

NZTR Over the JUMPS

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Richard Eynon – people love winners

BY DENNIS RYAN

It's hard to get anything that smacks of emotion out of Richard Eynon.

That's why he still blushes when he thinks back to the exuberance he displayed at Riccarton on the final day of the Grand National carnival.

The young Maori man standing high in the irons, punching the air and letting go the biggest "Whooppee!!" as he and Bennyosler were led back into the birdcage after winning the FMG Grand National Steeplechase really did surprise himself.

"I still fell a bit embarrassed about that," says Eynon, "that's not me."

Just goes to show, doesn't it, what winning one of New Zealand's landmark races can do to a normally low-key guy? From a wider perspective, Eynon's achievement goes to prove what heights can be reached by someone who gets the right breaks and with that, the chance to show what he's made of.

Ten years ago, winning the Grand National would have been as far from Eynon's mind as flying to the moon. Back then he was still learning how to ride a horse, having given away ideas of joining the army in favour of becoming a trackwork rider.

"I had done my entrance exams for the army after leaving Palmerston North Boy's High but then I got interested in the horses," he recalls. "My Mum was doing a course with Johnny Field and Janice Webster at Wanganui racecourse and it all started when I used to drop her off and pick off from there.

"I got talked into learning some more about riding myself and ended up riding trackwork. After a while I moved up to Cambridge to work for Ross McCarroll and then Chris Wood."

That former top jumps jockey talked Eynon into supplementing his time at the Cambridge training track with regular visits to Ken and Ann Browne's property in the rolling country behind the central Waikato town.

"I had never heard of the Browne's until then but the first day I went out there and rode a horse (that just happened to be retired 1992 Great Northern Steeplechase winner Lord Tennyson) over their practice jumps I knew what I wanted to be. I was hooked on becoming a jumps jockey!"

That was at the start of this decade when Eynon was in his early twenties. Now, at age 29, he can look back and judge his progression through the ranks to now be one of the country's most respected jumps jockeys.

"I was a bit of a hoon back then. I got into a bit of trouble and needed to sort myself out," he admits now. "When I got my licence I rode a bit for Kenny Rae – one of my first winners was his horse Phantom Jay, then I rode a highweight double for him on Our George and Road Ace at Waipa.

"That day he mentioned to me that he was looking for someone to ride trackwork for him up at Ruakaka, so I grabbed my gear, jumped in the truck with him and off I went!"

A mutually beneficial period followed, with Eynon mixing work in the winterless north with time on the road with the well travelled Rae team. Along the way the results accumulated and he began to pick up outside rides, the best of which resulted in victory in the 2006 McGregor Grant Steeplechase on the Ann Browne-trained Primo Canera and weeks later the Wellington Hurdles on that wonderfully versatile Wanganui galloper Van Winkle.

Early last year it was again time for a change, one that was the crucial decider in Eynon's current fortunes. Having ridden an increasing number of horses for

John Wheeler, he took up the Taranaki horseman's offer to join his stable and see what they could achieve together.

"Wheels said if I applied myself I would be guaranteed rides on his horses, so it wasn't hard to make up my mind," he recalls. "It was a different world there, what with riding at hunts and just getting so much practice and help with my jumps riding.

"I've learnt heaps and I know that whenever I've made a blue Wheels is there to put me right, he tells me where I've gone wrong."

This winter Eynon has repaid his boss many times over, headed by a Hawke's Bay Hurdle win on Bennyosler and on the same horse, the race that had eluded Wheeler for so long, the Grand National Steeplechase.

"I was stoked when it happened and since then I've realised how big it is winning a race like that. People haven't stopped congratulating me and now I've got some idea why Wheels is so respected.

"People love winners and he has had so many. It's like when you're having a round of golf with him, you're always having to wait for him to catch up because there are all these people wanting to talk to him.

"I'll never be in that league but I'll be happy to keep ticking over and doing my bit. It's pretty cool I reckon just doing that."



Great Northern Day – Whips and Spurs

THE FUJIFILM WHIPS N SPURS SPRING PARTY

Great Northern Day, Saturday 5 September, 2009

Guineas Ballroom, Level Three, Ellerslie Stand

11.30am – 8.30pm

The annual **Fujifilm Whips n Spurs Spring Party** is a much-anticipated event on everyone's social calendar and this year's event promises to be just that!

