

## **TAMWORTH MEETING 26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY COMPILED BY JULIE MAUGHAN**

Narrabri reinsman Chris Shepherdson had a pearler of a day at the Tamworth Paceway last Thursday when he drove three winners in Big Riddle, I Want Candy and Rockstar Ruler.

All three pacers are trained by Shepherdson's uncle, Peter Shepherdson.

"I drove four winners at a Narrabri meeting once" said Shepherdson "but I will take three here today".

Shepherdson is also placing the birth of his first son Cohen, with his partner Elizabeth, as giving a new zest for life.

"My son is a bit over four weeks old now so it's good to get the winners up. It's got me in good form" joked Shepherdson.

Making his debut for the Shepherdson stables, Big Riddle was the first to set the tempo in greeting the judge in the TAB.COM.AU Pace (1609 metres) when Shepherdson sent the Mister Big USA-Cipher NZ 3yo gelding straight to the lead from the two barrier.

"We got a bit lucky. Kind of got handed the lead" said Shepherdson.

As the field turned into the home straight on the final occasion Big Riddle had Boston Jack (Craig Clegg) racing to his outside with Rosie ORourke (Peter Missen) joining the line three wide.

A race incident on the final bend saw Peter Missen half dislodged from the spider and took all his might and composure to regain his seat and continue to the finish line.

Patrons were stunned when they saw that Big Riddle had raced clear of the incident and had a 19.9 metre win over Theghentaltarpiece (Shannon Harmey) and race favourite Jimmy Maguire (Cameron Davies) 3.9 metres away third.

"On the corner I thought it was definitely between us and Rosie ORourke so who knows it could have been me or him as the winner but it just made it a bit easier for us" said Shepherdson on return to scale and talking of the race incident.

Big Riddle who has been racing in Sydney before joining the Narrabri stable, recorded his second race win.

"We got him a month ago and he needed the run so he should improve off today" said Shepherdson.

**I Want Candy** then stepped up the stables presence when the 5yo Four Starzzz Shark CA – Good Looking Bert mare had an all the way win in the Changeover Stallion Service Tender Pace (1980m).

"We always thought she was a chance" said Shepherdson "and today she is racing down in grade compared to what she was at the Carnival"

I Want Candy was having her 19<sup>th</sup> start for the season and notched up her third win but has been good to the stable with 10 placing's for the season.

"It's good to get a win up and she keeps powering through" said Shepherdson with the two barrier once again playing into favour.

I Want Candy had a 5.4 metre win over last start winner Leighmont (Tom Ison) who got a split over the later stages of the race and Aces First (Sarah Rushbrook) a head away third.

“She will go around at Narrabri next week” added Shepherdson

The win of Rockstar Ruler in the NW Derby & Nevele R NW Oaks April 16 April was a bit tougher competition but it brought about the third win for the day for the Narrabri stable.

The Kissing Bandit and Rockamah shot out of the gate with The Kissing Bandit leading the field.

Shine On Wicklow (Anthony Varga) made a run three wide around the field with Rockstar Ruler taking the trail before racing up outside The Kissing Bandit in the breeze for the final two laps.

“The plan was to settle and then move forward but when I saw Shine On Wicklow move forward I thought if I got on his back I would get there pretty cheaply and this fella (Rockstar Ruler) worked around good” said Shepherdson.

The Brazen Jasper then joined the leader three wide as they turned for home.

In a very tight finish Rockstar Ruler showed a gutsy win to hold on for a head over The Kissing Bandit (Cameron Davies) who had a dead heat with Rockamaha (Peter Missen)

“This fella tries to stick his nose out at the right time” said Shepherdson of Rockstar Ruler. “He does a lot of work in his races and he keeps putting in and it was a good finish” said Shepherdson.

Rockstar Ruler notched his 12<sup>th</sup> career win, with having five since coming to the Shepherdson stables.

“He has been a good horse since we got him. He is a one batter. If we had a few more like him we would be happy”

“It’s been a really good day” said Shepherdson “I thought I had a good book of drives before I came here and it’s good to see that eventuate”

With the Narrabri HRC to race this Saturday the Shepherdson stable does not have far to travel, with the stable located at the Paceway with the John Dean Memorial, the Wee Waa Cup as well as heats of the Carnival of Cups on the programme.

Chris Shepherdson also received The Pub sponsored Drive of the Day for his efforts behind Rockstar Ruler.

**Diamondsnstones** put up a gem of a run in the opening event at Tamworth in the Peter Jackson Bookmaker Pace (1609m) to break thru for the geldings first win from 10 starts.

The win was also a relief for Inverell trainer Rod Miller who trains the Heartland Hanover USA-Angel Martino gelding for his wife Kerry.

“My last winner was about four years ago” said Miller with Diamondsnstones being bred by his son Clayton, who is now a trainer based in Toronto, Canada.

