



Friday 6 August, 2021

Racing update

St Leger showdown a 'Classic'

By Gerard Guthrie

Saturday night's \$35,500 Group 3 Warragul St Leger Final (460m) shapes as a 'must watch' sequel to the recent G1 Maturity Classic, with superstar duo **Qwara Bale** and **Aston Fastnet** reprising their starring roles.

Add boom speedster **Koblentz** (Box 2) into the mix and the race for the \$25,000 winner's purse shapes as one of the most memorable in the age-restricted feature's history.

Andrea Dailly's **Qwara Bale** (Box 7) celebrated her second G1 victory in the Maturity, having previously won the Sapphire Crown as well as the G2 Warrnambool Cup.

Qwara Bale made her Warragul debut when winning her heat in 25.63sec, handing exciting local prospect **Paua Of Buddy** (Box 3), trained at Buln Buln East by Steve White and a half-brother to joint Warragul 400m record holder Paua Of Oscar, his first defeat in five appearances at the track.

'Team Dailly' also has a second finalist in **Shima Classic** (Box 5), a half-sister to champion sprinter Shima Shine, which was unplaced in the 2019 St Leger final at just his fifth start.

Shima Classic ran third to **Qwara Bale** in the Sapphire Crown and also qualified for the G1 Australian Cup and G2 Ballarat Cup finals.

Aston Fastnet (Box 8), trained by Jason Thompson, whose wife Seona prepared 2018 St Leger winner Aston Kimetto, also raced by high profile owner/breeder Ray Borda, started favourite in the Maturity but was never a factor after blowing the start.

Aston Fastnet is the fastest qualifier for the St Leger after a 25.39sec heat victory, his second win from three Warragul appearances; however, as was the case in the Maturity, he'll have to contend with the outside alley.

TAB has marked **Aston Fastnet** as joint \$4.60 second elect with **Qwara Bale**, with **Koblentz** (Box 2), which won the third heat in 25.65sec, the \$2.30 favourite.

The regally bred **Koblentz**, a son of Fernando Bale and trainer David Geall's two-time G1 winner Up Hill Jill, boasts the imposing record of 17 from 24 and is looking for his first victory at Group level.

Koblentz has won three from three from box two, while he's yet to be beaten in eight career assignments from boxes one, two and three.

Another local hope, **Hennessey** (Box 6), trained by Ashlee Terry at Nilma North, is another finalist boasting excellent Warragul credentials, having won five on end before running third in Koblentz's heat.

The field is rounded out by Angela Langton's litter brothers **Keep It Blue** (Box 1) and **Keep It Black** (Box 4), both making their first appearances at Group level.

The St Leger meeting also includes the Simon Benson Memorial Grade 5 final (460m), featuring Maturity runner-up Fernando Mick, and the President's Cup (680m).

Here's a rundown of the contenders:

Group 3 Warragul St. Leger (460m)

1 KEEP IT BLUE

Trainer: Angela Langton (Anakie)

Breeding: April 2019 Fernando Bale x Art Nouveau

Comment: Won 7 from 31. Was a soundly beaten third in his heat to Aston Fastnet and hard to see him featuring at the pointy end in such esteemed company despite drawing the rails. (PB - 25.97sec)

2 KOBLENZ

Trainer: David Geall (Lara)

Breeding: May 2019 Fernando Bale x Up Hill Jill

Comment: Won 17 from 24. Emerged as one of the most exciting sprinters in the land with sensational 11-race winning streak before his run came to an end when narrowly beaten in a G1 Maturity heat by Aston Fastnet. Impeccable record from inside boxes and is the one they all have to catch. (PB - 25.65sec)

3 PAUA OF BUDDY **SCRATCHED**

Trainer: Steven White (Buln Buln East)

Breeding: April 2019 Aston Dee Bee x Paua To Admit

Comment: Won 5 from 8. Lightly raced and boasts excellent Warragul record, winning four on end before losing no admirers when second to Qwara Bale in his heat. This is his toughest test to date but he looks up to the task. (PB - 25.49sec)

