

Long, slow trip to winner's circle for Fastness daughter

By LINDA DOUGHERTY

As any thoroughbred breeder who has been involved in the industry for a lengthy period of time can tell you, for every high there is a low ... and vice versa.

That has certainly been true for Wernersville, Pa. resident Dave Lengel, who was riding high after his homebred, Faster, captured a \$69,400 maiden special weight on the turf on Sept. 25, defeating a salty group of fillies and mares by two lengths.

It was a long road to get Faster, now 5, to the winner's circle. Her story began on Oct. 1, 2002, when Lengel claimed her dam, Cogent (by Cozzene) at Delaware Park for \$8,000.

"Cogent was the neatest horse," said Lengel. "Even though when I claimed her she was 8 years old, she always acted like a young horse. She was extremely enthusiastic about racing, and it was a lot of fun to own her."

When Lengel finally retired Cogent the next season, she had made over \$70,000 for him, and her career earnings stood at more than \$280,000, with 13 wins from 73 starts. It was her competitive fire and her superb bloodlines, being out of a Vice Regent mare, which convinced Lengel she would make a fine broodmare.

Upon her retirement, Cogent was bred to the G1-winning millionaire Fastness (IRE), whom Lengel owned at the time. The result was the gray Pennsylvania-bred filly Faster, who was foaled rather late, on June 7, 2005.

But as high as Lengel was after Faster's birth, what followed was an unfortunate low. One day after foaling Faster, Cogent died.

"I sent her to the New Bolton Center (of the University of Pennsylvania), but they couldn't save her," said Lengel. He said it appeared as if, during the foaling process, the



Photo by Barbara Weidl/EQUI-PHOTO

Faster winning a \$69,400 maiden special weight on the turf Sept. 25 at Parx Racing.

mare had become injured internally.

"I had such a fondness for her," he said. "I was really heartbroken when she died."

Newborn Faster was sent to the Justaplain Farm of Gert and Helen Stearns in Cochranville, Pa., where they specialize in raising orphan foals. She did not race as a 2-year-old, while at 3 she did not get ready to race until late in the year, and in three starts, failed to hit the board.

Last year, Faster only made two starts, finishing second in a maiden-claiming event at Delaware Park in July, and suffered from what Lengel said were shin issues. After getting the winter off, she's returned this season to earn over \$70,000 in five starts.

On Sept. 25 at Parx Racing, Faster was sent off as the co-second choice in the field of 12 fillies and mares, and after dropping back to 10th in the early going of the 1-1/16 miles race, split rivals on the final turn under jockey Kendrick Carmouche, turned very wide into the stretch, and then seized the lead from 45-1 Seychelles nearing the eighth pole

and drew away to the handy victory, timed in 1:45.18 over the firm course. Faster earned a first-place check of \$40,800; she was trained by Phil Aristone.

"That was the toughest field she'd ever faced," said Lengel.

Her sire, Fastness (IRE), stands at Timber Ridge Farm in Felton, Pa. During his racing career, he captured two G1 races on the turf, the Eddie Read Handicap (twice), and was second in the G1 Breeders' Cup Mile, as well as several other graded stakes, earning over \$1.3 million. He is the sire of Canadian champion and millionaire Le Cinquieme Essai.

For Lengel, the victory by Faster was bittersweet, as she was the one and only foal out of Cogent. But, like her mother, she is showing many of the same traits.

"She very, very competitive, just like Cogent was," said Lengel. Although Cogent is gone, he's planning to use Faster as a broodmare some day, hoping she can pass down that fighting spirit to another generation.