

TONY MORRIS



PEDIGREE
ANALYSIS
Olympic Glory

THE 2013 British Champions Day was the first to be staged without Frankel, but it did deliver a notable tribute to that illustrious absentee when Farhh and Cirrus Des Aigles, two of his most prominent victims last year, fought out the finish of the day's most valuable prize.

Farhh, who was celebrated in this space after his victory in May's Lockinge Stakes, now heads for stud duty at Dalham Hall, while the gelded runner-up will no doubt race on, providing further reminders of the supreme talents of the horse who beat him in last year's Champion Stakes.

Underfoot conditions were far from ideal for a day when championships are supposed to be settled, clearly inconveniencing many of the runners and ensuring that a number who would have figured as worthy contenders were not even present. Inevitably, the rain-affected ground also helped some to show improved form, and in the case of Olympic Glory, the addition of blinkers was surely another factor in enabling him to record a clearcut victory in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes.

Olympic Glory does not need soft ground to be seen at his best – his outstanding effort when a short-head runner-up to Moonlight Cloud on a fast surface in the Prix Jacques le Marois proved that – but he has always gone well in the mud. It was heavy at Longchamp when he secured his previous Group 1 triumph in the Prix Jean-Luc Lagardere at last year's Arc meeting.

We perhaps underrated Olympic Glory as a juvenile. He won four out of five, including Group 2 victories in the Superlative Stakes at Newmarket and the Vintage Stakes at Goodwood in addition to his top-level victory in Paris, and his only defeat came in the Coventry Stakes at Royal Ascot when he was a fast-finishing second, beaten only three-quarters of a length by Dawn Approach. Had he taken on Dawn Approach again in the Dewhurst instead of heading to Longchamp, we might have learned to appreciate him more. But even in his own stable it seemed his unbeaten contemporary Toronado was preferred.

He came back in the spring to justify the odds laid on him in Newbury's Group 3 Greenham Stakes, when he didn't have to carry a penalty for his Group 1 win, and although he had only a length to spare at the finish, he needed the run and could be expected to improve for it. The Poule d'Essai des Poulains had long been his target and he went off favourite at 3-1 in a field of 18, but the draw was not to his advantage and he was soon out the back, racing wide, and never got into contention.

Olympic Glory was not seen again for three months. When he returned for the Jacques le Marois, he was still supposedly Toronado's inferior and had few friends in the betting for what was an ultra-competitive heat. His performance proved a revelation. Held up travelling well, he made smooth progress from three furlongs out, had to be switched entering the final furlong and only just failed to peg back the brilliant Moonlight Cloud. The third, fourth and fifth were Intello, Declaration Of War and Dawn Approach, underlining the merit of his display.

On that showing Olympic Glory looked a certainty for the Prix du Moulin de Longchamp, but Stephane Pasquier, on Maxios, rode his fellow jockeys to sleep and the Richard

QEII hero proves Choisir can still pack a punch

OLYMPIC GLORY

b c 27-3-2010

Danehill Dancer	Danehill	Danzig	Northern Dancer
		Razyana	Pas De Nom
		Sharpen Up	His Majesty
		Mira Adonde	Spring Adieu
Choisir (ch 1999)	Lettre D'Amour	Atan	Rocchetta
		Silly Season	Caro
		Lunchtime	Liang
		Great Occasion	Tom Fool
Great Selection	Biscay	Star Kingdom	Double Deal
		Pensive Mood	Hornbeam
		Staid	Golden Wedding
		Lyphard	Star Kingdom
Alzao	Goofed	Northern Dancer	Magic Symbol
		Sir Ivor	Minor Portion
		Lady Rebecca	Straightlaced
		Pocahontas	Nearctic
Acidanthera (b 1995)	Mill Reef	Natalma	Court Martial
		Shirley Heights	Barra
		Hardiemma	Sir Gaylord
		Bold Lad	Attica
Amaranthus	Barn Pride	Hardicanute	Roman
		Favoletta	How
		Never Bend	Never Bend
		Milan Mill	Milan Mill

Bred by Denis McDonnell in Ireland. £65,000 Doncaster Premier yearling

VERDICT

- ▶▶ Brilliant QEII victory suggests he might be the best miler of his generation
- ▶▶ The only European-bred Group 1 winner by his sire
- ▶▶ Product of a family that delivered much success over a long period for the Mollers

Hannon contender never got in a meaningful challenge, finishing five lengths adrift.

