

CAL CUP II: THEN & NOW

His Legacy

by DEBRA GINSBURG

California Cup Starter 1991

Near the end of His Legacy's racing career, Dave Hofmans couldn't tell if he was training the horse or the horse was training him.

"That's the way it is with these old campaigners," Hofmans said of the gelding who graced his barn for eight seasons. "He'd kind of let you know when he wanted to train, which wasn't often, as he got older. He couldn't take a lot of work in the mornings, but he'd give it to you in the afternoons."

California Cup got its first glance of this lanky gelding when he was a 6-year-old in 1991. He had earned stakes brackets the previous year when he captured the Tiburon Handicap at Golden Gate Fields, but he was attempting a marathon in the \$50,000 Cal Cup Starter Handicap. Race officials had increased the distance from 1 1/8 miles to 1 1/2 miles. That didn't stop His Legacy, though, who came from behind to score a half-length victory under Laffit Pincay Jr. Included among the runners in the beaten field were Great Event, the 1990 winner, and Shinko Wine, a half-brother to 1991 Sprint victor Letthebighossroll.

A son of Pocketful in Vail, His Legacy was bred by Laurie Kahn but he and his dam, Quella B., were purchased by Pete Parrella when ill health forced Kahn to disperse his horses. Parrella owns Legacy Ranch in Chino and named the foal for the ranch. His Legacy became a very effective advertising tool.

The gelding became the first horse to win back-to-back Cal Cup races when he captured his second Starter Handicap in 1992. He then came up short to make it three wins in a row when he ran second to Whisk Spree in 1993, but

closed out the year by running third in the grade III William P. Kyne Handicap at Bay Meadows. He then sustained a hairline fracture in his shoulder during a workout at Santa Anita and was not seen again for eight months.

"For a while, I wasn't sure we were going to make it," Hofmans said, "but then everything came together for us. One of our concerns was that we might lose His Legacy in a claiming race he had to enter to become eligible for the Starter. Luckily, that didn't happen."

His Legacy became Cal Cup's first triple winner on Oct. 29, 1994, and it's a distinction he

now shares with Megan's Interco. The roar of approval from the 32,275 in attendance was deafening as the 9-year-old gelding crossed the wire two lengths in front of Big Pal.

"This was the most exciting and emotional win I've ever had since I've been training," Hofmans recalled. "Grant (Hofmans' son) and I were both in tears, and at the eighth pole we were standing and applauding. I have had this horse since he was a 2-year-old and he's part of the family."

In the years since His Legacy, Hofmans has scaled the heights of racing. He sent out Alphabet Soup to defeat Cigar in the 1996 Breeders' Cup Classic and foiled Silver Charm's Triple Crown bid in the 1997 Belmont Stakes with Touch Gold. Big Pal, who was second in the 1994 Starter, is a full brother to the dam of this year's Arlington Million winner Silvano (Ger). His Legacy Too, a half-brother to the three-time Cal Cup winner and also owned by Legacy Ranch, ran third in the 1999 Starter Handicap.

His Legacy himself injured an ankle in 1995 and retired with 14 victories and earnings of \$420,925. Today, he spends his time as a distinguished country gentleman chomping grass at Legacy Ranch. He has earned it.



Nov. 9, 1991—Cal Cup Starter—His Legacy 1st