Third-year apprentice Kabelo Matsunyane will be jetting off to France on 12 June to contest the Prix Longines Future Racing Stars to be held at the Chantilly Racecourse on Sunday 16 June. Kabelo, who will be under the guidance of National Jockey Coach Robert Moore and South African Jockey Academy Principal Graham Bailey, said he was very excited to be chosen to represent South Africa and was looking forward to the experience.

“When I was told that I was chosen to go to France I was just overwhelmed with excitement and I am really grateful that I was given this opportunity, “I am looking forward to this great adventure to represent my country and to all the new experiences there. “Hopefully I will come back home with the winner in the bag and I will do my best to make everyone proud. Also, I greatly appreciate everyone who has been behind me the whole way, my family, friends, the Academy and my sponsor, Winning Form, he added.”
Hawwaam, the Mike de Kock-trained superstar in the making, boasts quite a collection of silverware this early in his career thanks to his hat-trick at the recent Racing Association Features Season Awards evening at the Aquanaut Room at Turffontein. The colt was named Highveld Champion Horse and also collected the trophy for Champion three-year-old colt/gelding and Champion middle-distance horse. Fittingly, De Kock himself got the Champion Trainer gong.

Over the six months of the Highveld summer and autumn, Hawwaam ran six times for five victories and a second, with smashing performances in the SA Classic and the Premier’s Champions Challenge stamping him as a horse of true class. He then followed it up with a splendid victory in the Daily News 2000 at Greyville. The RA Highveld Awards recognise outstanding achievements during the Gauteng season.

The 2019 selection panel was made up of Senior Handicapper Lennon Maharaj, former champion jockey Anthony Delpech and currently indisposed rider Gunter Wrogemann. RA CEO Larry Wainstein was the non-voting chairman of the panel.
Equine winners:
Champion two-year-old filly: Basadi Faith
Champion two-year-old colt/gelding: Frosted Gold
Champion three-year-old filly: Return Flight
Champion three-year-old colt/gelding: Hawwaam
Champion older horse: Tilbury Fort
Champion sprinter: Pacific Trader
Champion middle-distance horse: Hawwaam
Champion stayer: Samurai Warrior
Champion Horse of the season: Hawwaam

Human Winners:
Champion Work Rider: Joe Gwingwizha
Champion Apprentice: Dennis Schwarz
Champion Jockey: Gavin Lerena
Champion Trainer: Mike de Kock
Champion Breeder: Wilgerbosdrift & Mauritzfontein
Champion Owner: Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid al Maktoum
Champion Groom of the Season: Sonke Cacambile

Other RA Awards:
Youngest Owner: Marc Peter
Most successful Gauteng Raider: Yvette Bremner
Most second places: Take my Word (Owned by Mr and Mrs D Makins)
Winner by longest distance (13 lengths at Vaal Racecourse): Factor Fifty (Owned by Three Tier Construction (Pty)( Ltd) (Nominee: Mr S Naidoo), M/s Z Kirsten and Rakesh Singh
Exceptional Return on Investment: Return Flight (Bred by Mike Sharkey and purchased by Chris van Niekerk for R20 000. Stakes earned in excess of R2,2 million)
Excellent service to the sport of horseracing: Anthony Delpech
Most Successful Syndicate: Hyperpaint Syndicate (Nominee: G T Peter)
Corporate Social Investment is not about earning Brownie Points. It’s about community upliftment, and in the case of Phumelela, the focus falls squarely on uplifting the most vulnerable. It is therefore no surprise that Phumelela has yet again made a number of donations to schools that serve the youth in the rural areas.

Batjha Primary School and Popano High School in the Free State last month received teaching aids to the value of more than R570 000. Batjha Primary School now boasts two interactive whiteboards installed with speakers, two overhead projectors with installation and cabling, and two teacher laptops installed with Mathematics and Literacy software for grades 0 to 9. Educators at the school were also provided with basic computer training and board functionality training.

Popano High School also received two interactive whiteboards installed with speakers, two overhead projectors with installation and cabling, and two teacher laptops installed with Mathematics and Literacy software for grades 10 to 12 in the second phase of Phumelela’s CSI programme at the school. Last year Phumelela completed phase one, which was to sponsor grade 8 and 9 with textbooks. This year, the company undertook phase two which was to roll out two interactive whiteboards solutions and textbook sponsorship for grade 10 and 11.

