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Husson Eagle going straight past his opposition as if their hooves were nailed to the track

I can't remember having a better few days than we have just experienced. Isthmian got things rolling at Port Macquarie winning her second race for the preparation in a \$30,000 Class 1 plus a BOBS bonus which is terrific stakes money. She has really started to put it together and while she only had the two runs this time in she won both of them and is starting to fulfil the great promise she displayed as a younger horse. Well done to Kris Lees on once again doing an excellent job for us.

On Saturday morning I did something I normally don't do and listened to the 'experts' on radio dissect Husson Eagle's race. After they completed their summaries I checked to make sure he hadn't been scratched.

For those who did themselves a favour and inspected the horses before the race it was quite obvious which horse was the standout in the parade ring. Husson Eagle aided by a superb ride from Michelle Payne duly smashed his opposition running home his final 600 in 31.85 seconds. He has really come back in superb condition.

I love nothing more than to watch my moderately priced horses beat the 'silvertails' and send them home with their tails between their legs. We have done this more often than I would like to remember over the years. It gives me great satisfaction. Husson Eagle was a \$42,500 purchase from the Adelaide Magic Millions and has now won over \$900,000 which is a great result.

Patrick Payne and I sat down at the end of Husson Eagle's last preparation and sorted out a plan that would see him at his best come Magic Millions Day on 14 January 2017. We wanted to give him the best opportunity to win the Magic Millions Sprint for a second time, after all it is a \$1 million race!!!

He was sent him to Yarraman Park in the Hunter Valley with Flying Jess and Invincible Al to spell over winter. After we looked at the programme we thought it best to skip Flemington and its firm tracks and to concentrate on races at the tail end of the Carnival.

It is fair to say on the strength of Saturday's win he is a much more rounded horse than 12 months ago and again he produced exceptional sectionals. Well done to Patrick and his staff, they deserve our gratitude.

I was thrilled for Michelle Payne to get a good win under her belt. We were very worried about her when she had her fall earlier in the year with the reports coming through from the family being anything but positive. To her credit she has kicked back again and we wish her continued success.

Poor barrier draws are the biggest hurdle horses have to overcome as they get up in their grades and on Saturday Flying Jess's poor gate was too big an obstacle for her on Saturday but she put in the run of the race and all being well will join Husson Eagle at the Gold Coast in January. Her effort to finish 4th was exceptional at Listed level.

After such a great weekend it was terrific to see Stimuli continue the winning run scoring a strong victory at Taree. Stimuli had an issue and Kris Lees recommended a long break which he was given and he has come back in great shape winning today at his 3rd run back. Our team has really started to step up to the plate and I'm looking forward to the coming months.

AND THEN THERE WAS SUNDAY

A few weeks ago I received an invitation from Racing NSW to a farewell lunch for John Messara the outgoing Chairman of Racing NSW. On Sunday Maree and I headed out to Royal Randwick for the lunch during which the achievements of John Messara as Chairman of racing in the Premier State were highlighted.

We were privileged to be invited and I was the only Licenced Syndicator attending the function. This was very pleasing particularly considering I operate out of Victoria. It certainly was a special day

with former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, former NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and a host of other high profile people attending.

John's contribution to our industry should never be forgotten or dismissed. He has picked up the industry in NSW by the shoelaces and propelled it to a position where it is now the strongest racing jurisdiction in the Southern Hemisphere. It is impossible to see any other jurisdiction challenging NSW in the foreseeable future.

Like most effective leaders John isn't everyone's cup of tea all of the time but he is undoubtedly a great visionary and leader with the contacts and ability to get things done. He has the ability to open the highest doors in the land and to persuade support his vision. I admire his resilience and determination to push his case forward when it may be at odds with some of his colleagues.

His achievements are too great to list here but the following few are examples of what he has given the industry in NSW in the past five years:

- * Doubled the stakes money for Provincial races in NSW.
- * Doubled the stakes money for Country racing in his five years.
- * Was the driving force behind 'The Championships' which is a great way to showcase NSW and Australian racing to the world.
- * Raised stakes money on a Saturday in Sydney to a minimum of \$100,000 with the exception of the Country Highway Handicaps which are worth \$60,000.
- * Oversaw and implemented a standard of integrity that is the envy of every racing jurisdiction in Australia.

ON THE TRACK

This weekend we continue our march towards Magic Millions with Hijack Hussy, More Than A Rose and Reneged running at Ballarat, The Gold Coast and at Eagle Farm. There are races on offer for each of these horses at the Gold Coast should their form warrant it. Our other runners are Invincible Al at Sandown with Husson's Kiss and Tough Vic in Launceston.

MY MOVEMENTS

Unfortunately I received word today that a close friend of mine has passed away in Sydney. I will be heading back from Scone to attend his funeral on Friday before flying to Brisbane for Saturday's meeting. I'm back in Melbourne on Tuesday.



Isthmian bolting in at Port Macquarie Two on the trot!!!



Stimuli as a yearling

Stimuli is part of a great crop of 13 yearlings, all winners that included Husson Eagle, Savoureux, Hijack Hussy, Annaman, Makeadane, Raido and Rumeron.