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2023

Friday 1 December 2023

Group 1 Sportsbet Melbourne Cup: Armchair guide

Compiled by Gerard Guthrie and Peter Quilty

After a near-record heat victory, **Big Energy** is hot favourite to win the 68th running of the \$1,008,000 Group 1 Sportsbet Melbourne Cup Final (515m) at Sandown Park on Saturday night.

Regarded as Australian greyhound racing's 'Holy Grail', the Melbourne Cup headlines the penultimate night of the second \$4.1 million Dream Chasers Festival, which concludes with the third edition of The Phoenix at The Meadows on Saturday 16 December.

Trained by Kel and Jackie Greenough at Pearcedale, **Big Energy (box 4)** is striving to complete a scintillating clean-sweep of the Sandown legs of the five-week Dream Chasers Festival.

The track specialist secured his first group trophy when winning the four-greyhound G3 Shootout (515m) on November 18, before clocking the fastest time in last Saturday's eight 'must win' heats, smashing the elusive 29-seconds barrier on both occasions.

Big Energy's 28.91sec heat performance was the fifth quickest time recorded at Sandown, eclipsed by only track record holder Aston Rupee (twice), champion kennelmate Wow She's Fast and 2020 Melbourne Cup hero Hard Style Rico.

As a result, Big Energy dominates Sportsbet's Melbourne Cup market at \$1.85. The second elect at \$4.60 is the second fastest heat winner, **Tim Zoo (box 7)**.

Tim Zoo, named after world light middle-weight boxing champion Tim Tszyu, is trained by champion mentor Jason Thompson, who like the Greenoughs, is also based at Pearcedale.

Thompson is striving to become the first trainer to win the Cup on four occasions, having won the race with Light Of Fire (1994), Got A Moment (2012) and Black Magic Opal (2013), while wife Seona was victorious with Aston Dee Bee (2017).

The only other finalist at single figures in betting is **Buddy Monelli (box 1)**, trained by Lyn Smith, at \$5 after a 29.44sec heat victory where the former Western Australian also had the advantage of the rails alley.

A total of \$1,398,385 in prizemoney will be distributed on the bumper Cup card.

The meeting also features the \$165,500 G1 Sportsbet Bold Trease (715m), \$42,875 G3 Sir John Dillon Memorial (595m), \$42,875 G3 Sportsbet Cup Night Sprint (515m), \$42,875 G3 Provincial Plate (515m) and \$22,000 Listed Sportsbet Cup Night Stayers (715m).

Melbourne Cup night will be showcased nationally on free-to-air television on Racing.com, as well as Foxtel's channel 529.

CHASE YOUR DREAM PROMOTION

Across each night of the festival, we're giving one lucky winner the chance to chase their dream and share in over \$100,000 in cash and prizes.

It's free to enter and all you have to do is scan the QR code at the Sportsbet tent before Race 5.

If your name is drawn you'll be allocated a greyhound in a selected race, and if your dog wins, you'll select a box to reveal your prize.

Five prize boxes remain unopened – and with a brand-new Mitsubishi Outlander and 3 x 10,000 cash prizes up for grabs.

You must be on course to collect your prize.

Prizes won so far:

- Sporting experience in LA valued at \$15,000.
 - Fully catered corporate suite for 12 at AFL match of your choice at Marvel Stadium valued at \$7,000.
 - \$5,000 grocery voucher.
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POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Champion Pearcedale trainer Jason Thompson – **Tim Zoo** (Box 7) – is chasing his fourth Melbourne Cup, having saluted with **Light Of Fire** (1994), **Got A Moment** (2012) and **Black Magic Opal** (2013). His wife, Seona, won the race with **Aston Dee Bee** (2017). Jason finished second with **Hanify's Impact** (2008) and third with **See You Later** (2005), **Nitro Burst** (2008), **Hooked on Scotch** (2019) and **Plaintiff** (2022). Seona also finished second with **Black Opium** (2018).
- Tom Dailly – **Fabs Vegetable** (Box 2) – forms part of 'Team Dailly' with wife Andrea who has won the Melbourne Cup twice – **Dyna Tron** (2011) and **Dyna Double One** (2015). In fact, Andrea quinellaed a memorable final in 2015 with **Fernando Bale** finishing second. Andrea was also

runner-up with **Dyna Lachlan** (2009), **Dyna Beth** (2013) and **Lala Kiwi** (2021) and third with **Hawk Alone** (2013).

- Paul Bartolo – **Make No Promise** (Box 8) – quinellaed the Melbourne Cup in 2006 with litter sisters **Betty's Angel** and **Miss Mini Mouse**.
- There are two female trainers in this year's final: Lyn Smith - **Buddy Monelli** (Box 1) and Jackie Greenough - **Big Energy** (Box 4). Jackie's husband, Kel, finished third with **Tommy Shelby** (2020). The most recent female trainer to win a Melbourne Cup is Andrea Dailly with **Dyna Double One** (2015).
- Only two female greyhounds have won the Melbourne Cup in the past 20 years – **Betty's Angel** (2006) and **Got A Moment** (2012). **Idolize** is looking to buck the trend.
- During the past two decades only four favourites have won the sport's 'Holy Grail' – 2003 **Bombastic Shiraz** (\$2.30), 2010 **El Grand Senor** (\$1.70), 2013 **Black Magic Opal** (\$2.00) and 2017 **Aston Dee Bee** (\$2.40).
- The longest-priced winner in this period is **Ando's Mac** (\$12.90) in 2016.
- **Hard Style Rico** (\$5.70) established a race record (28.91sec) in 2020.
- 2018 Melbourne Cup winner My Redeemer is the sire of **Idolize** (Box 6).
- Meanwhile, stud supremo and 2015 Melbourne Cup runner-up Fernando Bale (2015) has two finalists – **Mac's Damage** (Box 3) and **Make No Promise** (Box 8).
- And sire Aussie Infrared also has dual representation – **Big Energy** (Box 4) and **Tim Zoo** (Box 7).

