

## **TAMWORTH MAY 7 MEETING COMPILED BY JULIE MAUGHAN**

### **ALYESKA DREAM WINS PERC VERNING MEMORIAL**

Perc Verning lived for harness racing at Tamworth. The veteran helped out in the formative years of racing at the Club as well as watching the career of his son Ian "Spud" Verning, but sadly Perc passed away just over a year ago aged 98.

"Spud" Verning has been a favourite around the north west tracks as both a trainer and reinsman and along with his family decided to place on a Memorial race at Tamworth in honour of their late father.

It was a pipe dream to think of winning the race but something special unfolded last Thursday at Tamworth.

Verning nominated Alyeska Dream for the Memorial race and with a tough draw of 10 watched the race unfold with young reinsman Tom Ison in the spider.

"Dad (Perc) would have been proud of Toms drive" said Spud Verning.

With Charming Joseph from the Harding stables commencing as race favourite, punters were not looking at Alyeska Dream who paid \$26.70 for the win.

Bathurst pacer Gunsmoke Shannon (Max Hughes) led the field, while Ison had Alyeska Dream placed four back in the outside running line.

Artsu (Anthony Varga) was the first to make a race move and raced around the field as the bell sounded, with Charming Joseph leaving his race move to come out of the one by one as the field rounded the final turn.

Ison then popped the question to Alyeska Dream, who sprouted wings around the final turn and raced four wide with a blistering sprint down the home straight to grab Charming Joseph on the line.

Alyeska Dream had a 1 metre win over Charming Joseph and Artsu, 3 metres away third.

"I'd like to say she runs better for me" laughed Ison after the win, which was the fifth for the mare this season, with Ison partnering Alyeska Dream to all of those wins. "That was the best win so far"

"I knew the run would come and it was just a case of getting it as she was up on the bit and was travelling alright" said Ison.

"I thought we would get a cart into the race somewhere as there was some good horses in the race. It was pretty much a top field. She (Alyeska Dream) always goes well here (Tamworth). You only have to pop the question and she will just go"

Alyeska Dream, a Dream Away-Village Jasper 5 yo mare was bred and is raced by Brian Betts and his son Rob, a Board member of the Tamworth HRC, who has seen Verning take the mare through her career of 59 starts for 9 wins and 14 placings.

"Fairy tales do come true" said Spud Verning, who recently celebrated his 70 birthday "around the back Tom had the horse well placed and only had to get a break"

For Ison he has a good association with Alyeska Dream with 14 drives producing five wins, and six placings.

**“The instructions from Spud are nothing much” said Ison “He must have some sort of confidence in me” joked the youngster who will shortly embark into the NSW Rising Star series representing the North West.**

**“I knew she was right into it today” added Ison of Alyeska Dream “It was a case of getting the run at the right time”**

**Tom Ison received the Pub sponsored Drive Of the Day for the win.**

#### RED RAPHAEL INTO DOOZA AT DUBBO

Hunter Valley pacer Red Raphael is off to Dubbo this Sunday after taking out the third heat of the Club Dubbo Dooza Golden Gig.

Red Raphael is raced by Jeff Andrews and his son Bruce, with Andrews’s senior handling the training whilst Bruce handles the reins.

“It’s been tough with the floods. Dad has done a great job with the horse” said Bruce Andrews with the training track at their property being out of action due to the recent floods in the Hunter Valley and their property at Farley, just outside of Maitland, coping its fair share of damage.

“It’s been a while since we have been up here (Tamworth) and thought we would make the trip” said Andrews.

The win at Tamworth was an opportunity to look back in the history books to see when the Andrews had their last winner at Tamworth and what a revelation!

Dreams of Fortune was the last winner at Tamworth for the duo when they won on the Barnett Hanover- Arts Dream gelding back on the 28th March 2010 but Bruce Andrews should have checked his horoscope before leaving home last Thursday.

Ten years to the day Bruce Andrews actually drove Dream Mover to a win at Tamworth on the 7th May 2005. (Sissies double was the runner up).

Its Platinum Plus NZ (Len Simon) went straight to the lead from the pole with Rosie O’Rourke (barrier three) out in the breeze and Red Raphael in the one by one, from the two barrier.

