



Racing Update

17 December, 2021

TAB Phoenix: Armchair Guide

By Gerard Guthrie

Melbourne Cup hero **Koblenz** needs to overcome Box 8 to break Australian greyhound racing's prizemoney record in Saturday night's hugely anticipated inaugural \$1.145M TAB Phoenix (525m), the world's only greyhound slot race, at The Meadows.

Eight slot holders paid \$75,000 each to be involved in the innovative feature, worth \$750,000 to-the-winner, with Koblenz selected by SEN.

Trainer David Geall didn't have a great deal of choice at last Sunday's interactive Phoenix box draw, with only boxes six, seven and eight remaining on the board when his turn came.

"Everyone was always going to head to the fence," said two-time Melbourne Cup winner Geall.

"Nobody was going to pick a wide box early on. We had the sixth pick and the reason we chose Box 8 was because at least there's no one drawn on his outside.

"It's definitely going to test him.

"It's very hard to get across on the two-turn tracks but we've just got to hope that he can nail the start at his best and break five seconds and he is capable of doing that.

"Even if, heaven forbid, he doesn't get across and lead, I expect him to run in the first four because he's such a good chaser and he'll be giving it a red hot go."

While Geall concedes the wide draw is a major, if not insurmountable, hurdle, **Koblenz**, the \$3.40 second elect in TAB's market, remains the main threat to \$2.30 favourite **Aston Rupee** (Box 5), which is also confronted by an awkward alley.

Like Koblenz, Aston Rupee hasn't raced since the Melbourne Cup, where he ran fourth as \$2.10 favourite, but he smashed Shepparton's 450m record on Monday night in an exhibition trial, clocking 24.69sec.

Koblenz has already banked \$711,235 in prizemoney, courtesy of an astounding 26 from 33 strike rate.

Victory in the Phoenix will see the blueblood shatter the million dollar barrier and surpass Fanta Bale's Australian prizemoney record of \$1,365,175.

"That would be something and to do it in a sprint race would be a real achievement because there's a lot more depth in sprint races," Geall said.

"Doing it in the first ever Phoenix would be special too. It might be the first Phoenix but it's not going to be the last.

"It's really attracted the media exposure and the promotional side of things. It keeps getting bigger by the day and there's going to be a huge crowd there."

While the box draw wasn't kind to the two Victorian superstars, it was much better news for NSW duo **Billy Creek** (Box 1) and **Jungle Deuce** (Box 2), as well as Queenslander **Spotted Elk** (Box 3).

Jungle Deuce sits prominently on the third line of betting at \$7.50, with Victorian prodigy **Wow She's Fast** (Box 4), with only six starts under her belt, the only other runner at single figures at \$9.

Here's a rundown of the contenders:

\$1.145m TAB Phoenix (525m), 8.30pm Saturday

1 BILLY CREEK (NSW GBOTA)

Trainer/Breeder/Owner: Ian Gilders, Beryl NSW

Breeding: May 2019 Brad Hill Billy x Midnight Jayne

Comment: Won 10 from 22. Won NSW qualifying event at Wentworth Park at big odds and was initially installed at \$101 before fortune favoured connections at box draw when able to choose Box 1. Trialled in a smart 29.94sec at The Meadows on Saturday night and draw gives him minor claims.

TAB Odds: \$41

2 JUNGLE DEUCE (Greyhound Racing NSW)

Trainer: Ray Smith, Forbes NSW

Owner: Mawson Jagers (SYN), Wattle Grove NSW

Breeder: Justin King, Londonderry NSW

Breeding: April 2019 Barcia Bale x Serena Fly High

Comment: Won 18 from 33. NSW star that has finally drawn close to the rails in Melbourne, after contending with wide draws in G1 Topgun and G1 Melbourne Cup heat. Has an excellent career record from Box 2 (7 wins from 9 starts) and has run fast time at The Meadows. Last start win over 605m at Dubbo an interesting lead-up to a race of this stature but comes right into contention after box draw. (PB – 29.90sec)

TAB Odds: \$7.50

3 SPOTTED ELK (Racing Queensland)

Trainer/Breeder/Owner: Graham Hall, Marbung QLD

Breeding: March 2019 Paw Licking x It Gets Better

Comment: Won 16 from 32. Speedy Queenslander that used Box 1 to advantage in winning heat and final of state qualifying series. Drawn suitably and if she's able to cross the inside pair is capable of giving a sight; however the local stars appear to have her measure.

TAB Odds: \$13

4 WOW SHE'S FAST (Sportsbet)

Trainer: Jacqueline Greenough, Pearcedale VIC

Owner: Greg Sprod, St Marys NSW

Breeder: Amstel (SYN), Langwarrin VIC

Breeding: February 2020 My Bro Fabio x Fair Of Face

Comment: Won 4 from 6. Lightly-raced but prodigious talent that burst onto the scene with scintillating 29.09sec win on debut at Sandown in September, going on to win her first four starts. Been unplaced in past two in Melbourne Cup prelude and heat but that experience in elite company will have been invaluable. Done all her racing at Sandown to date but in the best of hands and sure to be perfectly prepared. Must be respected.