**Group 1 Sportsbet Melbourne Cup Final (515m)
Race 10, 9.50pm. First prize \$650,000**

- 1 BUDDY MONELLI (Lyn Smith, Nambrok VIC)
- 2 FABS VEGETABLE (Tom Dailly, Anakie VIC)
- 3 MAC'S DAMAGE (Harley Whelan, Metung VIC)
- 4 BIG ENERGY (Jacqueline Greenough, Pearcedale VIC)
- 5 AUSSIE ROCKS (Geoff Mitchell, Spotswood VIC)
- 6 IDOLIZE (Peter Presutto, Devon Meadows VIC)
- 7 TIM ZOO (Jason Thompson, Pearcedale VIC)
- 8 MAKE NO PROMISE (Paul Bartolo, Little River VIC)

Reserves

9 DUNDEE REBEL (Geoff Scott-Smith, Pakenham South VIC)
10 NAVARINO (Jason Thompson, Pearcedale VIC)

MELBOURNE CUP HEAT WINNERS (Fastest to slowest):

28.91sec BIG ENERGY
29.07sec TIM ZOO
29.40sec AUSSIE ROCKS
29.41sec MAKE NO PROMISE
29.44sec BUDDY MONELLI
29.60sec MAC'S DAMAGE
29.68sec FABS VEGETABLE
29.72sec IDOLIZE

RECENT MELBOURNE CUP WINNERS

2013 BLACK MAGIC OPAL (Jason Thompson, Pearcedale VIC)
2014 DYNA VILLA (Jenny Hunt, Teesdale VIC)
2015 DYNA DOUBLE ONE (Andrea Dailly, Anakie VIC)
2016 ANDO'S MAC (Jason Mackay, Richmond Vale NSW)
2017 ASTON DEE BEE (Seona Thompson, Pearcedale VIC)
2018 MY REDEEMER (David Geall, Lara VIC)
2019 WHISKEY RIOT (Anthony Azzopardi, Rowsley VIC)
2020 HARD STYLE RICO (Luckie Karabitsakos, Pearcedale, VIC)
2021 KOBLENZ (David Geall, Lara VIC)
2022 YACHI BALE (Mark Delbridge, Balliang VIC)

**Group 1 Sportsbet Bold Trease (715m)
Race 8, 9pm. First prize \$105,000**

1 ZOHA BALE (Mark Delbridge, Balliang VIC)
2 VALPOLICELLA (Tony Zammit, Yatala QLD)
3 UNTAPPED (Dustin Drew, Dennington VIC)
4 MORAINÉ SUZIE (Brendan Pursell, Lara VIC)
5 GET READY DORA (Michelle Nolan, Devon Meadows VIC)
6 MRS. AVENGER (George Borg, Maryborough VIC)
7 PALAWA KING (Ray Smith, Forbes NSW)
8 RITZA PIPER (Joe Scerri, Berkeley NSW)

Reserves

9 SAVIC (Bruce Stirling, Lethbridge VIC)
10 BIG SUZIE (James Shaw, Seymour VIC)

2022 Sportsbet Dream Chasers Festival (major winners so far)

G1 Sportsbet Topgun: TRANSPONDER (Jason Thompson, Pearcedale VIC)

G1 Sportsbet Topgun Stayers: RITZA PIPER (Joe Scerri, Berkeley NSW)

G1 Hume Cup: HECTOR FAWLEY (Lisa Cockerell, Buckley VIC)

G3 Shootout: BIG ENERGY (Jacqueline Greenough, Pearcedale VIC)

KEY TIMES

6.30pm – First race

7.33pm – G3 Provincial Plate Final (Race 4)

7.58pm – G3 Sir John Dillon Memorial (Race 5 – first Quaddie leg)

8.17pm – Listed Sportsbet Cup Night Stayers (Race 6)

8.36pm – G3 Sportsbet Cup Night Sprint (Race 7)

9.00pm – G1 Sportsbet Bold Trease Final (Race 8)

9.50pm – G1 Sportsbet Melbourne Cup Final (Race 10)

10.35pm – Last race (Race 12)

HOW TO FOLLOW THE ACTION

- Racing.com will cover every race, every story, and every moment from 6.15pm with Gareth Hall, George Farrugia, Mitch Ebeyer, James Van de Maat and Simon Marshall.
 - Watch the racing LIVE and FREE on the Watchdog App.
 - Radio coverage and expert analysis from GRV's Andrew Copley on RSN Racing & Sport (927 AM).
 - Social media coverage on GRV Facebook, GRV Instagram and Watchdog Racing X.
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