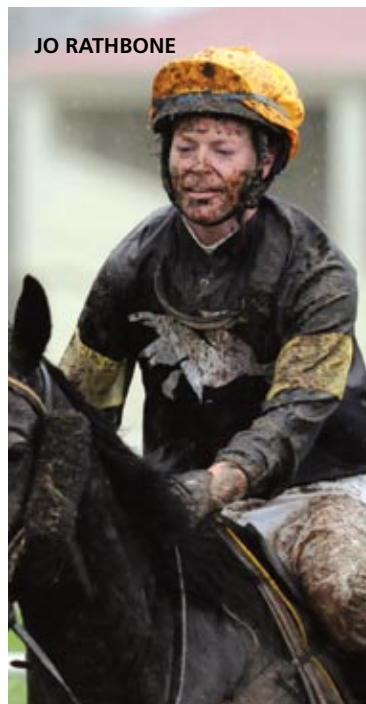
Held on Great Northern Day, it's the perfect opportunity for all you fillies and stallions to dust off your bits, get out of the stable and into the show ring for a bit of horsing around!

TICKETS INCLUDE:

- ▶ Racecourse admission (for tickets purchased prior to the day)
- ▶ Drink on arrival
- ▶ All day food, designed to suit the event's theme
- ▶ Racebook and pen
- ▶ Access to totes and a cash bar
- ▶ All day entertainment, including the spectacle of the time-honoured and gruelling Great Northern Steeplechase, tunes from Kieran Bell and live music after the last race.

All the surprise and delights of a **Fujifilm Whips n Spurs** party!

Tickets are just \$75pp.



JO RATHBONE

Jo Rathbone & Hypnotise – takes the honours

Congratulations are extended to jockey Jo Rathbone and the connections of outstanding steeplechaser, Hypnotise for their success in the Mercedes Awards. Both are worthy winners.



HYPNOTISE

Join Us at National Jumps Day at Te Aroha

NZ Jumps Inc is looking forward to hosting a hospitality area at the National Jumps Day on Sunday, September 27 at Te Aroha. All members of NZ Jumps Inc are welcome to join us for a complimentary drink and some finger food. Jumping owners with horses running on the day are also invited to drop in and say hello. Members of the NZ Jumps Inc Board and NZTR will be present at the venue – so please use this as an opportunity to come along express your ideas, suggestions, criticism and praise for all things jumping in New Zealand!



RIOCH

SEASON SENSATIONS

RIOCH

The shrewdness of Kevin Myers is legendary stuff in New Zealand jump racing. This season he sent a team of jumpers south to Oamaru and coolly collected three races with Gauchito Bastardo, Pasco and Asset Stripper. However, the stable runner to get most talking this season has been Rioch, owned by D, M J and S C O'Leary. Rioch debuted over hurdles at Wanganui on June 18 and duly won. He re-appeared in a maiden steeplechase at Wellington on July 11 and never looked in danger of losing. When he lined up in the Grand National Hurdle he was amongst those anticipated as a winner's enclosure candidate. The tactics of young jockey, George Strickland bold front running ride will be debated for a long time as will the question of would he or wouldn't he have won. The comment line for the race reads: *huge lead, fell 450, would have won.* We will never know for sure. But what we do know is that Rioch has been one of the sensations of the season.

COUNTER PUNCH

Before we examine the merits of this top grade hurdler, let's have a quick word of praise for his sire Yamanin Vital – who must be considered the leading jumping sire in Australasia. Not only is he responsible for the outstanding Mark Oulaghan trained Counter Punch – but he is also the sire of the dual Great Northern winner Hypnotise, leading South Island chaser Nicholman and the John Wheeler trained pair, Australian based jumper Yamanaura and his up and comer, Mali Juraj – as well as several others. White Robe Lodge can be proud of their contribution to the sport in more ways than one! Counter Punch kicked off his jumping year in the Waikato Hurdles with an encouraging looking fifth place however. He was then guided to Canterbury on what was a "recce" for the national when comfortably landing his maiden steeplechase victory in the Homeby. Stepped back to hurdles he won the PJR 1 Wellington Hurdles in a facile manner under an ultra confident Tommy Hazlett. Back down to Riccarton on the first day of National week, Counter Punch pulled out all the stops to get home in the Koral Steeplechase beating subsequent Grand National winner, Bennyosler and Grand National runner up, Nicholman in second and third. In a cruel twist, the day before the biggest jumps race of the year to date, Counter Punch was withdrawn from the field for the Grand National Steeplechase with a tendon injury. The question of would or wouldn't he have won had he lined up, will remain unanswered. Owners Mrs A P Duncan, Messrs M D Ormsby, M K Oulaghan & S J Speedy... and no doubt Tommy Hazlett will have asked themselves this question a few times!



