

Sunday 17 January 2021

AVANTAGE GOES BACK TO BACK IN TELEGRAPH



Avantage makes in Group One win number six as she takes out the Gr.1 JR & N Berkett Telegraph (1200m) at Trentham (Race Images – Peter Rubery)

Class prevailed at Trentham on Saturday when versatile mare **Avantage** (Fastnet Rock) was at her very best in taking out the Gr.1 JR & N Berkett Telegraph (1200m) for the second year in succession.

The Jamie Richards-trained five-year-old had scored fresh-up in the

Gr.1 Sistema Railway (1200m) at Ellerslie on New Year's Day to take her Group One winning tally to five and added a sixth as she defended the title she captured in 2020 with another superb performance.

Leading rider Danielle Johnson was smarting after a narrow defeat

on pin-up colt Brando, who finished a neck in arrears of quality filly Bonham (Per Incanto) in the Gr.1 Levin Classic (1600m) earlier in the day and was determined to redeem herself on the Fastnet Rock mare.

A good beginning from an outside

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AVANTAGE GOES BACK TO BACK IN TELEGRAPH

(Continued from page 1)

barrier saw Avantage placed handily with cover in midfield before being angled into the centre of the track by Johnson to make her final claim.

Unleashed at the 200m she powered past Mascarpone (NZ) (Shooting to Win) and Tavi Mac (NZ) (Tavistock) to take control of the contest, running out a comfortable two-length winner from last year's third placegetter Spring Heat (More Than Ready) and stablemate Burgundy Belle (NZ) (Burgundy), who finished well for third.

Johnson, who would go on to finish with four winners on the card, has partnered Avantage to three of her Group One victories.

"She's just a pleasure to ride and words can't really describe how exciting it is to get on her and win Group Ones," Johnson said.

"Everything seemed to work out well as we were three-wide but with cover.

"I knew what I had underneath me, but I wanted her to keep running to the line, so dinner was a bit easier after getting beaten on Brando (NZ) (Savabeel).

"1200m, 1400m, a mile or 2000m doesn't matter to her as she just keeps winning and it's a pleasure to be associated with her."

Richards echoed those sentiments when questioned after the race.

"She's a great mare and has done us all proud as that was pretty special," he said.

"It was a ten out of ten ride as well.

"She will go to Te Rapa in a month now (Gr.1 BCD Group Sprint, 1400m) but she has got time for a quiet week after this.

"She's done a fantastic job for us and I would like to give her a chance to put a Group One in Australia on the board.

"I think she deserves the opportunity, so we'll have to sit down and make a plan on how we get there.

"She can be a bit difficult behind the scenes and on raceday, but when we first saw her at the sales, we thought she might just be a two-year-old.

"She's now justified everybody's faith in her and has done a wonderful job.

"The best thing about her is her constitution and her willingness to be a racehorse."

Purchased by David Ellis CNZM for \$210,000 from The Oaks Stud draft during the premier session at Karaka 2017, Avantage has now won thirteen of her 23 starts, with ten of those at stakes level including her six Group Ones.

Bred by Willie and Karen Calder from Bluff, Avantage already boasts an Australian Group Three victory

and a Group Two placing from a brief campaign at three.

One of 40 individual Group One winners for prolific sire Fastnet Rock, Avantage has won more Group Ones than any other son or daughter of the great stallion.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	WRC Telegraph S. Gr.1 1200m
Winner	Avantage (AUS) 2015
Owners	Te Akau Avantage Syndicate (Mgr: KW Fenton-Ellis MNZM)
Trainer	Jamie Richards (Matamata)
Breeding	by Fastnet Rock (AUS) out of Asavant (NZ) by Zabeel) (NZ)
Breeder	Mr W Calder & Mrs K N Calder
Sales	2017 National Yearling Sale - Premier V: The Oaks Stud \$210000 P: DC Ellis

VIDEO



Avantage and Danielle Johnson score comfortably at Trentham





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BONHAM TAKES OUT TRENTHAM THREE-YEAR-OLD FEATURE

Talented three-year-old **Bonham** (Per Incanto) showed she is a filly of the highest quality when winning the Gr.1 Devan Plastics Levin Classic (1600m) at Trentham on Saturday.

Rated as the main danger to \$1.80 favourite Brando (NZ) (Savabeel), the Johno Benner and Hollie Wynyard-trained filly earned her victory the hard way as she sat three-wide for the majority of the race after starting from an outside barrier.