Rosie O’Rourke (Tony Missen) kicked clear up the back on the final occasion but Andrews kept his cool and raced to the outside of Rosie O’Rourke.

Up the home straight the two were neck and neck but Red Raphael kicked close to the line and had a 2.1 metre win over Rosie O’Rourke and Ride On A Rainbow (Mitch Chapple) 6.7 metres away third.

“It worked out nice on the back of Rosie O’Rourke” said Andrews “I was happy to be there. He (Red Raphael) dug in up the straight and Rosie O’Rourke was a good horse to be on the back of”

Punters were not following the form of Red Raphael who came into the 1980 metre event off a last start second at Newcastle in wet and heavy race conditions and paid \$22.80 for the win at Tamworth.

“His last three runs have been good runs. Up the straight he felt good, he raced terrific tonight” said Bruce Andrews.

“They were running along a bit in the beginning. I just followed Rosie O Rourke through. She is a good filly but you don’t want to come up to Tamworth and think you haven’t got a chance”.

A great innovation by the Dubbo HRC heats of the series having been conducted at Tamworth as well as Forbes, Bathurst, Parkes and Dubbo for horses with no more than four life time wins and restricted to hobby trainers.

Trophy for the final to be conducted at Dubbo is a Dooza Gig for the trainer and a \$250 Pot of Gold for the driver.

But Andrews knows what it's like to win in a Dooza!

"Bruce owns his gig and it is a Dooza" said Jeff Andrews after the win of Red Raphael at Tamworth so has the stables got the opportunity of another Dooza coming their way or are they chasing the \$250 Pot of Gold?

## **HARDING DOUBLE**

**"Just beautiful" said Bobs Farm trainer Geoff Harding. "We are her to win races"**

**Harding was summing up the days racing at Tamworth last Thursday when he travelled to the meeting with three horses and came away with training a double.**

**Youngest son James took charge of the reins and notched up his first win at Tamworth and made the stakes higher by driving a double.**

**James Harding is having the best run ever since the 20 year old returned from America earlier this year, having driven winners on northern tracks at Narrabri and Armidale before the wins at Tamworth.**

**Strathlachlan Art was the first win for the stables in breaking through for her first career win in taking out the TAB Sportsbet Pace .**

**"She is a nice little filly and she has been running around for a while now so it was nice to get the win" said James Harding with Strathlachlan Art having 12 race starts before the win.**

**"Dads always happy with a winner" joked James Harding. "He was confident she would go well if she had luck in running"**

**For James Harding, who along with his family were former residents of Moonbi, just outside Tamworth before the move to Bobs Farm, it was his first winning drive at the Paceway but soon doubled the effort.**

**"I have had two or three drives here" said Harding "I had a couple of drives here on an old horse called Winnies Central then I went to America, so it was good to win today"**

**Harding nearly had a win on the Paceway back in January 2014 when he registered two seconds with Winnies Central.**

**Strathlachlan Art went straight to the lead with Mondo Sports out in the breeze with no change.**

**Strathlachlan Art (Modern Art-Strathlachlan Gem) had a 4.6 metre win over Mondo Sports and Shadow River (Peter Hedges) another 18 metres away third.**

**"Mondo Sports (Michael Formosa) looked strong coming around the final turn but my filly gave a little bit more" said Harding of Strathlachlan Art.**

**The race was marred not long after the start when Dales Dollar had interference and fell, seeing young reinsman Scotty-Jon Welsh going over the top of the fallen pacer and having to be conveyed to hospital.**

(Welsh underwent an operation that night at Tamworth Base Hospital for a dislocated hand as well as broken bones in the hand and this week was to undergo further surgery at John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle)

**Strathlachlan Matt then stepped out in the following event, the Northern Inland Credit Union Pace, to notch up career win number five.**

**“He is a good little horse and he can run” said Harding of Strathlachlan Matt in taking out the Northern Inland Credit Union Pace (1980 metres).**

**“We were three wide and sat outside the leader. He felt strong and it was just a matter of waiting for the right moment to let him go” added Harding.**

**“I was happy to get one winner but to get two is great” said James Harding.**

**Strathlachlan Matt had a 3 metre win over Blucolla Moon and Ghost Gum (Julie Weidemann) 4 metres away third.**

**Charming Joseph could have made it three wins for the Harding stables for the day but finished second to Alyeska Dream in the feature of the day, the Perc Vering Memorial.**

#### **Artistic Uno – Peter Hedges/Ken Natty**

Tamworth trainer Ken Natty has added another handy pacer to his stables after the win of Artistic Uno in the opening event at Tamworth last week.