And so to Ascot, where Olympic Glory met some traffic problems, but Richard Hughes, at the cost of a two-day ban, procured him a passage and once in the clear he darted away to win with real authority. Can we still be sure that Toronado is his superior? It's a moot point.

Olympic Glory now seems likely to head for Santa Anita and the Breeders' Cup. The turning course will be different, as will the surface. Will blinkers be effective second time, or will they even be deemed necessary? More moot points. But he will go there in cracking form and let's hope he does himself justice.

Olympic Glory's sire Choisir distinguished himself as a runner in both hemispheres, being named Australia's champion two-year-old and recording a Group 1 win in the Lightning Stakes at Flemington at three. At four he registered a brilliant double at Royal Ascot, collecting both the King's Stand and Golden Jubilee Stakes, before chasing home Oasis Dream in the July Cup. Those

performances assured him of the title of Europe's champion older sprinter.

Choisir has not distinguished himself to the same degree as a sire, either in Europe or Australia. He did get one son who made a global impact in Starspangledbanner, a dual Group 1 winner in Australia before repeating that feat in Britain with victories in the Golden Jubilee Stakes and July Cup, but that horse – sadly sub-fertile when tried at stud – has been one of few exceptions to the rule. Choisir had Group 2 winners here in Chandlery (Vintage Stakes) and Stimulation (Challenge Stakes), but Olympic Glory is the only Group 1 winner to have emerged from his innings in Ireland.

INDEED, after several years in which three-figure books were the norm, demand for his services dropped and it was decided to leave him in Australia, where he remained popular. The emergence of Olympic Glory and Obviously's third place in last year's Breeders' Cup Mile prompted a return to Coolmore for 2013 and he covered at €10,000 this spring. Now back in Australia again for southern



Olympic Glory runs out an impressive winner at Ascot last Saturday

hemisphere duty, he is advertised at Aus\$27,500.

Olympic Glory is the ninth – and last – foal out of Acidanthera, who proved just useful as a three-year-old for James Fanshawe, winning a Beverley maiden over an extended seven furlongs and showing slightly better form when third in a mile handicap at Kempton. Her son by Choisir is far and away the best of her brood, although Mister Dee Bee, a gelding by Orpen, completed a hat-trick in minor events and was second in a competitive Goodwood handicap at three in 2009. Olympic Glory must have had something about him as a yearling to have realised £65,000 from Peter and Ross Doyle at Doncaster.

Acidanthera was a daughter of Alzao, whose record as a sire far surpassed his achievements as an athlete, but he did have a first-rate pedigree, which brought him opportunity and he never looked back after getting Cheveley Park Stakes heroine Pass The Peace in his first crop. After starting out at Ir3,500gns, he was soon able to command a fee of Ir20,000gns. He got 12 individual Group 1 winners, among them Wind In Her Hair, dam of the outstanding Japanese runner and sire Deep Impact.

The dam of Acidanthera was Amaranthus, an unraced daughter of Shirley Heights and the Bold Lad mare Amarantha. In 1977 Amarantha won the Queen Mary Stakes at Royal Ascot in such brilliant style that I was rash enough to tell readers of The Sporting Life that I thought she might be the fastest filly since Mumtaz Mahal. Not

for the first or the last time I was proved horribly wrong, and the Racehorses annual rightly took the mickey out of me after she had been beaten twice in her three subsequent races that season.

Still, I wasn't the only one embarrassed over that, because Amarantha's trainer Harry Wragg had believed her to be the fastest of her sex in his experience, and he went back a lot farther than me. At three the filly did surprisingly well to reach a creditable second in the Nell Gwyn Stakes, because seven furlongs was certainly not her trip. Her forte was exceptional early pace and her only wins came at the minimum distance. Like Standaan, who came along in the following crop, Amarantha would have seemed unbeatable if half-mile races had come back into vogue.

Amarantha came from the wonderful family descending from Horama which thrived for decades at White Lodge Stud, delivering winners up to Classic level for Budgie and Eric Moller. Favoletta, dam of Amarantha, won the Irish 1,000 Guineas, and her half-sister Furioso ran second in the Oaks before producing Derby victor Teenoso. Harry Wragg, and later son Geoff, always seemed to have something from Horama's family capable of mixing it with the best.

That female line has not yielded stars so regularly since the Mollers' time, but Rule Of Law (2004 St Leger) and Sir Percy (2006 Derby) both proved that it could still be a force at Group 1 level before Olympic Glory rose to prominence.