COUNTER PUNCH

New faces at the “Jump” races

KARLOS – TRAINED BY ROGER & SHERYL MCGLADE

Hit the jumping racing circuit in July and has recorded 2 wins from 4 starts.
A name to follow.

ORPHEUS – TRAINED BY JOHN WHEELER

Is a model of consistency. Has not missed a place in 10 starts from May 21,
winning his last three.

Performers of the year

BENNYOSLER – TRAINED BY JOHN WHEELER

Unquestionably the performer of the season so far, Bennyosler has notched up
result after result. To add to his win in the Grand National Steeplechase and
Hawke’s Bay Hurdle, he ran second in the K S Browne Hurdle, the Awapuni
Hurdle and the Koral Steeplechase as well as fourth in the Wellington Hurdle.

BIRCHWOOD RUN – TRAINED BY CHRISTINE EAGLE & MICHAEL SEYMOUR

Impressive winner of the Manawatu ITM Awapuni Hurdles Birchwood Run has
been one of the stars of the season. Won a hurdle at Hawke’s Bay prior to the
Awapuni Hurdles victory over Bennyosler, then had the tables turned by that
same horse in the Hawke’s Bay Hurdles a few weeks later. Made a successful
steeplechase debut at Oamaru in July but disappointed in the Grand National
Hurdle when fifth behind High Season.

HIGH SEASON – TRAINED BY JOHN WHEELER

Like John Wheeler’s season – High Season’s year has got better as it has
gone on. Campaigned in Australia in 2008, High Season took to NZ like
a duck to water with a third in the Waikato Hurdle, a third in Hawke’s Bay
Hurdle, a second in the Sydenham Hurdle and the ultimate success in the
Grand National Steeplechase.



KARLOS



ORPHEUS



HIGH SEASON



BENNYOSLER



BIRCHWOOD RUN

Vintage July for Jump Racing – 11 Runners per race Average!

Whilst the month of July for jump racing in 2008 was memorable for hardly staging any jump racing due to rain sodden tracks – 2009 can be remembered as a fantastic one. Firstly it was great to see action back at Trentham and those of us that climbed to the top of the stand to witness events were well rewarded. Statistically though, July produced one of the most satisfying results for the new look jumping structure. From the 21 races run the average jumping field sizes soared to an incredible 11 runners per race (usually we hover around the 9 mark). The roll on effect from this was much better than average betting figures.

New race at Riccarton hailed a success

The new special conditions hurdle programmed for the final day of the Grand National Carnival proved a great success for the club and jump racing as a whole. The \$15,000 Carlton Bar and Restaurant Hurdle attracted 21 nominations and commenced with 13 runners. Six of these, including the winner and runner up, Governor Bois and Telem were backing up from the maiden hurdle on the Wednesday. NZ Jumps Inc are working with the club to try and create a structure to the Grand National Carnival that could include a steeplechase with similar 0-1 conditions next season.

Jockeys Travel to be reduced during Grand National week

For a number of years now jumps jockeys have been expected to fly back to the North Island to partake in a jumps meeting on the Thursday of Grand National week. This season a Te Aroha meeting was staged on August 6. What would have been the equivalent date has been removed from the draft for 2010 in order to reduce the necessity for riders to fly back and forth. Furthermore, NZTR are hoping to persuade programming committees to not stage any highweight races during Grand National week also.

More jump racing for Te Rapa

It doesn't matter who you speak to there is an underlying desire to see significantly more jump racing staged at Te Rapa. With this demand in mind, NZ Jumps Inc has examined with NZTR the opportunities to race there more frequently in 2010. Subject to club and cluster approval, NZ Jumps Inc are hoping that the Waikato RC will programme jumps races on May 30, in addition to their early season meetings on May 6 and May 22. Additionally, Cambridge JC will stage jumping at their meeting on July 7 and Taumarunui RC will do likewise on July 31.

