

# GRAYSON-JOCKEY CLUB



# RESEARCH



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THE NEWSLETTER FOR BENEFACTORS OF GRAYSON-JOCKEY CLUB RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC.

## Sire Statistics — Looking For Soundness

One of the ideas put forward during the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit held in October was statistical recognition of stallions which have exceptional records in progeny soundness and durability. The observation that horses today lack the sturdiness and durability of earlier eras

was widely accepted by those participating in the Summit.

Measuring a stallion's genetic qualities is an inexact science, for percentage of starters and decisions to persevere in racing can be skewed by fashion. If a filly is fashionably bred, she might be retired at the first sign of a

problem, whereas a less fashionable individual might be turned out and brought back later.

Nevertheless, to the degree that percentage of starters from foals and average number of starts per starter give indication of genetic characteristics, the lists on pages 3 and 4 have value. The statistics were produced by The Jockey Club Information Systems. The criteria were: 1) the stallion must have at least one starter in North America in 2006; 2) he must have a lifetime total of at least 200 named foals of racing age, and 3) for relevance to today's breeder and today's racing patterns, stallions foaled more than 20 years ago are excluded.

Aspects to take into consideration, in addition to the impact of fashion, are that many two-year-olds have not yet raced, which will impact the statistics for a stallion with a large number of current juveniles. Other factors to be borne in mind include horses with a significant number of offspring raced abroad, where average number of starts might be traditionally low for reasons other than inherent degrees of soundness.

Like other lists, these should be seen in the context of comparison to the averages of the breed in general. The last foal crop whose lifetime statistics were deemed sufficiently complete to be useful is that of 2000. As Dr. Larry Bramlage highlighted in his presentation to the Summit, members of that foal crop have an average career of 16.5 starts. (As recently as the foal crop of 1995, that figure was 20.94, and in 1975 it had been 30.19 average lifetime starts per horse. Put another way, in the mid 1970s, 45 per cent of the year's starters ran 12 or more times

### Comments on the Summit

The Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit, held at Keeneland on Oct. 16-17, was a result of a long process. In the spring of 2005, Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation convened some 30 industry representatives with the general aim of refining priorities for future research. The Jockey Club Information Systems and the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association each provided statistical studies on aspects of racing which were counter to some presumptions about patterns of racing juveniles, number of starts by class categories, etc. The upshot was a realization that more data would be instrumental in arriving at a sound plan.

The mission of that early meeting eventually was broadened. The Jockey Club and the Foundation coordinated and underwrote the Summit, which was structured to include representatives from a broad range of segments of the Thoroughbred industry. A total of 38 individuals were invited participants (See box, page 2).

A key moment occurred during the public session on Oct. 16. As part of a panel, Seth Hancock of Claiborne Farm stipulated that the horses he is breeding today are not as tough and

sound as horses he and his father and grandfather bred in the past. That such a comment would be openly made by someone of Hancock's status helped encourage frank discussion by other stakeholders. Any urge to be defensive or territorial seemed to be alleviated, and the two days of presentations, break-out sessions, and combined discussions produced a far-reaching set of recommendations.

The proposed Strategic Plan resulting from the Summit has been widely reported in the trade press. Key aims include production of statistics which highlight bloodlines achieving higher than average results insofar as soundness and longevity of racing careers; reliance on scientific research for guidance on use of certain shoe types; a uniform national form for reporting injuries to provide accurate information on how many injuries and of what types are being incurred by Thoroughbreds; better methods of circulating information to horsemen which can help them keep horses sounder, and continuing impetus toward the achieving of safer race tracks.

Groundwork leading toward the Summit included numerous lists and studies produced by The Jockey Club

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## RESEARCH TODAY

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## Comments on the Summit

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Information Systems. Following are several examples which we found particularly interesting.

***The decline in number of starts per year is highly consistent up and down the class scale of race horses.***

As the average number of starts for the overall population has declined to less than 7, the variation among Graded Stakes Horses, Stakes Horses, Allowance Horses, and Claiming Horses have each contributed to the decline. For example, claiming horses averaged 8.33 starts in 1994 and 7.11 starts 10 years later.

***The percentage of the foal crop which races at two has declined markedly over the last four decades.***

Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation receives various communications from individuals suggesting that the racing of two-year-olds has been instrumental in the shortening of racing careers. However, the decrease in lifetime starts has played out in an era when the emphasis on two-year-old racing actually has been in decline. From the foal crop of 1964 a total of 52 per cent raced at two, whereas that figure is now down to 30 for the most recent crops. Moreover, the career longevity curve of horses consigned to two-year-old sales, yearling sales, and those not consigned at all have followed almost parallel paths. Each category has seen its average career starts slide from more than 25 to around the current national average (16.5) since 1980.

