

TONY MORRIS



Pedigree analysis
Telling

THE usual procedure with invitational races, as their name implies, is that connections of supposedly worthy competitors are contacted and asked if they would care to enter them.

And if you train a horse who has never won a stakes race, nor any kind of race for well over a year, you know that he is not going to get an invitation for a Grade 1 event at Saratoga’s prestige summer meeting.

But if your name is Steve Hobby, and you fancy that your horse just might have a squeak if he were given the chance to run, you summon up your courage, phone the stakes race coordinator at the New York Racing Association, and request an invitation. Sometimes folks in authority admire a chap with that kind of cheek.

As it turned out, the call paid off handsomely, as Hobby not only got the desired invitation for Telling in Saturday’s Sword Dancer Invitational Stakes, but saw his judgement vindicated in some style.

Of course, the five-year-old was readily dismissed by the betting public – an obvious no-hoper with an upstart trainer who had never previously saddled a runner at Saratoga – and they let him go off at 33-1, the complete outsider in the ten-horse field.

How could he be fancied against the likes of Grand Couturier, who was seeking his third consecutive win in the race, the 2004 winner Better Talk Now, others successful at Group 1/Grade 1 level in Quijano and Brass Hat, and a couple of 2009 Graded scorers in Americain and Muskettier?

But the horse whose connections had had to beg for his chance to compete duly embarrassed his more distinguished rivals by spurring clear in the final furlong to win by two lengths and one over veteran grass course stars Better Talk Now and Brass Hat, with Grand Couturier a never-dangerous fifth.

In future, Telling will be an automatic invitee to Grade 1 events at 1m4f, and he may even feature as a significant defender when the international challengers turn up at Santa Anita for the Breeders’ Cup Turf. Unlikely as it may have seemed before the weekend, he has unquestionably earned the right to compete for the highest honours now.

Telling was bred by Darley, saw no action as a two-year-old, and made his debut from Eoin Harty’s barn in an Arlington maiden in June 2007. He finished third that day, just behind a colt called Mountain Stag, whom Hobby trained for his Arkansas-based patrons Alex and JoAnn Lieblong.

If the Darley team were not particularly impressed by Telling’s display, Hobby was; he put in a private bid for the colt on behalf of the Lieblongs, and it was duly accepted.

Telling ran only once more as a three-year-old, finishing second in a maiden at Hawthorne in November, but blossomed early the following spring, collecting three straight wins at Oaklawn Park before a return to Chicago for another victory, this time in an Arlington allowance race on turf in May.

After those four wins in succession came a sequence of ten defeats. He generally ran creditably enough, only twice finishing far in arrears, and he kept good company on several occasions. Five of his runs came at Grade 3 level, and twice when competing over 1m4f he finished within a couple of lengths of the winner, second to Silverfoot in the Stars and Stripes Handicap at



A.P. Indy (seen winning the 1992 Breeders’ Cup Classic) has now sired 76 Graded/Pattern winners

Telling finally lives up to his pedigree

Under-achiever is latest Grade 1 winner for his 20-year-old sire

SIRE A.P.INDY

Bred by W.S. Farish III & W.S. Kilroy in Kentucky. \$2.9 million Keeneland July yearling, the top price of 1990. Won 8 (6.5-12f) of 11 races in 2 seasons, viz. 3 (inc. Hollywood Futurity-Gr1) out of 4 at 2 years, 5 (San Rafael S.-Gr2, Santa Anita Derby-Gr1, Peter Pan S.-Gr2, Belmont S.-Gr1, Breeders’ Cup Classic Stakes-Gr1) out of 7 at 3 years. Also 3rd in Jockey Club Gold Cup S. Earned \$2,979,815.

Experimental Handicap 122 (8lb below champion Arazi), Champion 3-y-o and Horse of the Year at 3, Daily Racing Form Handicap 127 (3lb clear of Pine Bluff). Raced without medication. Strong, well made, 16.0 hh. A tip-top performer at 10-12f, probably the best son of his sire, who also got Swale, Slew o’ Gold and Capote.

Half-brother to Preakness winner Summer Squall (\$1,844,282). Dam a Gr3 winner and earner of \$402,892, half-sister to Wolfhound and Foxhound and to the dam of Lemon Drop Kid. Granddam a Gr3 winner, half-sister to Gay Mecene (Gr1 winner, useful sire). Top-class family.

Stands at Lane’s End Farm, Versailles, Kentucky, at a fee of \$250,000. Sire of 14 crops of racing age, inc. notable winners: Tomisue’s Delight (Ruffian H.-Gr1, Personal Ensign H.-Gr1), Golden Missile (Pimlico Special H.-Gr1), Aptitude (Hollywood Gold Cup S.-Gr1, Jockey Club Gold Cup-Gr1), Secret Status (Kentucky Oaks-Gr1, Mother Goose S.-Gr1), A P Valentine (Champagne S.-Gr1), Jilbab (CCA Oaks-Gr1), Mineshaft (Pimlico Special H.-Gr1, Suburban H.-Gr1, Woodward S.-Gr1, Jockey Club Gold Cup-Gr1), Tempera (Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies-Gr1), Friends Lake (Florida Derby-Gr1), Bernardini (Preakness S.-Gr1, Travers S.-Gr1, Jockey Club Gold Cup-Gr1), Rags To Riches (Las Virgenes S.-Gr1, Santa Anita Oaks-Gr1, Kentucky Oaks-Gr1, Belmont S.-Gr1), Telling (Sword Dancer Invitational S.-Gr1), Music Note (Mother Goose S.-Gr1, Coaching Club American Oaks-Gr1, Gazelle S.-Gr1).

