

June 18, 2008

SHE'S ON FIRE BOOKS DURBAN JULY PASSAGE WITH WIN OVER THE COLTS, TODAY OFFICIALLY THE HIGHEST-RATED FILLY OR MARE IN SOUTH AFRICA, MARWING OPTS TO RIDE MARE FOR ORMOND FERRARIS IN PRESTIGIOUS G1

She's on Fire ran her eyeballs out on Saturday to reverse a decision with the 3yo Eddington in the Grade 3 Jubilee Handicap at Turffontein and in the process received the ultimate compliment as to her well being, when Weichong Marwing jumped off second-favorite Dancer's Daughter to ride the Team Valor mare for his old boss Ormond Ferraris in the Grade 1 Durban July, the biggest race on the South African racing calendar, in the process causing shock waves to ripple throughout the Turf.



She's on Fire lugged 131 pounds to victory in Turffontein Grade 3.

"A lot of people were incredulous that Weichong would choose to ride our mare over a three-time Grade 1 winner on which he had just beaten the Durban July favorite Pocket Power and the sharp 3yo miler Imbongi," said Barry Irwin. "One horse is co-second favorite for the big race, while our mare is more than twice those odds.

"Interestingly, Weichong made this choice in the full knowledge that She's on Fire would pick up a 1 kilo penalty for having her rating rise as a result of winning a handicap. As the conditions for the Durban July are written, Dancer's Daughter picked up no penalty, as her win came in a non handicap. Needless to say we are thrilled that Marwing rides us, as we think Weichong is the cat's meow."

The Jockey Club handicapper today moved She's on Fire's Merit rating up 2 pounds to 107, making her the highest rated filly or mare current training in South Africa, a pound above Dancer's Daughter. As a result the 5-year-old has been elevated a kilo in the weights, so that she will now have to shoulder 128 pounds in the 11-furlong Durban July



Robin and Jane Bruss lead in the Jubilee heroine.

Marwing has ridden the daughter of Jet Master twice this season, winning both times, in Saturday's race making up most of the 131 pounds she carried.

She's on Fire was winning a Graded stakes for a third consecutive weekend, two of the winners being ridden by Marwing. Two weeks ago Weichong steered yearling buy On Her Toes to a dead-heat win the Grade 1 Allan Robertson Fillies Championship and last week TVI took the Grade 1 Daily News 2000 with young Richard Fourie guiding Russian Sage to his second such tally.

From **SportingPost.co.za** comes the following:

Jubilee Hcp (SAf-G3) (6/15)



Whether Turffontein's Jubilee Handicap has much bearing on the Vodacom Durban July in most years is debatable at best, but the most recent edition of the 1800m race looks an exception. Half of the eight starters in this traditional off-season feature on the standside course were first acceptors for the July, amongst them Gr1 GommaGomma Challenge winner Eddington. She's On Fire and Bound By Honour, respectively second and fourth behind the Dominic Zaki inmate in Africa's richest race six weeks earlier, also turned out for the Jubilee.

Eddington proved most disappointing, even if he never did have a particularly straightforward task under 60.5 kgs in the first place. He was well placed in around third spot as Falstaff set a decent pace from She's On Fire, with Bound To Travel also prominent, but the GommaGomma winner was looking far from comfortable on the firm winter ground early in the straight and was soon beaten. Conditions at Greyville on July day shouldn't be anywhere near as firm as this, but nor are they likely to be anything like as soggy as on GommaGomma day. It is worth noting that three of Eddington's five career wins have come on soft ground, and while proper "good" going probably suits him fine he would certainly benefit from any unseasonable rains ahead of the July.

She's On Fire is also known to enjoy softer ground, but she coped perfectly fine with the conditions here. Picking it up comfortably once Falstaff faded, she opened up a solid lead 200m out and kept going well under Weichong Marwing to shake off a late challenge from Captain Corageous with room to spare. The runner-up had won the corresponding race twelve months earlier, when it was staged on the Turffontein inner course, but wasn't in particularly good form coming into Sunday's renewal. Bound To Travel finished third, lacking extra late after looking a possible threat at one point, with Singing Sword fourth, but Bound By Honour made no show and also disappointed.

She's On Fire is a 5yo mare trained by Ormond Ferraris, who is still looking to finally earn compensation for his colt Distinctly's unlucky July defeat back in 1975. Distinctly was promoted from third place to second after being severely impeded by original winner Gatecrasher, but the honours had to be awarded to a very fortuitous Principal Boy, who had crossed the line second. That may seem like ancient history to most, but not to She's On Fire's trainer.



Veteran Ormond Ferraris.

Whether the daughter of Jet Master has any realistic chance of finally laying the spectre of Distinctly to rest is a moot point, but she has turned into a seriously good performer over the past few months and will be in great form going forward to the July. She's On Fire is out of the Concertino mare Cream Of The Crop and was bought for R90k at the 2004 National Yearling Sale. Bred by the Scott Bros, she has won 6 of 13 starts and earned R1 311 700 for her owners, Team Valor.