***Top trainers' starts per starter has followed the national trend.***

In 2005, the top 10 trainers in earnings averaged 3.61 starts per starter. (The top 100 averaged 3.83.) In 1976, the earliest year for which that figure can be produced, the top 10 trainers in earnings averaged 5.7 starts per starter. When compared to the prevailing national averages for 2005 and 1976, the figure for today's top trainers is consistent with that of their 1976 counterparts. The 3.61 average per starter for 2005 is 56 per cent of the national average of 6.45. In 1976, the top 10's mark of 5.7 starts per starter also was 56 per cent of the 10.20 national levels of that era.

We had assumed that the top 10 trainers in wins (as opposed to earnings) would be comprised of stables large in numbers and with considerably more activity. This proved wrong. In 2005, the top 10 trainers in number of wins averaged 4.1 starts per starter, and in 1976 the top 10 in number of wins had averaged 6.0. Neither figure is much higher than that for the elite leaders in earnings.

### Participants in the Summit

**Breeders/owners**  
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Dell Hancock  
Seth Hancock  
John Harris  
Dr. Hiram Polk  
Frank (Scoop) Vessels

**Trainers**  
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**Jockeys**  
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**Bloodstock/Breeding Management**  
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Dr. Larry Bramlage  
Dr. Tom Brokken  
Dr. Gary Lavin  
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# Sire Statistics

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each, compared to 18 per cent in 2004.)

In **Table 1** (ranked by average number of lifetime starts per starter), the leaders are Shining Steel and Norquestor, each with more than 29 starts per starter. The list shown includes all horses meeting the above criteria and having as many as 20 starts per starter on average. (Supporting the

thought that longevity is in decline, 27 stallions born prior to 1986 still have at least one starter this year and have higher career average starts per starter than the leaders of this list as shown.)

Another measure addressed here is the percentage of foals that get to the races, i.e., make at least one start. The average of the breed is 69 per cent of all foals getting to the races. In

**Table 2**, the leaders have numbers in the high 80s. The list includes the names of all stallions meeting the above criteria and having at least 75 per cent starters from foals. These lists represent initial steps. The Summit funding organizations, along with The Jockey Club Information Systems, will continue to develop additional data and make it available in a timely manner.

**TABLE 1**

Sire	Foaling Year	Starters	Starts	Avg Sts per str
Shining Steel (GB)	1986	236	6,913	29.29
Norquestor	1986	293	8,567	29.24
Black Tie				
Affair (IRE)	1986	378	9,845	26.04
Strike the Gold	1988	212	5,462	25.76
Line In The Sand	1989	395	10,081	25.52
End Sweep	1991	338	8,489	25.12
Chromite	1986	214	5,299	24.76
Tricky Creek	1986	275	6,760	24.58
Formal Dinner	1988	329	8,014	24.36
Twining	1991	266	6,466	24.31
Kipper Kelly	1987	250	6,027	24.11
Diablo	1987	255	5,966	23.40
Dixie Brass	1989	339	7,753	22.87
Citidancer	1987	258	5,860	22.71
Roanoke	1987	287	6,463	22.52
Robyn Dancer	1987	416	9,346	22.47
Judge T C	1991	227	5,085	22.40
Opening Verse	1986	242	5,394	22.29
Mukaddamah	1988	229	5,069	22.14
Secret Hello	1987	209	4,577	21.90
Colony Light	1989	207	4,473	21.61
Eagle Eyed	1991	253	5,451	21.55
Sheikh Albadou (GB)	1988	203	4,363	21.49
Distant Relative (IRE)	1986	231	4,964	21.49
Sea Hero	1990	219	4,682	21.38
West by West	1989	370	7,881	21.30
Press Card	1990	256	5,442	21.26
Future Storm	1990	259	5,469	21.12
Corporate Report	1988	279	5,859	21.00
Rubiano	1987	386	8,070	20.91
Summer Squall	1987	279	5,826	20.88
Flying Continental	1986	310	6,472	20.88
Miner's Mark	1990	228	4,745	20.81
Tactical Advantage	1990	330	6,867	20.81
Eastern Echo	1988	321	6,630	20.65
Concorde's Tune	1989	201	4,134	20.57
Roi Danzig	1986	360	7,340	20.39
Rizzi	1991	230	4,669	20.30
Emarati	1986	230	4,663	20.27
Houston	1986	384	7,757	20.20
Academy Award	1986	236	4,761	20.17
Dancing Dissident	1986	333	6,710	20.15
Dixieland Brass	1986	277	5,576	20.13
Is It True	1986	216	4,345	20.12
Classic Secret	1986	252	5,062	20.09
Brief Truce	1989	321	6,436	20.05
Northern Flagship	1986	254	5,090	20.04