DAM WELL CHOSEN

Bred by Peter E. Blum in Kentucky. \$360,000 Barretts March 2-y-o. Won 2 of 9 races, viz. 1 out of 4 at 2 years, 1 (Ashland S.-Gr1) out of 5 at 3 years. Also twice 2nd in Gr3 events at 3. Earned \$501,330.

Looked a high-class performer at around 1m in spring as 3-y-o, but evidently not very sound. Well bred. By a champion 2-y-o and champion sire. Half-sister to Gr3 winner In Contention (by Devil’s Bag), to Listed-placed winners Fine And Dandy and Oude and to the dam of multiple Gr3 winner Multiple Choice. Dam placed, sister to Gr2 winner Academy Award. Granddam winning half-sister to 3 stakes-winners. To stud at 4 years and dam of: unnamed (2000 f by Seeking The Gold; unraced), Lost Canyon (2001 c by Seeking The Gold; unraced), Telling (2004 c by A.P. Indy; Gr1 winner), Yes She Is (2005 f by Seeking The Gold; unraced), Dublin Castle (2006 g by Seeking The Gold; unraced). She has a yearling filly and colt-foal, both by Bernardini.

CONCLUSIONS

Chose a big occasion for his first win in a long while, but a well-bred individual, clearly suited by 1m4f on turf.

TELLING

b h 12-4-2004

Seattle Slew	Boldnesian	Bold Ruler Alanesian
	Bold Reasoning	Hail To Reason Sailing Home
	Reason To Earn	
My Charmer	Poker	Round Table Glamour
	Fair Charmer	Jet Action Myrtle Charm
A.P. Indy (b 1989)		
Secretariat	Bold Ruler	Nasrullah Miss Disco
	Somethingroyal	Princequillo Imperatrice
Weekend Surprise	Buckpasser	Tom Fool Busanda
	Gay Missile	Sir Gaylord Missy Baba
Vice Regent	Northern Dancer	Nearctic Natalma
	Victoria Regina	Menetrier Victoriana
Deputy Minister	Bunty's Flight	Bunty Lawless Broomflight
	Shakney	Jabneh Grass Shack
Well Chosen (ch 1995)	Bold Ruler	Nasrullah Miss Disco
	Somethingroyal	Princequillo Imperatrice]
Chosen Lady	Mr Prospector	Raise a Native Gold Digger
	Mine Only	Better Self Sin Igual
Mono		

Bred by Darley in Kentucky

Arlington Park and third to Always First, after an unlucky trip, in the Sycamore Stakes at Keeneland.

That long losing run ensured that there would be no invitation to the Sword Dancer unless a request for one was granted, but those two performances in particular gave his trainer reason to believe that he could prove competitive in the best company. Hobby knew that Telling would relish the distance, and he knew that the horse was in the form of his life after a sharp piece of work a week before his date at Saratoga.

Recording his fifth win from 17 starts while increasing his bankroll to \$484,406, Telling finally lived up to what might have been hoped for, if not expected, of one so impressively bred. By North America’s most consistently successful sire, A.P. Indy, out of a Grade 1-winning mare in Well Chosen, and inbred 3 x 3 to Secretariat into the bargain, he arguably flaunted the finest pedigree among the Sword Dancer contenders.

I have been penning paeans of praise for A.P. Indy in this space for nigh on 20 years, celebrating him first as the highest-priced yearling of 1990, then as a Grade 1 winner as a two-year-old, and 12 months later as America’s Horse of the Year. Returned to Lane’s End, where he had been bred, he wasted no time in making an impression as a sire, getting nine individual Graded winners from a first crop of only 47 foals, and scarcely a year has gone by without one or more of his products being featured on this page.

A.P. Indy has twice headed the North American sire list, has figured among the top ten every year since 1998, and has provided a host of outstanding performers, including eight recognised champions, Mineshaft, Bernardini and Rags To Riches among them. Telling is his 124th individual stakes-winner and the 76th in Graded or Pattern company from a tally of 1,032 foals of racing age.

NOW 20 years old, A.P. Indy continues to deliver high-class products and to attract mares of rare quality at a fee of \$250,000. Telling is his second Grade 1 winner at the current Saratoga meeting, after three-year-old Flashing’s victory in the Test Stakes, his six-year-old son Just As Well was recently runner-up in the Arlington Million, and he is also responsible for Eye Of The Leopard, successful in the Queen’s Plate, the most coveted prize in the Canadian season.

Telling’s dam Well Chosen was bought as a two-year-old for \$360,000 by Demi O’Byrne and did her racing for Michael Tabor and Susan Magnier. Although she won only twice from nine starts, she returned her purchase price with interest, one of her victories coming at Grade 1 level in the Ashland Stakes. Also placed second twice in Grade 3 company, she lacked something in soundness, failing to reappear after a disappointing effort in the Kentucky Oaks, for which she had been one of the favourites.

The family is one which has delivered plenty of winners, though none of the highest class, in recent generations. Telling’s fifth dam, Sin Igual, was a sister to the 1946 US Triple Crown winner Assault and to Equal Venture. Unfortunately, Well Chosen has passed on her unsoundness to some of her stock, and Telling is to date the only one of her five foals to have reached the