

Juvenile Crop Should Lift

By Gary Crispe

CEO and Managing Editor
Racing and Sports Pty Ltd

My recent analysis of the 2013-14 three-year-old crop highlighted the possible impact associated with the loss of several highly Timeform rated gallopers entering their four-year-old season.

It is now time to examine the two-year-old crop for the season just ended, with an eye to what we can expect from them at three.

The table below lists several key performance indicators associated with the longitudinal analysis of two-year-olds turning three, since the year 2000.

It is clear the 2013-14 juvenile crop is the lowest in terms of juveniles at the higher end of the Timeform ratings scale not only since 2000, but indeed for the last 20 years.



Rubick winning the Sportingbet Blue Diamond Prelude

Three juveniles Earthquake, Mossfun and Rubick, ended the 2013-14 two-year-old season equal top rated on 119, a pound under the 2005-06 juvenile crop. It also had a tie for top spot headed by Miss Finland and Nadeem, both Timeform rated 120.

The 2013-14 juvenile crop was also the first (in the same period) that had no runner Timeform rated 120 or above.

So how do we analyse this data with a view to how the crop will perform at three?

Table A shows the longitudinal progression of each crop from two to three and it does illustrate some interesting trends. While the recently-turned three crop starts off a low base at the top, there is enough evidence to suggest they can emerge to at least average three-year-olds.

First let's examine the current crop of juveniles Timeform rated above 114, which yielded an average Timeform rating of 117 - that average is equal to four previous lowest values recorded since 2000. (2000-01, 2002-03, 2004-05 and 2005-06).

But that does not necessarily spell doom for the crop, and here is why. As shown below in all four previous low rating crops, all increased the crop average at three, by just fewer than one and a half pounds, which is quite a significant increase in the context of the entire crop.

That statistic would indicate those respective juvenile crops were possibly slower maturing youngsters at the top end that managed to catch up during their three-year-old year.

Crop	>114 Av TF At Two	>114 Av TF at Three
2005-06	117.0	119
2004-05	117.0	119
2002-03	118.0	118.5
2000-01	117.0	118

Just staying with this theme, if we now look at the number of juveniles rated 114 and above, that had only eight juveniles or less we see there are two previous crops with a lower number in that category since 2000 - crop 2012-13 had five and 2011-12 had six. Crops 2010-11 and 2007-08 like the 2013-14 crop also had eight.

Crop Year	Rated >114 at Two	Rated >114 at Three
2012-13	5	17
2011-12	6	21
2010-11	8	22
2007-08	8	21

Again history shows us that is not the negative it would first seem, with both the 2012-13 and 2011-12 crops improving markedly with maturity, yielding 17 and 21 runners in that category at three.

Also while the 2013-14 juvenile crop had no runners rated 120 or higher, my analysis again indicates that need not be a bad sign for the crop at three.

In fact an examination of previous crops with two or less runners in this category show there has been a spectacular trend of improvement with maturity as below

Crop	>=120 at Two	>=120 at Three
2012-13	1	9
2007-08	2	15
2005-06	2	11
2001-02	2	12
2000-01	2	10

Other factors examined that show encouraging signs for the juvenile crop, at three, include an analysis of the crop median ratings, as well as how the top end progresses from two to three.

A look at the three previous seasons of low rating leading Juveniles shows the crop can catch up at three, even if the top Timeform rated juvenile is not the top Timeform rated three-year-old.

Crop	Top Rated at Two	Top rated at Three	Improvement at Top end
2012-13	Overreach 121	Shamus Award 124	+3 pounds
2005-06	Miss Finland/Nadeem 120	Haradasun 126	+6 pounds
2001-02	Bel Esprit 121	Choisir 126	+5 pounds

The above table illustrates how past crops with low rated top juveniles can improve sharply at three which would seem to support the view the 2013-14 crop should follow the same trend.

It is interesting to note that the Top Timeform rated juvenile has emerged the Top Timeform rated three-year-old on just one occasion since 2000 – in 2010-11 Sepoy was Timeform rated 124 at two and in 2011-12 he was Timeform rated 129 at three.

The last factor to be looked at involves the median Timeform rating for each crop.

Based on a stop-loss minimum rating of 40 analysis of each crop, the 2013-14 crop had a median Timeform rating of 97, which is in line with values from all the crops since 2000.

Again this a clear indicator there is depth in the crop “below the surface”, which has in the past been the engine for the more mature types coming to the fore at three.

Like the recent three-year-old crop analysis, the evidence suggests that while the 2013-14 juvenile crop is starting off at the lowest base since 2000, there is a strong case to suggest they will indeed improve sharply at three.

Whether that improvement from such a low base will be sufficient to earn them a spot within the normal range of historical averages, at three, will only be known at seasons end.

But my quantitative empirical evidence says the crop can be assured that some gallopers from within will step up to be counted in the months ahead. But thankfully the two-year-old crop at this juncture at least - unlike the three-year-old crop, has not lost any of the higher rated youngsters to injury etc going forward.

All age group crops vary in quality from season to season. That is the nature of the industry and has been so for many decades. The reasons why the last two juvenile crops have been below par remains a mystery, perhaps the current bloodlines are more attuned to maturity, and favour three-year-olds more than two-year-olds.

Or maybe the better juveniles are now being held back at an early age, as is suggested by the average number of starts juveniles now have at two, down to 2.6 starts per season from 3.4 some 20 years ago.

There has been some interesting changes emerging amongst the youngsters in the last two seasons. It will be interesting to observe what happens to the babies for 2014-15.

TABLE A – Longitudinal Analysis Of Two-Year-old to Three-Year-Old

Season	Top Rated 2YO	#2YO >114	#2YO >119	>114 AV TF	Top Rated 3YO	#3YO >114	#3YO >119	>114 Av TF	3YO G1 wins Older
2013-14	Earthquake Mossfun Rubick (119)	8	0	117					
2012-13	Overreach (121)	5	1	118	Shamus Award (124)	17	9	118.0	3
2011-12	Pierro (127)	6	3	120	All Too Hard (129)	21	10	120.5	11
2010-11	Sepoy (124)	8	3	119	Sepoy (129)	22	12	120.5	6
2009-10	Crystal Lily (122)	13	5	118	Star Witness Jimmy Choux (124)	26	7	118.0	4
2008-09	Real Saga Phelan Ready (123)	13	7	119	Wanted Starspangledbanner So You Think (126)	15	12	119.0	7
2007-08	Amelia's Dream (124)	8	2	118	Whobegotyou (126)	21	15	119.0	3
2006-07	Meurice (123)	13	4	118	Weekend Hussler (130)	9	5	118.0	7
2005-06	Miss Finland (120) Nadeem (120)	15	2	117	Haradasun (126)	14	11	119.0	6
2004-05	Stratum (122)	30	5	117	Racing To Win (126)	22	14	119.0	8
2003-04	Dance Hero (125)	17	5	118	Fastnet Rock (127)	21	7	118.5	6
2002-03	Untouchable (122)	20	3	117	Exceed And Excel (126)	21	10	118.5	9
2001-02	Bel Esprit (121)	14	2	118	Choisir (126)	17	12	119.0	8
2000-01	Viscount (123)	15	2	117	Lonhro (124)	18	10	118.0	5

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