Grade 1 race.

Under the third dam is a Japanese runner named Sugino Endeavour. Without the G3 indicators following the race names, you might not know what level of racing this colt was participating in. With them, one can immediately see his level of success.

This brings up another issue – comparing race values between countries. Are Japanese Graded races considered to be the same quality as American Graded races? Yes.

Is the horse who wins the Slovakian Derby held in the same regard as the horse that wins the Kentucky Derby? No.

A responsibility of the ICSC is to annually audit the level of quality in each racing country in order to verify that the races submitted for inclusion into public auction sales catalogues do in fact meet the outlined criteria.

Sugino Endeavour winning the Grade 3 Kitakyushu Kinen.

The aim of the committee, which is comprised of representatives of the racing authorities, breeders' organizations and international auction houses of the major breeding and racing countries, is to

achieve uniformity of cataloguing standards throughout the world during the internationalization of thoroughbred breeding, racing, and marketing. Some of their responsibilities are:

- To assure that racing in these countries is of sufficient stature in terms of number of horses competing, number of races contested, and purse monies distributed to justify their classification as being among the world's major racing countries;

- To assure that the number and percentage of races given "black type" status in these countries is consistent with the pattern of racing in them without being disproportionate to the ration of such races in the countries already in Part I;

- To assure that the "black type" races in these countries are, in fact, the highest class races contested within them.

Racing nations fall into four groups, as determined by the ICSC. Each group is treated differently in sales catalogues. This method allows for the reader of the catalogue page to see relative quality in the achievements of the horses mentioned therein.

	Countries (as of 2012)	Limitations in Catalogues
Part I	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, United States of America.	All Graded and Listed races count for the value, exactly as written, and carry designators [G1], [G2], [G3], and [L] as appropriate.
Part II	Hong Kong, India, Macau, Malaysia, Panama, Puerto Rico, Scandinavia, Singapore, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	All Graded and Listed races count only for the value of a Listed race, and carry designator [L].
Part III	Austria, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Korea, Mauritius, Mexico, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago.	All Graded and Listed races within these countries receive no black-type and carry the designator [N].
Part IV	All Jump races (steeplechase, hurdle, cross country)	No black-type is assigned for jumps, but instead carry italicized type.
Unassigned	All other countries not listed above, such as Hungary, Russia, Morocco, Serbia, Colombia, Thailand, The Philippines, etc.	Racing in these countries may not be mentioned in global catalogues & reports.

Some Part II and III nations host International Racing days with large purses and invitations for global participants. Certain exceptions are made for these races, which are allowed to carry greater value than the nation's regular stakes races. An example of this is the International Festival held in Hong Kong where Irridescence won the International Queen Elizabeth II Cup, which carries legitimate Grade 1 black-type.