

Sugar Babe sweet out wide

TRAINER Lee Freedman has given Sugar Babe's Magic Millions Classic hopes a big boost by declaring her well up to Golden Slipper standard.

But Freedman does not underestimate the huge task facing Sugar Babe to win the MM Classic from the outside draw in a capacity field of 16 at the Gold Coast today.

Sugar Babe would become the third MM Classic winner from gate 16. The others were Molokai Prince (1988) and Malibu Magic (1989) when the race was run in two divisions for colts and fillies.

Single-digit barriers have dominated in recent years, with the exception of Mirror Mirror who missed the start from gate 15 but came from the tail of the field to score.

Sure, the barrier is a sobering factor. But I think Sugar Babe is a very good horse. And the form supports that rating, said Freedman, who was runner-up with Gold Ace in 1995 and third last year with Royal Ascher.

At Rosehill when she won last start she came from the tail of the field in a slowly run race to win under a big weight (57kg). The third horse, Mr Profumo, was a length behind her but in another 100m she would have been many lengths ahead of him and he came out to win at Randwick on Saturday.

"Previously she was second to Believe'n Succeed in the Blue Diamond Prelude and that form has stacked up.

"I definitely want to give her a chance in the Golden Slipper. There are still four weeks less two days to the Slipper after this race so there is plenty of time to give her a short freshen-up and build back up to the Slipper. She's good enough to do it."

Freedman acknowledged reports Sugar Babe was in "light" condition when she won at Rosehill a fortnight ago. But he said Sugar Babe was a filly who was a big eater and actually had put on weight while in training.

"She's one of those horses who eats everything but doesn't show much for it. That's just her," he said.

Toowoomba trainer Mark Webb feels Black Minx gives him his best chance of success in the Magic Millions, which he has twice been close to winning.

Webb was unlucky with Emit Time (second) who cost himself a win by racing erratically in the straight in 2005, and the following year he had Reigart (third) and Cruskit (fourth).

Black Minx is unbeaten in three runs, all at 1000m including a dashing finish for a two-lengths margin at Eagle Farm three weeks ago.

"Everything has gone perfectly with her. She had a solid hit-out in an exhibition gallop at Toowoomba last Saturday and that just topped her off beautifully," Webb said.