



Wednesday 24 February, 2021

Racing update

Rich Australian Cup Carnival to draw to a thrilling conclusion

One greyhound will land a life-changing \$300,000 first prize in less than 30 seconds in Saturday night's rich TAB Australian Cup Final (525m) at The Meadows.

In great news for sports lovers, coverage of Australian Cup night will be broadcast live on *Sky Racing Active* from 6.30pm and streamed via The Watchdog app, while the night will also be showcased on free-to-air television as greyhound racing's popular show, *'Thrill of the Chase'* returns to 7Mate from 9pm.

Champion WA sprinter **Tommy Shelby** stamped his authority on the Australian Cup series with a breathtaking heat win last Saturday in 29.51sec, clearly the fastest time of the night.

Extraordinarily, he was one of five greyhounds (out of eight) to win their Australian Cup heat from Box 5.

One of the world's most popular greyhounds, **Tommy Shelby** is named after the main character in top-rating Netflix series, *Peaky Blinders*, while his racetrack exploits have seen him raise around \$25,000 for various charities.

Tommy Shelby's owners, Jodie-Louise Harders and Steve Withers (the latter also trains the greyhound), donate 10 per cent of the owners' share of his prizemoney (5 per cent of his overall winnings) to a different charity each month, with his current aligned charity - *Bushfire Volunteers WA* – to collect a \$15,000 windfall if he wins the Australian Cup.

A relentless chaser renowned for his elite decision-making in pressure-cooker situations, **Tommy Shelby** is the only 2021 Australian Cup finalist not trained in Victoria, and he opened up as a \$2.80 equal favourite with TAB after drawing Box 4.

No 'Sandgroper' has won the Australian Cup in the race's 63-year history.

Heading the Victorian brigade is lightning-fast beginner **Fernando Bluey** (Kayla Cottrell), who has won nine of his past 10 starts and also opened up at \$2.80 after drawing Box 6.

Cottrell, 18, became the youngest ever Victorian greyhound trainer to win a Group 1 when **Fernando Bluey's** litter sister, **Fernando Cazz** snared the \$75,000 to-the-winner Rookie Rebel (600m) on opening night of the Australian Cup Carnival on 13 February.

Kayla boasts rich sporting bloodlines, with her grandfather Len representing the Carlton Football Club in 12 games as a ruckman in the 1950s, while her cousin Matthew Cottrell is currently on Carlton's playing list and famous for a memorable celebration after kicking the winning goal against Sydney in 2020.

Kayla heads a wave of promising young greyhound trainers coming through the ranks in Victoria - including three others who have finalists in Saturday night's \$429,000 TAB Australian Cup Final – Harley Whelan (23), Correy Grenfell (27) and Tim Britton (30).

The Whelan family – based in the Gippsland town of Metung – are chasing their second home-bred group success at The Meadows for 2021. In January the Whelans won the Silver Chief – their first ever Group 1 - with **Lakeview Walter**, trained by Harley's mother Monique, while Harley has Walter's litter brother **Lakeview Cruiser** (Box 2) in the Cup.

Grenfell is no stranger to success, having already won multiple group races with his Australian Cup finalist **Tiggerlong Tonk** (Box 7), along with **Yozo Bale** and former champion **Orson Allen**.

Tim Britton is having his first crack at a Group 1 with **Utah Blues** (Box 1), who is at huge odds despite being unbeaten in four attempts from the inside draw. His father, Robert has had enormous success in the Australian Cup, training three winners – **Isa Brown** (2002), **Tasman Queen** (2008) and **Fanta Bale** (2017).

The strong and classy **Christo Bale** is aiming to deliver NSW's Wheeler family a phenomenal fifth Australian Cup in the past six years.

Tyler Durden shocked punters when winning his heat at \$15.50, slashing his PB by six lengths when clocking 29.66sec, the second fastest time of the night.

And finally **Shima Classic** – the least-experienced Australian Cup finalist – showed incredible maturity when notching her sixth win from just nine career starts in her heat.

The only female greyhound in the final, **Shima Classic** is a younger half-sister to champion sprinter **Shima Shine**, and is aiming to deliver Andrea Dailly her sixth Australian Cup.

The Australian Cup isn't the only Group 1 to take place on Saturday night, with The Meadows to also host the \$142,750 Fanta Bale Super Stayers Final (725m).

And in a remarkable show of generosity, Mark Ruff, owner of Super Stayers favourite **Houdini Boy**, has pledged to donate his share (50%) of any prize money his champion greyhound wins on the night to Victoria's Greyhound Adoption Program. With a \$100,000 first prize on offer, it could equate to as much as a \$50,000 donation if **Houdini Boy** happens to win.

