

PAUL HANAGAN AND MARTIN HARLEY CELEBRATE VICTORIES



Champion Jockey Paul Hanagan celebrated retaining his Flat racing crown - and then paid warm tribute to his major rival Silvestre de Sousa.

After a nail-biting finish to the 2010 title race when he edged out Richard Hughes by just two winners, it was almost as close this year for Paul in his battle with Silvestre.

Silvestre's hopes appeared to have taken a fatal blow when Paul rode a treble at Redcar four days before the conclusion to the season.

However, the Brazilian - who returned to Britain after riding in the Melbourne Cup - came storming back, especially on the penultimate days of the season when he rode no fewer than four winners at Ffos Las and Wolverhampton.

On to the final day at Doncaster, and the gap of four winners proved too much - and Paul once again was declared the Champion Flat Jockey. He had ridden 165 winners to Silvestre's 161.

Paul said: "It's been another incredible year in the saddle. The race for the title has been thrilling.

"I would not be honest if I said I had enjoyed every single minute of it, but I have had many fantastic times over the last seven and a half months.

"My major rivals in the championship race have been first class opponents. I am particularly delighted for Silvestre who has ridden superbly well all season."

Paul reflected on a memorable season.

"If I have had one disappointment this season, it is that my Group 1 winner from 2010, Wootton Bassett, didn't enjoy a good season. I felt for my boss Richard Fahey because he was the star horse in the yard and he was beset by niggling little injuries," he said.

"Sometimes, it just isn't to be for great two-year-olds to replicate their first season form when they return as three-year-olds. And that's been the case with Wootton Bassett who has now gone on to a career at stud. Maybe one of his progenies will be as good - and I can take the ride!

"Royal Ascot was a downer too when I was injured. But those bad moments pale into insignificance in contrast to all the fabulous days and the many winners."

The formal presentation of the 2011 trophy was made to Paul by PJA Chief Executive Kevin Darley.

The Champion Apprentice title that Paul Hanagan won in 2002 was won by Martin Harley who had six more winners - 57 to 51 - than his closest pursuer Kieran O'Neill.

Martin already knew he had taken the prize before heading to Doncaster.

"I've had a fabulous year and it was great to be able to come here today with no pressure. It's been a ding-dong battle all year with Kieran and it became a bit of a scrap towards the end and it was a relief to come out on top," he said.

For further information, please contact:

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