TAB Odds: \$9

5 ASTON RUPEE (Ray Borda)

Trainer: Glenn Rounds, Devon Meadows VIC

Owner/Breeder: Ray Borda, Mawson Lakes SA

Breeding: April 2019 KC And All x Aston Miley

Comment: Won 19 from 33. Absolute superstar, dubbed 'the world's fastest greyhound', and deserved favourite, despite awkward draw. Brilliant winner of the G1 Topgun at The Meadows last month, clocking a flying 29.66sec and 5.02sec early. Started favourite in G1 TAB Melbourne Cup at most recent appearance when came from last to finish fourth. Barring bad luck he's the one they all have to beat. (PB - 29.47sec)

TAB Odds: \$2.30

6 VICE GRIP (The Dogs WA)

Trainer: Adam Smithson, Nambeelup WA

Owner/Breeder: Four Frothys (SYN), Bunyip VIC

Breeding: January 2019 Aston Dee Bee x Bells Are Ringin

Comment: Won 24 from 58. Well-travelled former Victorian that's been a model of consistency since arriving in WA, winning five of past seven. Has middle distance experience at The Meadows earlier in career but draw is no help and looks tested in this company. (PB – 34.50sec 600m)

TAB Odds: \$34

7 TRUE COLLINDA (TAB)

Trainer: Jason Thompson, Pearcedale VIC

Owner/Breeder: Stephanie Tyler, Boisdale VIC

Breeding: May 2019 Zambora Brockie x She's A Collinda

Comment: Won 8 from 20. Emerging Victorian prospect trained by one of the best in the business. This is her biggest test to date but showed what she's capable of at Sandown last

start when claiming BON honours on Melbourne Cup night, posting 29.17sec. Would be better suited drawn near the rails but improving with every run and has each-way claims.
TAB Odds: \$10

8 KOBLENZ (SEN)

Trainer: David Geall, Lara VIC

Owner: Geall Gals (SYN), Lara VIC

Breeder: Rose Geall, Lara VIC

Breeding: May 2019 Fernando Bale x Up Hill Jill

Comment: Won 26 from 39. TAB Melbourne Cup hero and will break Australian greyhound racing's prizemoney record with victory here. Brilliant speedster with phenomenal strike rate, winning eight of last nine. Will need to show all his blistering early pace from the outside draw but is capable of doing just that and will give an enormous sight if he leads. Looms as the main threat to Aston Rupee. (PB - 29.78sec)

TAB Odds: \$3.40

Reserves

9 LALA KIWI

Trainer: Andrea Dailly, Anakie VIC

Owner/Breeder: Dailly Greyhound Farms (SYN), Elaine VIC

Breeding: May 2019 Aussie Infrared x Lala Shim

Comment: Won 17 from 39. High class female, narrowly beaten in TAB Melbourne Cup when runner-up to Koblenz. Has run flying time at Sandown (29.24sec) and The Meadows (29.84sec) either side of that gallant effort and would be a definite threat if she secures a start. (PB – 29.82sec)

TAB Odds: \$8.50

10 LAKEVIEW WALTER **SCRATCHED**

Trainer: Monique Whelan, Metung VIC

Owner: Lakeview Kennels (SYN), Metung VIC

Breeder: Peter Whelan, Metung VIC

Breeding: April 2019 Fernando Bale x Lakeview Maisey

Comment: Won 11 from 30. Four-time G1 finalist, winning the G1 Silver Chief at The Meadows almost 12 months ago. Last start Melbourne Cup finalist, finishing sixth, and has to be respected if elevated into the field, especially from an inside draw. (PB - 29.67sec)

TAB Odds: \$10

PRIZEMONEY

1st - \$750,000

2nd - \$100,000

3rd - \$80,000

4th - \$65,000

5th to 8th - \$37,500

HOW TO FOLLOW THE ACTION

- **Thrill of the Chase** with Molly Haines, Gareth Hall and George Farrugia on **7Two** and via **The Watchdog app** from 6-7pm.
- Comprehensive live telecast trackside with Jason Lincoln, Marc Ohlmus and Jason Adams on **Sky Racing and via The Watchdog app** from 7pm.
- Behind the scenes Twitter coverage with '**@TheMeadowsDogs**' and '**@WatchDogRacing**'.
- Regular updates with Trent Langskaill on **RSN Racing and Sport (927 AM)**.
- Live coverage with The Watchdog, Mitch Ebeyer, Damien Watson & Troy Little on **SEN Track (1593 AM)** from 6pm.
- Live coverage of the TAB Phoenix Final just prior to 8.30pm on **Thrill of the Chase** on **7Two**.
- Live coverage of TAB Phoenix Final just prior to 8.30pm with Andrew Copley on **3AW (693 AM)**.

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