



Saturday 26 December, 2021

## Group 1 Gold FM Sale Cup: Armchair guide

By Gerard Guthrie

Chasing a second Group 1 Gold FM Sale Cup (650m) title on Sunday night, Jeff Britton is cautiously optimistic it will be a case of third time lucky on the G1 stage for TAB's \$2.10 favourite **Mepunga Ruby** in the Boxing Day showpiece.

Britton won the Sale Cup in 2014 with classy Western Australian Star Recall, while his GRV Hall Of Fame inductee father Allan and brother Robert have also won the event in 1997 and 2010 with Shannen's Storm and Symmetry respectively.

**Mepunga Ruby** (Box 1) has been racing in elite staying company since August, winning the G3 Speed Star (725m) at The Meadows, running third in the G1 Bold Trease and sixth in the G1 Topgun Stayers, incredibly missing a place just once in her last 19 starts.

**Mepunga Ruby** dropped back from '700' for last Sunday's Cup heats, where she finished strongly at her Sale debut to score in 37.37sec, the 'slowest' of the four run-offs, and then 'drew' Box 1 for the \$75,000 to-the-winner final.

"She was the last one left, so Craig (Solkhon, kennel representative) didn't have to choose," Jeff Britton said of the box draw.

"I'd rather be drawn there. Boxes win these races. If Do It had 'the red' in the (G1) Hobart Thousand last week I think he would've won by three or four lengths.

"I trialled Mepunga Ruby at Sale last week but she looked like she was still feeling her way around in her heat.

"She rails fairly well on the city tracks but I trialled her off 'the red' and she wanted to get out to Box 4 and she seemed to do the same thing in her heat.

"She went into the first corner running second and came out fourth. You can't do that.

"Sale can be a tricky track up the back but once she got around there she really took off.

"I really want '700' with her now. She keeps getting stronger. But over 650m, there's a lot more pace in the race. I think **Untapped** (Box 5) will probably lead but hopefully we'll be running first or second and then we've got to worry about **Zac's Entity** (Box 6)."

**Zac's Entity**, which is trained by Kel Greenough, who's aiming at back-to-back Sale Cup victories after Houdini Boy was successful in 2020, is undoubtedly the query runner.

After incurring the wrath of the stewards in the G1 Topgun Stayers, the lightly-raced talent made his return in last weekend's heats and did just enough to win in 37.14sec, edging out G1 Hume Cup winner **Knicks Bale** (Box 3).

**Knicks Bale**, trained by Correy and Samantha Grenfell, is one of three 'Bale' finalists, along with Mark Delbridge's fastest qualifier **Jarick Bale** (Box 8) and Andrea Dailly's **Drako Bale** (Box 4), which is striving to go one better than his illustrious mother Fanta Bale, runner-up in the 2017 Cup final.

Local support will be with hometown hero **Omega Tyson** (Box 7), which is trained, owned and bred by Barry and Heather Harper at Seaspray.

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## Here's a rundown of the contenders:

### G1 SALE CUP (650m)

#### 1 MEPUNGA RUBY

**Trainer:** Jeff Britton, Anakie VIC

**Breeding:** March 2019 Fernando Bale x Mepunga Rosie

**Comment:** Won 15 from 25. Developed into one of the nation's best stayers, finishing unplaced only once (G1 Topgun Stayers) since stepping up to '700' in August. Found the line strongly on debut at Sale in 37.37sec heat victory and drawn to get every chance to open G1 account at third attempt. Deserved favourite. (PB – 37.37sec)

**TAB Odds:** \$2.10

#### 2 MY MARGARITA

**Trainer:** Steve White, Buln Buln East VIC

**Breeding:** December 2018 Bekim Bale x My Bella Rose

**Comment:** Won 8 from 35. Former NSW stayer that qualified for G2 Sydney Cup final in October prior to relocating to Victoria. Started at \$26 in heat when came from last early to run a close second to Mepunga Ruby. Outsider of the field and depth is likely to test her. (PB – 37.09sec)

**TAB Odds:** \$41

#### 3 KNICKS BALE

**Trainer:** Samantha Grenfell, Anakie VIC

**Breeding:** December 2018 Kinda Cruel Red x Dyna Willow

**Comment:** Won 16 from 77. Enjoying a remarkable late career purple patch that sees her contesting third G1 final in two months, including emotion-charged victory in G1 Hume Cup (600m) on the day of her legendary breeder Paul Wheeler's funeral. Was grabbed on the line by Zac's Entity in heat and has each-way claims.

**TAB Odds:** \$8

#### **4 DRAKO BALE**

**Trainer:** Andrea Dailly, Anakie VIC

**Breeding:** April 2019 Dyna Villa x Fanta Bale

**Comment:** Won 6 from 43. Professional placegetter that hasn't won since July but was beaten less than a length by Omega Tyson in heat, coming from midfield. Also qualified for G1 Bold Trease at Sandown last month after running second in heat to another rival here in Untapped. Minor claims again appear best.

