

EBONY FLYER WILL REMAIN IN TRAINING AS 5-YEAR-OLD IN SOUTH AFRICA SCOPE ANALYSIS SHOWS THROAT HAS STABILIZED AFTER TWO SURGERIES TRAINER JUSTIN SNAITH EXPECTS TO BRING AMAZON BACK NEXT JANUARY



Classic and multiple Grade 1 winner Ebony Flyer remains in training as a 5-year-old, it was revealed today by Barry Irwin, CEO of Team Valor International, who campaigns the Jet Master mare with Gaynor Rupert of Drakenstein Stud and Anant and Vanashree Singh of South Africa.

Initially the partners had agreed to retire Ebony Flyer following her sterling campaign at 4 and breed her to Drakenstein stallion Trippi. However, trainer Justin Snaith urged the owners to have a rethink, as the riders of the 17-hands 1-inch tall black filly indicated she still had a lot of run left in her.

Ebony Flyer beat Igugu in the G1 Cape Fillies Guineas

Ebony Flyer, as South African followers of the sport are aware, has undergone two operations to fix a problem with her throat. Irwin convinced his partners to retire her in order to keep her excellent record intact and in anticipation that the throat would once again fail her.

But this week dynamic scope tests performed in South Africa and analyzed by veterinary surgeons both in Cape Town and Kentucky indicated that the throat problems temporarily have stabilized, which has encouraged the partners to allow the mare to continue in training as a 5-year-old.

No definitive plans have been made for Ebony Flyer's first start of the new season, but Justin Snaith indicated that he might have a look at the summer features for the distaff set in Cape Town, starting off with the Paddock Stakes over 9 furlongs and followed by the Majorca over 8 furlongs. The Queen's Plate is a possibility, but the original thought is to restrict Ebony Flyer to races against her own gender during her 5-year-old campaign.

Barry Irwin said "I feel fairly comfortable that this is a good decision, although I for one was more anxious to start getting foals from the mare. My breeding theories run something like this: the two most important attributes for being a good producer are youth and health. Young mares are the most healthy and they produce their best offspring, by and large, early in their careers. So the earlier they enter production, the better their chances for success in the nursery.

"The other thing is that I wanted to avoid my partners and their advisors and their friends from trying to run Ebony Flyer in races like the J & B Met and the Durban July. When one has a horse with this much talent, regardless how impaired they may be in their wind, the natural inclination is to want to run them over ground. I have always considered this to be potentially disastrous for Ebony Flyer because of her breathing issues. In this regard, she is no different from her sire Jet Master.

"So as we anticipate racing Ebony Flyer at 5, it is with a clear understanding that we do so in the common agreement that this magnificent mare will race at distances that won't be too much of a challenge for her respiratory system."