Text books sponsored for the Grade 10s include Accounting, Physical Science, Afrikaans, and English, while the Grade 11 textbooks cover subjects Afrikaans, Sesotho, Accounting, and Physics.
A learner from Popano High School receives text books courtesy of Phumelela.

An Endangered Wildlife Trust school visit in the Marico River catchment aimed at improving sanitation facilities.

Phumelela also finances Endangered Wildlife Trust school visits to the tune of R200 000. This project aims at improving the lives of people living within the Marico River catchment while protecting the biodiversity and ecological integrity of this fragile groundwater system. The objective is to change negative behaviours around catchment management, to develop and support green economy opportunities, advance skills and education in the area, and to address the self-identified need of rural communities for access to improved reproductive healthcare, and sanitation facilities.
The Investec Derby has produced its fair share of surprises and this year even more so, when Anthony Van Dyck managed to clinch the first prize with four other contenders less than a length behind him.

Listening to trainer Aiden O’Brien after the race, it is obvious that Anthony Van Dyck is unlikely to be seen as one of the best Derby winners. Whether he was the best horse in the race is debatable, but he definitely was the best horse on the day. And not just because of luck in the running. He displayed an uncanny sense of determination, a characteristic also seen in his sire, Galileo, O’Brien’s first Derby winner in 2001.

“It’s a built-in thing with determination,” O’Brien told The Guardian afterwards. “Their heads go down and it’s an inward thing in their minds. They won’t give up and it’s a very strange thing.”

Anthony Van Dyck had an accomplished jockey as well in Seamie Heffernan. Despite never riding as O’Brien’s first choice rider, he has now ridden 30 winners at Group One level.

O’Brien now shares the record for Derby winners with Robert Robson, John Porter and Fred Darling. Before the race, the trainer’s attention to detail was there for all to see in the paddock as he brushed and saddled his seven runners in turn. And as O’Brien conceded afterwards, while he could not be sure that Anthony Van Dyck was the best of his team, he had won a major trial for the Classic at Lingfield a month before and fully deserved his place in the field.

Describing the Derby, he said it is the ultimate test. “It tests the runners in every way. It tests their speed, their stamina, their agility and their mentality as well. That’s why we come here and try to compete every year but it’s very tough. I’m privileged to be a small part of a great team.”
Phumelela’s sponsorship of projects benefiting the Horse Care Trust will amount to R1.2 million in the current financial year, which ends on 31 July. Projects were undertaken in Limpopo, the Eastern Cape, North West, Free State, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape, with the funding primarily used for horse care initiatives that include equine education projects, and providing stabling and daily care (food, water, vaccinations, deworming etc) for abandoned and/or confiscated horses as a result of investigations into cruelty towards animals. The Highveld Horse Care unit, founded in 1991, is the largest equine welfare organisation in the southern hemisphere and is predominantly funded by donations. Phumelela encourages the general public to support the organisations, which are in dire need of assistance.
Ear muffs are now part of the official gear for racehorses and as such are listed in the Computaform, the Computaform Express and TAB sheets.

Ear Muffs are identified as “M” on the Computaform and the Computaform Express and as a < in TAB sheets and newspapers.

Ear muffs are used to help deaden sounds which could upset horses and to prevent bugs and flies from entering a horse’s ears, which causes irritation. They also help horses from shying or losing focus during key moments of a race.

KwaZulu-Natal-based trainer Duncan Howells confirmed he successfully uses ear muffs on a number of his horses in training.

“The main reason (I use ear muffs) is because fractious horses tend to react negatively to noise at the racetrack,” he said. “The cotton in the ear muffs help eliminate some of that noise and I’ve found that this not only calms them down but also ensures they are race ready.

“Sometimes horses also react badly to the noises made at the starting stalls. The banging sound, especially as gates open, cause some to miss the jump. This could cost them the race.”

Interestingly, Australian wonder-mare Winx lost a mammoth four lengths out the gates in the 2017 Warwick Stakes and although she went on to show tremendous courage – winning by a short neck – this performance prompted her trainer, Chris Waller, to fit ear muffs in her follow-up.

“She (Winx) wears ear muffs in her track work and she works every day in them,” Waller said. “It just helps block out the background. She always wears them at the races.

“Ear muffs are simply like wetsuit material that blocks out 20% of the sound. She still hears 80%,” he said.
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