

# News from the **North**

## Racing News

By Richard Scheidt

Golden Gate Fields concluded its first race meet on its new engineered racing surface, Tapeta Footings, with great success. For the first time in recent memory, stables were full and horsemen from out of state were knocking on the door to receive a stall. Average field size for the meet was 8.2 horses per race, up 1.3 from the same period a year earlier. Total handle for the meet was up 9.4 percent, and handicappers around the country took notice of the large fields, as out-of-state handle increased 24.8 percent.

Designed as a safer, all-weather surface, Tapeta Footings performed as advertised. Trainers and jockeys raved about its performance, especially the way it held up during heavy rain. Golden Gate Fields looks to continue their momentum this spring when they will run a 30-day meet beginning May 14. The short meet will host nine stakes races featuring the Grade III Golden Gate Fields Turf on May 31.

Summer fair racing is on the horizon, featuring some changes to the circuit schedule for 2008. The Alameda County Fair in Pleasanton will be first out of the gate, and this year celebrates 150 years of horse racing. After running the "experiment" of only one week of live racing in 2007, the Solano County Fair meet in Vallejo is back for 10 days in 2008, followed by 12 days at the Sonoma County Fair in Santa Rosa, including turf racing. The San Mateo County Fair is up next, and will run its last scheduled race meet at historic Bay Meadows. Ferndale in Humboldt County will again run concurrently with San Mateo in mid-August.

The California State Fair at Cal Expo in Sacramento rejoins the circuit after a three-year hiatus, with 12 days of racing concluding on Labor Day, September 1. After a highly successful meet in 2007, the San Joaquin Fair in Stockton moved their live racing to September. Stockton will run unoverlapped for the second straight year, and the shift in the schedule will add continuity to the racing calendar. The "Central Valley Swing," beginning with Sacramento and Stockton, concludes at the Big Fresno Fair. Live racing in Fresno runs the first two weeks in October, concluding with the last day of fair racing in 2008 on Columbus Day, Monday, October 13.

TOC has worked closely with CARF (California Authority of Racing Fairs) representatives to maintain summer purses at levels equal to those at Golden Gate Fields and Bay Meadows. CARF will again conduct their Starter Series, tying together one race at each of the nine fairs with bonuses paid to the top connections at summer's end. The fairs will not be without black type opportunities, with stakes races scheduled throughout the summer. Additional information including race dates, post times and stakes schedules may be found by visiting [www.calfairs.com](http://www.calfairs.com).

## Seminar Update

TOC's Continuing Education Series made its first stop of 2008 at Bay Meadows on February 23. More than 20 participants were treated to one of the best seminars to date in Northern California. Experienced owners Robert Ansara and Randy Morris shared their knowledge from a combined 70 years in the business. Ansara, who races under the stable name

Blue Moon Racing, stressed the importance of a well thought out business plan whether racing as an individual or in partnership. Morris, also a breeder, spoke in detail on the various ways to acquire a Thoroughbred. He emphasized "buyer beware" and that, in general, the less expensive the horse, the more problems that horse might have. He touched on how breeding to race is a long-term investment and patience is a must. Both speakers have worked with various trainers over time and stressed that teamwork and developing a trusting relationship are key to a successful stable. They also mentioned that taking time and doing due diligence in selecting a trainer will help alleviate surprises down the line.

Following a question and answer period, participants headed to the backside for a barn tour. O.J. Jauregui walked the participants through a day in the life of a trainer. He outlined training and feed schedules, and how decisions are made on where and what level to run a horse.

The Seminar Series in Northern California continues in 2008 with a conformation clinic on April 12 at Bay Meadows followed by the Business of Thoroughbred Ownership at Golden Gate Fields on May 31. Visit [www.toconline.com](http://www.toconline.com) for the entire 2008 schedule of events.



### Baze Tops 10,000 Win Mark

Russell Baze has done it again. The all-time leading jockey by wins in North America has hit yet another milestone by winning race number 10,000. On Saturday, February 1 at Golden Gate Fields, Baze guided Two Step Cat up the rail to win in the tightest of photos. Baze has won more than 70 riding titles at Bay Meadows and Golden Gate Fields and seems to routinely win more than 400 races each year. Baze, who passed Laffit Pincay Jr. in December of 2006 at Bay Meadows to take the all-time lead, indicated that he has no plans for backing off. Want to get a glimpse of Russell Baze? Just stop by the winners circle at your favorite Northern California track!