

Becket trumps Jacqueline in last stride

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MUMBAI: Sponsors lay out their sponsorship funds with the reasonable hope that they will derive some mileage from the expenditure.

The Vandrevala Foundation could not have hoped for a better result from their venture to contribute Rs. 60 lakhs to the fund for the Indian Turf Invitation Cup than that which they obtained late on Sunday afternoon when Becket (Hawk Wing-Boiling River) came up from far behind to pip Jacqueline in a thrilling finish that script writers dream of.

Sedate pace

The story of the race is simply told: Silvestre De Sousa took Native Knight to the front and set a sedate pace, followed all the way by Golconda Derby winner Arabian Prince.

In contrast to the McDowell Indian Derby, Jacqueline — the race favourite — was closer to the leaders, while Becket, who got off slowly, was at the tail end.

Native Knight was still in front turning for home when Richard Hughes, sitting chilly on Jacqueline, opted to make

his move.

The pair nonchalantly swept to the lead, and for a few moments looked "home and dry". However, Suraj Narredu on the second favourite had other ideas.

Setting his mount down for a final challenge, he conjured up a brilliant run which saw Becket prevailing by a head. Completing the order of finish was Change Of Luck — 4-1/2 lengths behind.

Bred at the Sohna Stud Farm, Becket was trained by S. Padmanabhan, recording his third victory in the race, for owner Mr. Haresh N. Mehta, representing Rohan Bloodstock Pvt. Ltd.

Fabulous finish

Earlier, the Deepak Khaitan-owned Aboline prevailed in a fabulous finish to the Grade I Maj. P.K. Mehra Memorial Super Mile, just holding off the spirited challenge of Dancing Dynamite on the outside.

Arjun Mangalorkar has done a splendid job in bringing his ward back to his best after a dismal effort last time out. Christopher Alford steered the Kunigal-bred winner.



CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS: Mr. Haresh N. Mehta (left) and trainer S. Padmanabhan leading in Becket (Suraj Narredu up), winner of the Vandrevala Foundation Indian Turf Invitation Cup.— PHOTO: VIVEK BENDRE