16 year old reinsman Tom Ison took the reins and from the pole shot Diamondsnstones straight to the lead and was left alone until the final lap when Artistic Double (David Munsie) raced three wide to be level pegging.

“There were no real driving instructions, Rod just said look after him” said Tom Ison “The horse just put it all together today”

Ison was a little worried when Artistic Double came on the scene.

“She is a real good horse and was the danger” said Ison of Artistic Double.

But could bananas be the answer to the change around for Diamondsstones?

“I have been battling with the horse to get him right” said Miller “He is seven year old, only had nine starts but I know he has got a lot of racing in him and he is still sound. He does like to eat bananas though so he gets one when he is rugged up every night” said Miller.

Diamondsstones had a 3 metre win over Kemira Cause (Anthony Varga) and Confessionsoficeman (Lola Weidemann) a head away third.

Mile Rate for the 1609 metre journey was 2.01.2

**Meanwhile**, Tom Ison's elder brother Sam Ison stepped out in the following event, the Northern Inland Credit Union Competitive Stakes to show he also had class with a win behind Pirates Pearl who paid \$28 for the win.

Ison works at Hazells Farm & Fertilizers for Rod and Di Hazell, who also race Pirates Pearl with Sam handling the training of the mare.

“I didn’t expect to win” said Ison “but she finished off the race real good”

Coming into the race off a last start third at Muswellbrook to Harris Street, Ison was more than happy with the win, the second for the Artistic Fella-Harmonia 4yo this season.

“She had a few obstacles in her way in her last run at Muswellbrook” said Ison

Although Ison did have the lead he was a bit worried that Illtelyawat (David Munsie) may have put in one final sprint for the line.

“I thought he may have come at me with a last minute sprint but she made herself look good in the home straight”

With Illtelyawat leading the field, Ison set Pirates Pearl alight and raced up to be racing out in the breeze and quickened the tempo as the bell sounded to come away for a 8 metre win over Corbin Lee (Len Simon) and Illtelyawat (David Munsie) another 2.5 metres away third.

With the promise of cake for morning tea Ison was looking forward to the icing on the cake after a handy drive.

**Dubbo reinsman Madison Reynolds has had five drives behind Young Rusty with the last one proving to be a winner.**

“It was good to win and I only had the one drive today” said Reynolds after the running of the Live or Die Tender Pace (1609m).

Elboron (Peter Missen) found the lead with Pacific Benz (Lola Weidemann) out in the breeze while Reynolds parked in the one by one with Young Rusty.

Reynolds moved Young Rusty up outside Elboron to find himself in a close finish to hold on for a head win over Elboron and Blucolla Moon (Anthony Varga) a half neck away third.

"I didn't think I had won the race" said Reynolds "I thought the horse had gone at the 400 but to his credit he kept going"

Young Rusty is trained at Dubbo by Bill Leslie with the 5yo only lightly raced with 12 starts for two wins and five placings.

"He is a nice horse and Bill has always been good to me so it's good to get a win:" said Reynolds.

Young Rusty, (Strong Life USA-With Me gelding) made it back to back wins at the paceway, with the last being back on February 10.

**Sissies Beach Girl surprised reinsman David Munsie with a win in the Supporting Chris Alford in 2015 WDC Pace (1609m).**

"That was a pleasant surprise" said Munsie "I thought she might have needed the run but we got over the top of them"

With Narrabri pacer Beatle Man trained by Jarred Hetherington commencing as favourite it was a close finish with Sissies Beach Girl having a half neck win over Mister Armagedon (Julie Weidemann)

With Lively Lillie (Peter Hedges) leading the field, Beatle Man raced out in the breeze but as the field turned into the home straight on the final occasion Munsie sent Sissies Beach Girl three wide, with the mare gaining momentum with each stride she took down the home straight.

"I had a nice trail behind Beatle Man and he kept kicking but she had a better run and just got him on the line. I'm glad the way it went" said Munsie.

With a mile rate of 2.00.1 Munsie was happy with how the race played out.

"That style of racing suited her down to the ground. I think we will head to Narrabri next week. You have to be in it to win it" added Munsie.

Sissies Beach Girl paid \$18.10 for the win.

**Long Term Fella is still learning to race and for reinswoman Lola Weidemann she is pleased when they return to scale.**

"He's getting better and tracking a lot straighter" said Weidemann who takes the reins for her sister Julie who also owns and trains the Armbr Operative USA-Armarella gelding.

"It's really good to have something that has a motor and he will pick it all up. He is a real good natured horse" added Weidemann

Long Term Fella commenced as race favourite in the TAB Rewards Pace (1609m) and did not disappoint the punters with a 13.2 metre win over Alyeska Dream (Tom Ison) and Miss Presidential (Peter Missen) 3.3 metres away third after leading.

"The time is impressive" said Weidemann "We wanted to win a State Bred Bonus and he has got that now"

Long Term Fella clocked 1.58.6 for the 1609 m journey and with only six starts under his belt produced his third career win.