4 KEEP IT BLACK

Trainer: Angela Langton (Anakie)

Breeding: April 2019 Fernando Bale x Art Nouveau

Comment: Won 10 from 28. Continued consistent recent form when runner-up in Koblentz's

heat. Rarely runs a bad race but lacks the class of some of his rivals and draw is no help. (PB - 25.74sec)

5 SHIMA CLASSIC

Trainer: Andrea Dailly (Anakie)

Breeding: April 2019 Mepunga Blazer x Shima Song

Comment: Won 10 from 27. Dual G1 finalist in 2021. Gave a great sight in heat when led from box one before being overpowered late by fastest qualifier Aston Fastnet, with 'daylight' to third. Has the pace to offset her middle draw. (PB - 25.57sec)

6 HENNESSEY

Trainer: Ashlee Terry (Nilma North)

Breeding: April 2019 Barcia Bale x Tigress Ally

Comment: Won 7 from 15. Developed into a Warragul specialist after relocating from NSW earlier in the year, winning five on end before running third in his heat to Koblenz. This is harder again but should be competitive with luck from the draw. (PB - 25.67sec)

7 QWARA BALE

Trainer: Andrea Dailly (Anakie)

Breeding: April 2019 Allen Deed x Daithy Allen

Comment: Won 19 from 32. Stamped herself as the best female sprinter in the land, winning G1 Maturity, G1 Sapphire Crown and G2 Warrnambool Cup. Back to her brilliant best winning her past three after a below par Queensland campaign and is again a major player. (PB - 25.63sec)

8 ASTON FASTNET

Trainer: Jason Thompson (Pearcedale)

Breeding: April 2019 KC And All x Aston Miley

Comment: Won 10 from 22. Enormous talent, capable of winning anything. Started favourite in G1 Maturity from this draw but was never a factor after a poor start. Produced the fastest heat performance and while likely to be spotting key rivals a start, is sure to be steaming home. (PB - 25.35sec)

Reserves

9 BLACK AVENGER

Trainer: Joe Borg (Maryborough)

Breeding: April 2019 Aston Dee Bee x Lady Avenger

Comment: Won 6 from 16. Showing ability but well-beaten by Qwara Bale in heat and likely to find this too tough if a starter. (PB - 26.22sec)

10 BAHATI BALE

Trainer: Andrea Dailly (Anakie)

Breeding: April 2019 Dyna Villa x Fanta Bale

Comment: Won 6 from 32. Doesn't win out of turn and this looks a bridge too far. (PB - 25.91sec)

HEAT WINNERS (fastest to slowest)

25.387sec Aston Fastnet

25.630sec Qwara Bale

25.647sec Koblenz

KEY TIMES

5.28pm: Race 1

6.44pm: \$9,750 Presidents Cup (680m) – Race 5

7.06pm: \$8,000 Simon Benson Memorial Final (460m) – Race 6

7.24pm: Young gun Rebellious (10 from 13) is looking to bounce back from his shock St Leger heat defeat – Race 7

7.44pm: \$35,500 G3 Warragul St. Leger Final (460m) – Race 8

8.27pm: Last race – Race 10

RECENT WARRAGUL ST LEGER WINNERS

2015 He's So Good (Michael Fearnley, Paynesville VIC)

2016 Fanta Bale (Robert Britton, Lara VIC)

2017 Jimmy Newob (Barry Fullerton, Red Cliffs VIC)

2018 Aston Kimetto (Seona Thompson, Pearcedale VIC)

2019 Mepunga Daniel (Jeff Britton, Anakie, VIC)

2020 Catch The Thief (Matt Clark, Briagolong, VIC)

HOW TO FOLLOW THE ACTION

- Watch every race LIVE and FREE via watchdog.grv.org.au or on **Sky Racing**.
- Trent Langskail to provide regular crosses to **RSN Racing and Sport** (927 AM).
- **SEN Track** (1593 AM).
- Extensive Twitter coverage with '@WatchDogRacing'

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