A dual G1 winner, **Houdini Boy** is a renowned escape artist who can win from just about anywhere, and he'll be looking to turn the tables on **Zack Monelli**, the electrifying WA front-runner who got the better of the champ in his heat.

Incidentally, Saturday night's Quaddie will start at Race 6 and culminate with the Australian Cup (Race 9).

How to follow Australian Cup night:

- Extensive coverage on Sky Racing Active and via The Watchdog app with Jason Adams, Gareth Hall, Marc Ohlmus & Troy Iwanyk live on course from 6.30pm.
 - Live free-to-air broadcast on 'Thrill of the Chase' on 7Mate and via The Watchdog app with James Van de Maat, George Farrugia, Mitch Ebeyer & Jason Bonnington from 9pm.
 - Watch every race LIVE and FREE on The Watchdog app or at watchdog.grv.org.au.
 - Radio coverage with RSN Racing and Sport (927 AM) & SEN Track (1593 AM).
 - Follow on social media via @TheMeadowsDogs and @WatchDogRacing.
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\$429,000 G1 TAB AUSTRALIAN CUP (525m)

The Meadows Saturday, 9.37pm

\$300,000 (1st); \$86,000 (2nd); \$43,000 (3rd)

- 1 UTAH BLUES (Tim Britton, Lara VIC)
- 2 LAKEVIEW CRUISER (Harley Whelan, Metung VIC)
- 3 SHIMA CLASSIC (Andrea Dailly, Anakie VIC)
- 4 TOMMY SHELBY (Steven Withers, Casuarina WA)
- 5 TYLER DURDEN (Jeffrey Britton, Anakie VIC)
- 6 FERNANDO BLUEY (Kayla Cottrell, Pearcedale VIC)
- 7 TIGGERLONG TONK (Correy Grenfell, Anakie VIC)
- 8 CHRISTO BALE (Mark Delbridge, Balliang VIC)

Reserves

- 9 MEPUNGA FELIX (Jeffrey Britton, Anakie VIC)
 - 10 WOW (Karina Britton, Ambarvale NSW)
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\$142,750 G1 FANTA BALE SUPER STAYERS (725m)

The Meadows Saturday, 9.12pm

\$100,000 (1st); \$28,500 (2nd); \$14,250 (3rd)

- 1 HOUDINI BOY (Kelvyn Greenough, Pearcedale VIC)
- 2 RUN LIKE JESS (Robert Camilleri, Lara VIC)
- 3 ZACK MONELLI (Lyn Smith, Nambrok VIC)
- 4 HERE'S TEARS (Robert Britton, Lara VIC)
- 5 SUNSET BOURBSKI (Andrea Dailly, Anakie VIC)
- 6 SIR TRUCULENT (Walter Harkins, Reynella SA)
- 7 PILBARA (Mario Briganti, Tuerong VIC)
- 8 STANLEY ROAD (Mark Gatt, Thirlmere NSW)

Reserves

- 9 MY GIRL KIZZY (Jeffrey Britton, Anakie VIC)
- 10 LET'S SEE (Mark Davidson, Brandy Hill NSW)

Key times & Feature races on Australian Cup night:

6.30pm Sky Racing Active coverage begins

6.47pm First race

7.28pm Race 3 - G3 GRV Vic Bred Maiden Final (525m) – 1st prize \$25,000

7.46pm Race 4 - GRV Vic Bred Grade 5 Final (525m) – 1st prize \$9,060

8.10pm Race 5 - Country Championship Final (525m) – 1st Prize \$25,000

8.28pm Race 6 - Australian Cup Consolation (525m) – 1st Prize \$20,000 *Quaddie begins*

8.45pm Race 7 - Cup Night Middle Distance (600m) – 1st Prize \$15,000

9.00pm 'Thrill of the Chase' coverage begins on 7Mate

9.12pm Race 8 G1 Fanta Bale Super Stayers – 725m (Race 8) – 1st prize \$100,000

9.37pm Race 9 G1 TAB Australian Cup – 525m (Race 9) – 1st prize \$300,000

10.39pm Last race (Race 12)

Metro Festival of Racing

This Saturday night will close out the 2021 Australian Cup Carnival, which falls under the 'Metropolitan Festival of Racing' banner and incorporates a total of five Group 1 events and more than a million dollars in prize money.

2021 Australian Cup Carnival (group winners so far)

G1 Temlee (525m): **Wow** (Karina Britton, Ambarvale NSW)

G1 Rookie Rebel (600m): **Fernando Cazz** (Kayla Cottrell, Pearcedale VIC)

G1 Zoom Top (725m): **Houdini Boy** (Kelvyn Greenough, Pearcedale VIC)

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