

EBONY FLYER CRUISES BY 3 AT KENILWORTH IN QUEEN'S PLATE PREP AMAZON MARE SKIPS CLEAR IN LOADED ALLOWANCE RACE ON SUNDAY SNAITH/IRWIN TO DECIDED ON WHETHER SHE NEEDS ONE MORE TRIAL

Ebony Flyer cruised to a 3-length victory today over 7 ½ furlongs in a race that looked more like a Grade 1 than an Kenilworth allowance prep for the Grade 1 Queen's Plate. The one-turn event was run at a slow tempo into a stiff headwind down the homestretch. Although the Amazon had the benefit of a debut run at 4 this season over the Durbanville bullring in October, she broke sluggishly today, being ahead of only one of her 5 rivals when the gates sprung open. Veteran reinsman Felix Coetzee, however, soon had the filly balanced, as she took up a wonderful position one horse width off the rail and right behind forwardly placed In Like Flynn.



The horses raced in a tightly bunched pack around the turn. Sensing the slow pace, Coetzee made a somewhat premature move to ease the odds-on favorite out towards the middle of the straight, in order to avoid a rival from stealing a march on him when the field arrived in the lane. "She wasn't even able to stride out because the pace was so slow and she was so cramped for space," Coetzee said. "When I moved her out, it allowed her to use her full action." In a matter of a few strides over perhaps 40 meters, Ebony Flyer caught the leaders and moved out to a clear advantage.

Ebony Flyer never felt the whip, as Coetzee rode her with heels and hands, as the black filly strode away to a sizeable lead well before the final furlong had been reached. From there, Ebony Flyer simply cruised to her sixth victory in seven outings. The Grade 1 winner's lone defeat came last year, when she was a magnificent third in the Grade 1 Queen's Plate, becoming only the second 3-year-old filly in the 150-year annals of the mile race to finish in the top 3. It is that same race, sponsored in the modern era by L'Ormarins wines, which is her seasonal goal during the Cape summer season.

Ebony Flyer is owned in partnership by Team Valor International, Anant and his wife Vanashree Singh and Gaynor Rupert. The Jet Master filly will fly Mrs. Rupert's light blue and white silks in the Queen's Plate, which is sponsored by the winery owned by Gaynor and husband Johann Rupert.

Trainer Justin Snaith said "She has bounced right back to her best, even though it was a slowly run race. She had a good blow because of the headwind and I think we must strongly consider running her again in the 6 weeks before the Queen's Plate."

Racing Manager Barry Irwin said "I completely agree with Justin. I originally had thought two preps would be enough for the Queen's Plate, because last season the filly ran best when fresh. This year, however, she has grown and filled out into that enormous frame and she requires more work to get her to peak fitness. I was not impressed with her comeback win, I have to admit. This race fully restored my confidence in her. She's the best South African racehorse we've ever owned and that includes Ipi Tombe, Iridescence and Gypsy's Warning."