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## \$110,000 CANTERBURY BUSTER ROSE BY DENIS BLAKE

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**THE \$110,000 CANTERBURY**, named to honor the Minnesota track that hosted the first Claiming Crown in 1999, proved to be a popular addition to the Claiming Crown at Gulfstream Park. The race replaced last year's Iron Lady, which was for fillies and mares going 1 1/16 miles on the main track. This new race, at five furlongs on the turf for horses who had started for \$25,000 or less, attracted 41 nominations and a well-matched field of 14 starters. At the finish line, it was Michael Ball's homebred Buster Rose in front, as the Indiana-bred son of Pioneering came with an eight-wide move to prevail by a half-length at odds of 7-1.

Epona Racing Stable and CJC Racing's Thomas Hill, a shipper from Belmont Park, took third with Joe Bravo riding for conditioner Bruce Brown.

Mongolian Saturday, Determinato, Didn't Take It, Moonwalker, Amelia's Wild Ride, Mongol Bull, Elusive Blueboy, This Ain't No Bull, Take Time to Pray, Pirates Vow and Quality Lass completed the order of finish.

Trained by Stephen Dunn and ridden by Jeremy Rose, the 6-year-old veteran had won all four of his turf sprints at Indiana Grand and proved he could take his show on the road in his first-ever start in Florida. He earned \$60,500 for the dash timed in :55.96, which put his lifetime earnings at \$364,168 with a record of 29-10-8-5. Buster Rose became eligible for the Canterbury with several starts at the \$10,000 claiming level last year.

"For whatever reason, God made him to be a five-eighths of a mile on the grass horse," Dunn said. "He shows up every time, and he's a special horse in that he's 23 out of 29 in the money now, so that just tells you how good a horse he is. He has a great owner; he bred him, and he's had him since he was a baby. I'm just lucky enough to be a part of the team."

Favored Mr. Online, who had run in four consecutive graded stakes at Woodbine and Gulfstream Park with two second-place finishes, came with a wide move to get second for owner Tim E. O'Donohue Racing LLC, trainer Michael Pino and jockey Mario Pino.



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# PREPARING FOR BREEDING SEASON

BY AVALYN HUNTER

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**F**rom November through January, thousands of broodmares and broodmare prospects exchange hands. Their new owners now face a common problem: how to make choices that yield the greatest likelihood of getting profitable foals from their mares.

Preparation for the breeding season always begins with an honest assessment of the mare—not just her pedigree, conformation, and race record, but her status as an individual. Is she in good reproductive health? Is she at a desirable weight? Does she have dental or orthopedic issues that need addressing? As much as possible, physical issues need to be dealt with before the mare goes to the breeding shed, and that means going over any available veterinary records as well as scheduling needed work-ups and treatment.

In most cases the money spent getting a mare into prime reproductive shape is far less than the cost of a year's barrenness or production of a foal that is not vigorous and healthy.

That taken care of, the next area to consider is how the mare and any prospective foal will fit into a breeder's program. Is she intended to produce runners for a homebred stable? Will her foals run in a state-bred program, or are they part of a breeding program with national ambitions? If the foals will be sold, where and when will they be marketed? The answers to these questions will help define the type of stallion that should be sought to increase the odds of getting a foal that meets the breeder's goals. It usually does little good to breed a mare to a fine breed-to-race stallion if the horse consistently throws a type that is not attractive in the sale ring and the intent is to sell the foal as a yearling, but this might be a perfectly logical mating if the breeder's intent is - to supply her own racing stable.

Regardless of whether the foal is intended for the sale ring or the track, breeding for the individual is an important consideration. That means making the effort to see as many of the stallions being considered for the mare as possible, as well as being as objective as possible about the mare's faults. It also means studying pedigrees and learning about

the individuals in back of the names to know what physical traits they tended to transmit. The ideal mate for a sickle-hocked mare not only should have correctly conformed hind limbs but should not have a sickle-hocked individual close up in his family tree, especially one that tended to be dominant in transmitting the trait. On the other side of the coin, a stallion that is imperfect in an area in which the mare is very strong may still be worthy of consideration if he suits the mare well in other regards and does not have a history of being dominant for stamping his fault on his foals.

Taking time to become familiar with the dominant traits of the mare's family is also important. Some families are quite flexible to their mates; others consistently throw the same traits generation after generation. The family descended from Calumet foundation mare Blue Delight is one example; stamina-oriented itself, her family has historically gotten its best runners from stallions that had at least a dash of brilliance in their makeups. If certain traits run strongly in a family, then obviously extra attention needs to be paid to selecting a stallion from bloodlines that have been successful in working with that family and its dominant characteristics within the venue for which the foal is destined.

For breeders desiring professional assistance in planning a mare's mating, plenty of options exist. These range from nicking reports (often provided by stallion managers as a free service to mare owners) through computer programs designed to assist with research to pedigree analysts who will make individual recommendations based on their own studies and experience and with any parameters specified by the mare owner taken into account. The key in making the best use of these resources is to know their limitations and to do one's homework as far as one is able, as no means of analyzing data are any better than the quality of data given it to work with and the competence and integrity of the provider.

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