

THE INDIAN TURF INVITATION CUP WEEKEND

“A GRAND WEEKEND WHEN THE GOLD AND BROWN COLOURS REIGNED SUPREME”

The Gr.1 Indian Turf Invitation Cup has more often than not only been a confirmation of the Indian Derby result. Elusive Pimpernel, Smart Chieftain and Storm Again have left an indelible mark on this event by not only winning the Indian Derby but also stamping their authority in the invitation cup, the travel from one centre to another not having a bearing on their performance, things have changed, so much so, that the winner of this race is not necessarily the Indian Derby winner and may not even be the winner of any regional Derby. Ministerial, Zurbaran and *Star Supreme won this premier event, without a Derby success behind them.*

As a three year old, when star of Windsor was brought to Mysore, this son of Steinbeck was considered something special perhaps, the Mysore Derby came in a wee bit too early as he put in a listless performance. Dr. Ramaswamy on the other hand, always believed that this horse would be a force to reckon with in winter, and this proved right when star of Windsor won his share of Races, including the Bangalore Winter Derby.

Star of Windsor produced a devastating run to cruise home and win the Poonawalla Stud Farms Stayers' Cup by a widening margin of three lengths from brown Sugar and Baffert. Steinbeck has sired back to back winners of the stayers' cup in Chennai, having bred Alameda and Star of Windsor.

Trainer Ganapathy deserves accolades for keeping Spectacular Quest in fine condition. Having regained his form after a setback, Spectacular Quest emerged triumphant in the Maj. P.K. Mehra Super Mile in a competitive field, where Coral Gables had to once again play the role of bridesmaid having come second the day before in the Sprinters' Cup.

The 43rd running of the Invitation cup saw the impressive son of Razeen – Allinda, Southern Regent, the Indian Derby winner, trounce the opposition, giving Dr. MAM Ramaswamy his 422nd classic success and his first invitation from as many as nine running in Chennai. As jockey Neil Mc Cullagh, who was astride Frida Kahlo who came 2nd in the Indian Derby, sums it up, “Southern Regent just run over me like a gale.” For trainer Ganapathy, this was his first Invitation Cup

Victory and for Dr. Ramaswamy, his 7th success in this historic race.

At a colourful ceremony held at the Madras Race Club's Guindy Lodge on the eve of the Invitation Cup, the Chevrolet Racing Awards for excellence on the Indian Turf were presented. The awards recognize and honour the achievements for the year gone by. The Leading Stud Farm – USHA & MEHRA Group of Stud farms represented by Ms. Ameeta Mehra, all had a few moments to express their sentiments to member of the racing fraternity that had gathered from all part of the Country to enjoy the weekend of racing. Mr. S. Rangarajan – Managing Director of 'The Hindu' who has had a lifelong association with the sport was inducted into the 'Hall of Fame'. It was with his encouragement and persuasion that the Madras Race Club agreed to host the Invitation Cup, one year in advance of its rightful turn.

As chairman of the Madras Race Club, Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy took a very keen and personal interest in the planning and execution of the many programmes planned for the weekend of racing, with meticulous attention being paid to the minutest detail. The special race card prepared for the event has to be commended as it had international appeal. The warmth and hospitality was greatly appreciated. The seventeen sponsors for the various races have made a very valuable contribution of the success of the 43rd running of the Invitation Cup, a colourful fireworks display, a cultural show and a gala dinner rounded off the weekend's festivals.

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The Presentation Ceremony of the Indian Turf Invitation Cup, 2005

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