

The Great Debate 3



Littorio took advantage of weight conditions in the Turnbull Stakes

ARE FEMALE WEIGHT ALLOWANCES UNFAIR?

Do fillies and mares really have an unfair advantage from sex-based weight allowances? **RENEE GEELLEN** finds it's not necessarily the case.

Prior to the first Golden Slipper in 1957, there weren't many opportunities for fillies to succeed in racing. Alf Thompson of Widden Stud was reputed to have told Sydney administrator George Ryder: "Sometimes I wonder whether I should just pick out the filly foals I would like to breed from and hit the others on the head. There aren't any races for them." This sentiment led to the formation of many races specifically for female horses.

Over 60 years later and his great-grandson Antony Thompson runs Widden Stud. Plenty has changed in racing in this time, and Antony's thoughts on the subject of racing opportunities for fillies reflects this change. "Fillies and mares in today's racing system are well catered for, with one slight exception. Compared to other countries, Australia lacks a specific Gr1 race for 2YO fillies, however the weight allowance as it currently stands means that they remain

competitive against the males. The situation is much better for older mares, with plenty of Gr1 opportunities for mares to race against their own sex."

However, the change in fortunes has led to a perception amongst some of the betting public that fillies and mares have improved over time, giving them an advantage on the weight-for-age (WFA) scale.

Mark Read of IASbet.com believes that racehorse development runs parallel with female endeavours in human society. The Women's Liberation movement started in America in 1964, and has resulted in obvious changes for society in terms of employment, social and political equity but never so evident than in women's sport. Read believes that this same process meant that more thought was put into fillies and mares racing, especially with the increased accent on commercial breeding, and this gave racemares

For the rest of this story: *SUBSCRIBE NOW* →

OUR GREATEST OFFER EVER!

YOU PAY ONLY
\$75
(instead of \$145.65)

2009 PLATINUM PACKAGE

(available only to Australian subscribers) includes the:

- 2009 Sires Annual in June 2009
- 2009 Gr1 Annual in August 2009
- 2010 Websites Directory in October 2009

PLUS

Get your \$75 back as a **FREE BET** with Australia's leading bookmaker, Colin Tidy's **Betchoice!**

COLIN TIDY'S
BETCHOICE.COM

Not open to existing Betchoice clients, or NSW residents (due to legislation). \$75 bet must be used in one transaction and may not be withdrawn until turned over.

2 INSTANT WAYS to take advantage of this offer

1 PHONE
Madeleine Stratton:
(02) 9281 7523

OR

2 EMAIL
Send an email to Madeleine Stratton on mstratton@breedingracing.com with your phone contact details & we'll ring you back to take down your credit card details.