**TABLE 2**

Sire	Foaling Year	Named Foals	Starters	% Strs/foals
Timeless Times	1988	265	234	88.30
Bag	1989	329	288	87.54
Free At Last	1989	286	250	87.41
Norquestor	1986	339	293	86.43
Petardia (GB)	1990	309	267	86.41
Petionville	1992	248	214	86.29
Tricky Creek	1986	322	275	85.40
Hadif	1986	334	283	84.73
Shining Steel (GB)	1986	279	236	84.59
Royal Applause (GB)	1993	330	279	84.55
Dashing Blade (GB)	1987	598	503	84.11
Summer Squall	1987	333	279	83.78
Take Risks	1989	289	242	83.74
Opening Verse	1986	289	242	83.74
Dixie Brass	1989	407	339	83.29
Elmaamul	1987	369	307	83.20
Mujadil	1988	538	447	83.09
Polish Numbers	1987	512	425	83.01
Line In The Sand	1989	476	395	82.98
Polar Falcon	1987	446	370	82.96
Storm Boot	1989	453	375	82.78
Caller I. D.	1989	428	353	82.48
Valid Expectations	1993	291	240	82.47
American Chance	1989	268	221	82.46
Emarati	1986	279	230	82.44
Farma Way	1987	402	331	82.34
Quiet American	1986	513	422	82.26
Storm Creek	1993	363	298	82.09
Robyn Dancer	1987	507	416	82.05
Inchinor (GB)	1990	421	344	81.71
Metfield	1988	308	251	81.49
Exit to Nowhere	1988	475	387	81.47
Sea Hero	1990	269	219	81.41
Not For Love	1990	398	323	81.16
Unaccounted For	1991	261	211	80.84
Kissin Kris	1990	358	289	80.73
Lord Carson	1992	316	254	80.38
Lit de Justice	1990	253	203	80.24
Cherokee Run	1990	404	324	80.20
Kipper Kelly	1987	312	250	80.13
Citidancer	1987	322	258	80.12
Out of Place	1987	446	357	80.04
Concorde's Tune	1989	252	201	79.76
Wheaton	1990	278	221	79.50
Linamix (FR)	1987	657	522	79.45
Epervier Bleu	1987	316	251	79.43
Forest Wildcat	1991	411	326	79.32
First Trump (GB)	1991	283	224	79.15

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TABLE 2 continued from page 3

Sire	Foaling Year	Named Foals	Starters	% Strs/ foals	Sire	Foaling Year	Named Foals	Starters	% Strs/ foals
Green Tune	1991	311	246	79.10	Chromite	1986	278	214	76.98
Wekiva Springs	1991	287	227	79.09	Cartwright	1990	291	224	76.98
Rock City (IRE)	1987	253	200	79.05	Miner's Mark	1990	297	228	76.77
Malagra	1986	267	211	79.03	Rubiano	1987	503	386	76.74
Alphabet Soup	1991	343	271	79.01	With Approval	1986	656	503	76.68
Wolfhound	1989	314	248	78.98	Smart Strike	1992	330	253	76.67
Mujtahid	1988	290	229	78.97	Lost Soldier	1990	267	204	76.40
Deploy (GB)	1987	351	277	78.92	Septieme Ciel	1987	532	406	76.32
Sky Classic	1987	562	443	78.83	Pembroke	1990	308	235	76.30
Corporate Report	1988	354	279	78.81	Sultry Song	1988	354	270	76.27
Strike the Gold	1988	269	212	78.81	Rizzi	1991	302	230	76.16
Monsun (GER)	1990	297	234	78.79	Peaks and Valleys	1992	363	276	76.03
Explosive Red	1990	268	211	78.73	Carson City	1987	859	653	76.02
Colony Light	1989	263	207	78.71	Fly So Free	1988	364	276	75.82
Williamstown	1990	309	243	78.64	Lahib	1988	380	288	75.79
Dancing Dissident	1986	425	333	78.35	Friendly Lover	1988	342	259	75.73
Pursuit of Love (GB)	1989	432	338	78.24	Scarlet Ibis	1986	295	223	75.59
Platini (GER)	1989	444	347	78.15	Deputy Commander	1994	282	213	75.53
Classic Secret	1986	323	252	78.02	El Prado (IRE)	1989	621	469	75.52
Boone's Mill	1992	300	234	78.00	Patton	1991	290	219	75.52
Zilzal	1986	350	273	78.00	Wild Zone	1990	333	251	75.38
Devil His Due	1989	516	402	77.91	Future Storm	1990	344	259	75.29
Deposit Ticket	1988	417	324	77.70	Montbrook	1990	415	312	75.18
Valley Crossing	1988	279	216	77.42	Smokester	1988	345	259	75.07
Fast Play	1986	343	265	77.26	Sanglamore	1987	288	216	75.00
Goofalik	1987	331	255	77.04	Houston	1986	512	384	75.00
Peteski	1990	283	218	77.03	Twilight Agenda	1986	324	243	75.00



## Rokeby Circle Members

*In honor of the generosity to the Foundation by the late Paul Mellon, Grayson-Jockey Club designates inclusion in the Rokeby Circle for those donors/members at the \$10,000-plus level within the year. The honor is named for Rokeby Farm, Mr. Mellon's estate in Virginia. Current members of the Rokeby Circle as of Dec. 1.*

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