Taken forward by rider Lisa Allpress to challenge for the lead rounding the home bend, Bonham kicked clear early in the straight before holding out the late charge of Brando to capture her fourth win from just five starts for owner Gary Harding.

Benner admitted he had his concerns during the race, but trusted in the ability of both horse and rider to get the job done.

"She's good and she had to be today," he said.

"Lisa tried to ride her positively with cover, but she lost that and had to go forward at the 700m.

"She (Bonham) always seemed comfortable in herself and now you can call her a Group One winning filly, although that's a feeling you never get used to.

"She does things that only Group One horses can do, and is a great walking filly with a beautiful action.

"Gary (Harding) has been great to us and this will mean a lot to him.

"We're pinching ourselves with how well things are going at the moment. We have great staff at home, so I'm just the pretty face on days like today, well that's what I tell myself anyway!"

Allpress also noted she had her own concerns when she found herself trapped out wide and fearing for what might be said by Benner and Wynyard if she didn't do something about the situation.

"I wasn't having a lot of luck three-deep and I could hear Johno and Hollie in my head," she said.

"I thought I need to trust my horse as she was fit and ready for today and a very fast mare, so I knew they would have trouble coming from behind her.

"I think I've lost my voice from screaming at her as she doesn't need the whip, she just needs a push to get her over the

line.

"Johno and Hollie are my biggest supporters, so I'm delighted to get the win for them."

Bred by Little Avondale Stud, Bonham was purchased for \$160,000 by Harding during the 2019 Karaka Book 1 Yearling sale.

Out of the Redoute's Choice (Danehill) mare Fortune's Choice, Bonham is the fourth individual Group One winner for her sire Per Incanto (Street Cry).

There was a sensation before the start with both Brando and the well-favoured Whimsical (NZ) (Savabeel) requiring a veterinary clearance to start after both became fractious in the starting gates.

Brando charged home from midfield to finish a neck away from Bonham in second, while Whimsical failed to beat a runner home.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	WRC Levin Classic Gr.1 1600m
Winner	Bonham (AUS) 2017
Owners	GE Harding
Trainer	Johno Benner & Hollie Wynyard (Otaki)
Breeding	by Per Incanto (USA) out of Fortune's Choice (AUS) by Redoute's Choice (AUS)
Breeder	Little Avondale Stud
Sales	2019 National Yearling Sale - Book 1 V: Little Avondale Stud \$160000 P: GE Harding



Bonham (inner) holds out a late charge from Brando to win the Gr.1 Devan Plastics Levin Classic (1600m) (Race Images – Peter Rubery)





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FAIRFIELD COLOURS TO THE FORE IN ANNIVERSARY



Pukekohe visitor Super Strike wins the Gr.3 Wellington Seamount Anniversary Handicap (1600m) at Trentham (Race Images – Peter Rubery)

Six decades on from the heyday of the legendary sprinter Yahabeebe, the same colours have played a starring role at Trentham.

Super Strike (NZ) (Super Easy) stepped up to stakes level for the first time and triumphed in Saturday's Gr.3 Wellington Seamount Anniversary Handicap (1600m). It was the fifth win of a nine-start career for the rising star son of Super Easy, bred and owned by Janet Hepi, whose father Lou Fisher raced the two-time Gr.1 Railway Handicap (1200m) winner Yahabeebe.

"It's very special to win this race in my father's colours," Hepi said. "Those same colours were carried by Yahabeebe in some of our great sprint races, including in the Telegraph here at Trentham."

"I just loved the win today by my super, super Super Strike. It was a sensational ride by Andrew Calder, and Richard and Judy Collett have done such a good job with him. I really appreciate all their efforts, including driving him all the way down here from Auckland for this race."

Super Strike was backed into warm favouritism at \$2.60 for Saturday's feature, in which he dropped to 53kg after lugging 60kg into a gallant last-start second in the Stella Artois 1500 Championship Final (1500m) on Boxing Day at Ellerslie.

Patiently ridden by Calder, Super Strike dropped out near the tail of the field before rushing into contention with a powerful burst in the straight.

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FAIRFIELD'S FAMOUS COLOURS TO THE FORE IN ANNIVERSARY

(Continued from page 6)

Sacred Elixir (NZ) (Pour Moi) fought back strongly on his inside, but Super Strike lunged at the line and got the verdict by a nose.

