

Haresh Mehta's Becket is the greatest



Haresh Mehta (left) and trainer Padmanabhan lead in Becket as jockey Suraj Narreddu exults with his arms thrown up.



Haresh Mehta, owner of Becket receives the Vandrevalla Foundation Indian Turf Invitation Cup after the race.



Cowds eager to congratulate the owner of Becket.



Chairman Vivek Jain (left) with Bollywood celebrities Saif Ali Khan and Bipasha Basu

Jacqueline goes down fighting a losing battle

BY TIMUR

It was the big sponsorship by Vandrevalla Foundation and Hircio (nearly Rs. 3 crore) that for the first time in the history of the Invitation races, a record crowd turned up — 15,000. And there was celebration — dances, music, ice-skating in addition to a thrilling two-horse fight to the finish. As Becket and Jacqueline fought it out in the last 200 metres, the crowds just roared. It looked the crowds at the racecourse had the time of their life.

With its four wins, it would appear, that Jacqueline had mesmerized racers. They would not look beyond Jacqueline — despite strong facts and proofs available to them: Becket was not fully prepared when it ran in the Derby. World class trainer Martin Dwyer who rode the horse in the Derby said he would win the Invitation Cup. Becket burned the track in pre-Invitation trials.

Becket had a terrific challenge. It just could not cope with it. Its rider Hughes could not win "with the rider looking back". After the race, Suraj Narreddu had a serious check and if it was not there he would have won by two lengths.

It has been established that with horses running from all the centres, Becket has emerged with horses running from all the centres, Becket has emerged as the greatest horse in the country.

If the two horses run in the St. Leger, the day would be another crowd puller. Jacqueline was a tired horse and it was whipped and fully stretched. The horse which moved the best in the last few metres was Becket. It looked clean that it could stay over a longer distance.

Becket is a pucca, tough stayer.

And credit for the win goes to jockey Suraj narreddu whose ride on Becket was excellent. And to Harish Mehta too who decided to have a young Indian jockey ride his horse. Usually Indian owners of prestigious, expensive horses will only have foreign jockeys. Suraj's able performance was one more proof, if any was needed, that Indian jockeys have arrived. After Pesi Shroff who was a great, world-class rider, it looks like we have now some good jockeys from the Narreddu family.

There was an opinion at the racecourse that the Vandrevalla and Hircio week-end was more enjoyable than the Derby week-end.

And finally, it was the leadership of RWITC chairman Vivek Jain and his organizational skills that made the Invitation Days a happy great celebration. ■



Haresh Mehta looks fondly at his horse as he takes hold of the reins after its sensational win.



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