



Take Two
With...
ELITE HORSE RACING
Sponsored by National Association of 2YO Consignors

Owner of Royal Card
(f, 2, Chapel Royal--Showmethagreencard, by De Niro)
Consigned by *Bridlewood Farm*, agent
\$175,000 2yo OBS February 2008
Lifetime Record: 1-1-0-0, \$25,730.

In only their second year of operation, Gabriel Duignan and Ben McElroy's Elite Horse Racing received an additional boost last weekend when Royal Card, purchased by Elite Racing for \$175,000 at this year's OBS February Sale, came from just off the pace to take her first start by 1 3/4 lengths at Keeneland Apr. 19. Officially launched by the two Irishmen in 2007, the syndicate specializes in buying high-quality fillies at the juvenile sales and racing them through the end of their three-year-old seasons.



EquiSport

"It was obvious over the last couple of years at the major

breeding stock sales, fillies fresh off the track which had success at stakes level and were from proven families brought premium prices, so we always thought this would be a sound investment," said McElroy. "Ultimately, people can have the thrill of owning horses that will compete at the top racetracks in America while their investment increases its value with success on the track."

Born in Ireland, Duignan came to the United States in 1985 as a student and plied his trade in farm management before branching out to pinhooking in the early '90s. The co-founder of Paramount Sales--along with Pat Costello--in 2001, Duignan also served a time as president of Castleton-Lyons and ventured out on his own, creating the full service operation Foxtale Farm. Also arriving in America via Ireland, Ben McElroy started out as a student in 1995, and worked at Knockgriffin Farm. Upon the completion of his degree in Equine Science in 1997, he was brought on by Vinery, where he eventually assumed the position of farm manager, and in 2005, was promoted to co-general manager. In December of 2006, McElroy went out on his own and started McElroy Equine.

The horsemen saw their fledgling operation bear fruit early when Game Face (Menifee), a member of the 2007 Elite Racing syndicate, broke her maiden by an impressive seven lengths at Aqueduct and was subsequently sold to Zabeel Racing for a healthy profit.

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A winner in her first start in 2008 in the GII Old Hat S. Jan. 12, Game Face, a \$280,000 OBSMAR juvenile purchase was a game second in her most recent start in the GII Davona Dale S. Mar. 2.

Explaining their reasoning for buying at the two year sales, McElroy remarked, "We get to see them on the track, their breezes, the way they gallop out, and how they hold up mentally after the breeze. We probably know a little more from buying them at the two-year-old sales and where they will fit into our racing program than if we bought them at the yearling sales."



Ben McElroy
elitehorseracing.net

The 2008 Elite Racing syndicate, which is currently made up of eight juvenile fillies, may expand by a few more, if the partnership finds something that fits the bill at the upcoming Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Sale in May. The operation's 2008 string, who were all selected by the team effort of Guignan and McElroy, are owned exclusively by the Elite Racing syndicate. McElroy and Duignan invested in the syndicate in 2007 and again in the 2008 crop and hope to expand the program as they develop a deeper client base.

"Moving forward, we would like it to expand a bit more because we think this is a good way of getting some new investors into the horse business," said McElroy. "Hopefully, we can continue to do well, and in two or three years, maybe we'll be up to somewhere around 20 fillies. After the success we've been having so far, we have a few more investors this year, plus everybody who invested in the initial syndicate has



Gabriel Duignan
elitehorseracing.net

reinvested, which would have to be taken as a great vote of confidence. Hopefully we can continue to build on that in the years to come."

As for the operation's upcoming star, Royal Card looks likely to make her stakes debut later on in the summer, possibly in Churchill Down's GIII Debutante S. June 28 or the Astoria S. at Belmont June 29.

"She looks like the further she goes, the better she will be," added McElroy. "I think she will be a very good filly down the road."

Prior to the 4 1/2-furlong event, the filly dropped rider Johnny Velazquez in the post parade, but was recovered in good order and was able to make it to the gate.

"She is actually a very laid-back filly, but she doesn't really like the pony," said McElroy, explaining the mishap. "She had been schooling with the pony, but I guess she just shied away and dropped the rider. Everything considered, given that she dropped the rider and was wide on the turn, I think she ran a serious race."

--Christina Bossinakis

OBS - 2008 SALES DATES

June 2yo/HRA	June 17-18
Selected Yearlings	Aug. 18
Open Yearlings	Aug. 19-22
Fall Mixed	Oct. 6-10

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