"He gave me a great feel before the start, he had really fresh legs," Calder said. "But he's just such a laid-back horse. You don't want to get to the front too early on him – he switches off and waits for the others. But he's exciting and still has improvement in him."

After winning one of his three starts in his first preparation, Super Strike began this season in Rating 65 grade. But he has soared through the ranks with four impressive wins from six appearances.

The four-year-old holds a nomination for the Gr.1 Thorndon Mile (1600m) on January 30, and the TAB now rates him a \$10 chance. But Richard Collett was non-committal about a return to Trentham in a fortnight.

"He's come a long way in this preparation, and this was his first time in open company," the Pukekohe trainer said.

"So we'll get him home and see how he's come through this run before deciding on anything. He might not be far away from going out to the paddock."

"But this was a good result today, and it's a big thrill to get this win for Janet. She's a lovely lady and I've trained horses for her for a number of years."

The performance of runner-up Sacred Elixir was full of merit. The son of Pour Moi won the Gr.1 JJ Atkins (1600m) in Brisbane as a two-year-old back in 2016 and finished second in the Gr.1 Victoria Derby (2500m) later that year.

After three years on the sidelines, he returned to racing with a fifth at Ellerslie on December 10 and a sixth in the Gr.2 Rich Hill Mile (1600m) on New Year's Day. He also holds a Thorndon Mile nomination.

There was another length and a half back to Guillada (NZ) (Guillotine), who took third just ahead of Times Ticking (NZ) (Tavistock) and Sinarahma (NZ) (Darci Brahma).

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	WRC Anniversary H. Gr.3 1600m
Winner	Super Strike (NZ) 2016
Owners	Mrs J L Hepi
Trainer	Richard Collett (Pukekohe Park)
Breeding	by Super Easy out of Southern Touch by Stark South (USA)
Breeder	Mrs J L Hepi

AUDIO



Andrew Bensley talks with Jamie Richards about his day at Trentham on Saturday where he had two winners including Avantage in the Gr.1 JR & N Berkett Telegraph (1200m).



Andrew Bensley talks with John Benner after Bonham struck Group One glory in the Gr.1 Devan Plastics Levin Classic (1600m) at Trentham



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VALUABLE TRENTHAM STAKES VICTORY FOR OUR HAIL MARY

Well-related and talented staying mare **Our Hail Mary** (NZ) (Ocean Park) scored a strong win in Saturday's Gr.3 Dixon & Dunlop Trentham Stakes that counted for much more than its \$70,000 stake.

Previously placed at Listed level as a three-year-old, the lightly raced mare took the next step and claimed big black type for the first time in her 13-start career.

"I think she's cemented herself as a future broodmare now," trainer and part-owner Allan Sharrock said.

"She's by Ocean Park out of a sister to Shez Sinsational (NZ) (the Eksraar mare Repenting), so she's got the pedigree behind her and the family is really firing at the moment."

Back-to-back victories in lead-up races earned \$4.20 favouritism for Our Hail Mary on Saturday, despite being disadvantaged under the set weights and penalties conditions of the Trentham Stakes. Multiple stakes performers Camino Rocoso (NZ) (Shocking), Hunta Pence (NZ) (No Excuse Needed), Dolcetto (NZ) (Per Incanto) and Fiscal Fantasy (Skilled) all carried either 56kg or 55kg, only slightly more than Our Hail Mary's 53kg.

The five-year-old also had to overcome a less-than-ideal trip, never given the chance to settle into a smooth rhythm as defending champion Camino Rocoso threw down the gauntlet and opened up a 20-length lead down the back straight.

But Our Hail Mary answered every question that was asked of her, and when jockey Danielle Johnson called on her to quicken in the straight, she responded.



The Taranaki mare surged to the front with 150m to run, and when Fiscal Fantasy came at her with a big late challenge, she summoned even more to hold on by a long neck.

"I'm proud of the mare, it wasn't easy for her today," Sharrock said. "There was a lot of pressure on all the way and she had to work hard, but to her credit, she really kept on giving."

Johnson was similarly impressed with her mount's tenacity.

"There was never really any let-up in the run, so she was never able to get on the bit and start travelling," she said.

"She had to work all the way, so it was a very good win. She's got a nice future as a stayer, especially in some of those Cup races next season where she'll be a lot better off at the weights than she was today."