National Jumps Day 2010 – Wellington

With the National Jumps Day having always been staged in the Northern area – it has been decided to give the Central district an opportunity to host this important fixture. The chosen venue for 2010 is Trentham. With the event in Wellington it is hoped that it may encourage more South Island participation – cementing the national feel to the occasion.

Whilst on the subject of Wellington it has been a suggestion from NZ Jumps Inc to the Central Programming committee that it would be an enhancement to the programme on Wellington Steeplechase day to make the maiden events 0-1 wins, providing a another opportunity for horses in this grade.

Ann Browne – Elected to NZ Jumps Inc Board

At the NZ Jumps Inc AGM on August 6 in Christchurch, jump racing stalwart Ann Browne was elected unopposed on to the NZ Jumps Inc committee. She was joined as a NZ Jumps Inc members' representative by Dennis Ryan, who was re-appointed. NZ Jumps Inc would like to thank all those that attended the AGM – it was a very positive meeting. We would also like to thank Ray Knight for the time he has spent on the committee. No one can question Ray's passion for jumping racing and his raw enthusiasm and determination to see it develop and flourish.

Ireland v New Zealand?

NZ Jumps Inc are eager to see an extension to the Australia v Ireland jump jockey series that has taken place across the Tasman for over 20 years by bringing the Irish team to New Zealand. The contest that is traditionally run in August has been cut back this season to events solely in South Australia and in the opinion of many, it needs a new lease of life – and a NZ leg may well be the answer.

The Series has featured many of the world's greatest jumps jockeys over the years – and has thrown up some great stories, many jovially re-told by long time Irish team co-ordinator Sean Lynch.

Unbelievably the results sit at 11.5 wins per team (although I think they have been at this level since Tommy Hazlett represented the Australian team over five years ago and appear to be subject to promotionally focused manipulation!) – either way, the competition is always hard fought and the riders take the contest to heart.

The presence of the Series in NZ would be a colourful addition to our already fascinating jump racing season.



ANN BROWNE

Burton Construction Amateur Rider's Series

JOCKEY			RACES											Total
Surname	Title	Initials	Riverton	Paeroa	HB	Te Aroha	Hawera	Paeroa	HB	Pakuranga	Oamaru	Foxton	BOP Hunt	
			1-5	13-5	21-5	10-6	2-7	22-7	30-7	Hunt 22-8	28-8	10-9	27-9	
Jenkins	Mrs	L M	4	3		10	2	6	10	6				41
Northcott	Miss	M K	10	10					3					23
Dell		C		6		3		10	1	2				22
Ormsby		P		2	10				4	4				20
McNab		S			2		3	4		10				19
Roughan		C			4	4	10							18
Thompson	Mrs	S			3	6	6							15
Wenn		S		4	6			3	2					15
Bandey		R				1	4		6					11
Miller		L J		1				2		3				6
Richards		J	6											6
Kinsey	Miss	P				2	1	1		1				5
Murphy	Miss	K C	3											3
Johansen		R	2											2
Bruce	Ms	K			1									1
Timpany		N	1											1

Points: 1st - 10; 2nd - 6; 3rd - 4; 4th - 3; 5th - 2; 6th - 1

Ballantines Whisky Jumps Star of the Season Points Table

STEEPLECHASER

Position	Horse	Points
1st	Triplepan	233
2nd	Willie Winit	212
3rd	Climbing High	194
4th	Mikemendaad	189
5th	Bennyosler	174

HURDLER

Position	Horse	Points
1st	Bennyosler	230
2nd	High Season	228
3rd	Mr Charlton	188
4th	Birchwood Run	185
5th	Arrastra	172

TRAINER

Position	Trainer	Points
1st	J Wheeler	1377
2nd	A Browne	725
3rd	B & S Anderton	415
4th	K Myers	385
5th	M Oulaghan	347

JOCKEY

Position	Horse	Points
1st	R Eynon	937
2nd	J Rathbone	853
3rd	S Houston	759
4th	T Hazlett	699
5th	I Lupton	681

Updated as at Tuesday 25 August