**TAB Odds:** \$21

#### **5 UNTAPPED**

**Trainer:** Dustin Drew, Dennington VIC

**Breeding:** April 2019 Aston Dee Bee x Mepunga Fame

**Comment:** Won 10 from 34. Consistent middle distance performer that made impressive leap to elite company in G1 Bold Trease series over 715m, leading all-the-way to win heat and leading again when fourth in final. Led until home turn in heat when runner-up to fastest qualifier Jarick Bale. Looks likely to be the 'lamplighter' again and should give another great sight.

**TAB Odds:** \$7

#### **6 ZAC'S ENTITY**

**Trainer:** Kel Greenough, Pearcedale VIC

**Breeding:** May 2019 Fernando Bale x Zara's Entity

**Comment:** Won 5 from 9. Enormous ability but question marks surround the lightly-raced talent after racing erratically in G1 Topgun Stayers. Resumed from break in heat when claimed Knicks Bale on the line. If his mind is on the job can definitely win. Certain to be the cynosure of all eyes. (PB – 36.95sec)

**TAB Odds:** \$4.60

#### **7 OMEGA TYSON**

**Trainer:** Barry Harper, Seaspray VIC

**Breeding:** August 2018 My Bro Fabio x My Superstar

**Comment:** Won 11 from 26. Will carry the hopes of the locals after continuing consistent recent form in heat victory. Experience at the track is a plus and only missed a place once in last 10 starts but the move from Box 1 in heat to an outside alley isn't ideal. Others likely to have his measure. (PB – 37.22sec)

**TAB Odds:** \$21

#### **8 JARICK BALE**

**Trainer:** Mark Delbridge, Balliang VIC

**Breeding:** March 2019 Allen Deed x Houston Bale

**Comment:** Won 18 from 50. Was a near-record 36.72sec heat winner of Sale Distance Championship over this course before unlucky fourth in final. Bounced back when claiming heat honours from this draw. One of the key players and with luck from the draw should be in the finish. (PB - 36.72sec)

**TAB Odds:** \$6

### **Reserves**

#### **9 INVICTUS RISING**

**Trainer:** Garry Selkrig, Devon Meadows VIC

**Breeding:** December 2018 Invictus Rapid x Jubilation

**Comment:** Won 16 from 37. Powerful sprinter that's made an impressive transition to middle distance ranks, winning three straight over this course and distance, including Distance Championship, before close-up third in Zac's Entity's heat. Definite each-way prospects if a starter. (PB – 36.99sec)

**TAB Odds:** \$8

#### **10 ASTON ULYSSES**

**Trainer:** Paul Abela, Parwan VIC

**Breeding:** November 2018 Aston Dee Bee x Sweet It Is

**Comment:** Won 16 from 49. Capable type and while he hasn't yet delivered on the distance potential he demonstrated earlier in the year, wouldn't be without a chance if he secured a start.

**TAB Odds:** \$15

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#### **HEAT WINNERS (fastest to slowest):**

37.13sec Jarick Bale

37.14sec Zac's Entity

37.22sec Omega Tyson

37.37sec Mepunga Ruby

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#### **RECENT WINNERS**

2010 Symmetry (Robert Britton, Lara VIC)

2011 Mystic Apple (Val Awramenko, Leopold VIC)

2012 Destini Fireball (Emilio Rinaldi, Lethbridge VIC)

2013 Dyna Nalin (Paul Stuart, Nambeelup WA)

2014 Star Recall (Jeffrey Britton, Anakie VIC)

2015 No Donuts (Bradley Canty, Cardiff NSW)

2016 Dundee Osprey (Geoffrey Scott-Smith, Pakenham South VIC)

2017 Quick Jagger (Christopher Halse, Nambeelup WA)

2018 Neo Cleo (Wendy Neocleous, Hazelwood North VIC)

2019 Weblec Eagle (Matthew Lanigan, Anakie VIC)

2020 Houdini Boy (Kel Greenough, Pearcedale VIC)

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## KEY TIMES

6.35pm First race

7.35pm Cup Night Match Race – Graclyn Bale vs Gypsy Wyong (Race 4)

7.54pm Rising Stars Final (Race 5)

8.17pm Summer Cup Final (Race 6)

8.39pm Festival Launch Final (Race 7)

8.58pm G1 Sale Cup Final (Race 8)

10.27pm Last race (Race 12)

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## HOW TO FOLLOW THE ACTION

– Live broadcast from the track with Troy Harley, Brooke Ennis and Corey Smith on [GRV's Facebook Page](#) and via [The Watchdog app](#).

- Watch every race live and free on [Sky Racing](#) and at [watchdog.grv.org.au](http://watchdog.grv.org.au)

– Behind the scenes Twitter coverage with '@TheMeadowsDogs' and '@WatchDogRacing'.

– Live coverage on the 'Sale Sundays' show on [SEN Track \(1593 AM\)](#) with Jason Bonnington, Mitch Ebeyer and Rob Popplestone.

– Regular updates with Trent Langskail on [RSN Racing and Sport \(927 AM\)](#).

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