Our Hail Mary is now the winner of six of her 13 starts, with the prospect of much more still to come.

"Over ground, I believe she'll get to the top level," Sharrock said.

"But I'm not going to ask too much of her this time. I've got things like the Waikato Cup (Gr.3, 2400m) in mind for next season. There are a couple of fillies and mares' races coming up over the next few months, those could be nice options for her."

Those include the Gr.3 Manawatu Breeders' Stakes (2000m) on April 9 and the Gr.2 Travis Stakes (2000m) on May 1.

Fiscal Fantasy's second placing was a welcome return to form for the three-time Group Three winner, who tailed the field home in the Gr.1 Zabeel Classic (2000m) at Ellerslie last start. She finished a long neck ahead of Riverton raider Dr Velocious (NZ) (Haradasun), who ran a bold race for third at big odds. – **NZ Racing Desk**

Race	WRC Trentham S. Gr.3 2100m
Winner	Our Hail Mary (NZ) 2015
Owners	S A Sharrock, K M Fleming, T F Fleming & B L Fleming
Trainer	Allan Sharrock (New Plymouth)
Breeding	by Ocean Park out of Repenting by Eksraar (USA)
Breeder	Sir Patrick & Lady Hogan
Sales	2017 National Yearling Sale - Premier V: Cambridge Stud \$35000 P: SA Sharrock

Our Hail Mary (9) adds black type to her record with a win in the Gr.3 Dixon & Dunlop Trentham Stakes (2100m) (Race Images – Peter Ruberry)



JOHNSON BRINGS UP A CENTURY OF WINS AT TRENTHAM

The runaway leader of the National jockeys' premiership, Danielle Johnson, notched her 100th winner for the season when she guided Te Akau Racing two-year-old **Quattro Quinta (NZ)** (Darci Brahma) to victory in the Listed IRT No.1 Wellesley Stakes (1000m) at Trentham on Saturday.

Installed a warm \$2 Fixed Odds favourite, the Darci Brahma gelding certainly didn't have things all his own way as he was attacked by Ansu (Press Statement) and Magneto (NZ) (Showcasing) throughout the first 600m of the contest.

Asked for a serious effort at the top of the straight, Quattro Quinta found a strong kick but was immediately set upon by fellow Matamata raider Wolfgang (NZ) (Puccini), who ranged up alongside for a fight to the finish.

Under strong riding, Quattro Quinta pulled out just enough to take the thick end of the prize from a brave Wolfgang, with Magneto fighting on well for third.

Trainer Jamie Richards was pleased with the effort from his charge who was having his first run since finishing second at Pukekohe back in November.

"He's a real little racehorse," Richards said.

"I think we have to make the most of him this season as I'm not sure if he has the scope to train on.

"It was a good strong effort, helped by the fact he found the rail, which is a big assist to the two-year-olds.

"He will go to the Matamata Slipper now (Gr.3, 1200m) and then on to Auckland (Gr.1 Sistema Stakes, 1200m) and Manawatu (Gr.1 Manawatu Sires' Produce Stakes, 1400m)."

Johnson, who is over fifty wins clear of her nearest rival on the premiership ladder, was pleased with the fight Quattro Quinta displayed in the finish.

"He gave his all, although I was waiting for him to change



Quattro Quinta (right) holds out a brave Wolfgang to take out the IRT No.1 Wellesley Stakes (1000m) at Trentham (Race Images – Peter Rubery)

legs for the extra effort in the straight as the second horse wasn't going away," she said.

"It was a real dogfight, but he won well."

Bred and raced by a group including Nearco Stud Ltd, K W Fenton-Ellis MNZM, Westonlea Bloodstock Partnership & Waihi Livestock Ltd, Quattro Quinta is the fourth foal of Alamosa mare Quintette, a daughter of Gr.2 New Zealand Cup (3200m) winner Everswindell.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	WRC Wellesley S. L 1000m
Winner	Quattro Quinta (NZ) 2018
Owners	Nearco Stud Ltd, K W Fenton-Ellis MNZM, Westonlea Bloodstock Partnership & Waihi Livestock Ltd
Trainer	Jamie Richards (Matamata)
Breeding	by Darci Brahma out of Quintette by Alamosa
Breeder	K W Fenton-Ellis; Nearco Stud Ltd; D Peacocke & Waihi Livestock