The Art Major – Defining Moment 5 yo mare was having her second start for the stables and accomplished an all the way win in the Australian Training and Consulting Pace (1980 metres) with Peter Hedges in the spider.

**“She (Artistic Uno) drew nice today” said Hedges “we were hoping she had enough speed to hold the lead”**

Artistic Uno’s win in the 1980 metre event was good judgement by punters as the mare commenced as race favourite.

Ken Natty trains a small team and already has two handy pacers in Leighmont who has achieved seven wins and stablemate Jedi Superstar 14 wins, since coming to the Tamworth based stables.

**“Ken looks around on the net and gets them from the right area out of Melbourne. John Caldow had this filly and there is no doubt she will go through her grades” added Hedges.**

Before coming to Tamworth Artistic Uno did all her racing in Victoria with the last win being at Maryborough back in August 2013 going 1.57.6 for 1609 metres.

Artistic Uno’s shining performance last week saw a 8.7 metre win over Mondo Courage (Michael Formosa) and Smart Cecil (Brendan Hunt) a half neck away third.

### **ELBORON Tony Missen**

Having a big head has certainly paid dividends for Elboron in taking out the TAB Rewards Droughtbreaker Mile Prelude at Tamworth last week.

Elboron, a 4 yo Safari-Eowyn gelding had a head win over Sakoy (Sarah Rushbrook) and Gannicus (Sam Ison) 1 metre away third.

“There were horses everywhere on the post” said trainer and reinsman Tony Missen after the win “He (Elboron) has got a head on him like a violin case but he still manages to get beat” joked Missen.

If Elboron is in tune he could look the winner of the \$7,650 Final over 1609 metres to be staged at Tamworth on May 21.

Tony Missen also races Elboron in partnership with Tamworth HRC Board member Greg McDonell and Bob Peterson, who were trackside to see the win.

“They are fantastic owners” said Missen.

A back row draw from barrier 8 did not bother Elboron who lobbed three back in the outside running line while Sakoy (Sarah Rushbrook) led the field and Enrichment (Tom Ison) racing out in the breeze.

“I was a bit disappointed when I drew the backline today but it panned out just nice” said Missen.

“He (Elboron) had a good run and just needed the split up the straight and he got it”

As the field rounded the turn into the home straight on the final occasion, Elboron raced four wide to claim Sakoy on the line and paid \$10.90 for the win.

“He’s won his two races here (Tamworth) and been placed here a few times too.” Said Missen.

Elboron has had 35 races starts for two wins, five seconds and five thirds

### **Anthony Varga/Ernie Mabbott Double**

It’s a Historymaker was back in the winners circle at Tamworth last week and handed trainer Ian Mabbott and reinsman Anthony Varga the first leg of a winning double.

“Once we got the split I knew we were a chance” said Varga of the win of Itsa Historymaker.” I knew I was home when I got that split”

Paying \$28.40 for the win, many did not expect the Julius Caesar-Tarport gelding to be in the limelight with Shantung from the Clayton Harmey stables being the race favourite.

Lively Lily (Sarah Hall) set the tempo out in front with Itsa Historymaker on the leaders back while Shantung joined Lively Lily as the field turned into the home straight on the final occasion.

Varga saw a split as Lively Lily kicked and took advantage to come away for a 4.9 metres over Lively Lily and Mondo Seelster (Mitch Chapple) another 1.9 metres away third.

Mithrhy Magic then commenced favourite in the final event of the day to give the local trainer and reinsman their training and driving double for the day, and had an all the way win in taking out the Tab Droughtbreaker Final May 21<sup>st</sup> Pace (1609 metres).

“I thought if we got to the front he would be hard to beat” said Varga “He has been running out of class lately”

Mithrhy's Magic, a IfIhadyourluck-Scoot On La Belle gelding was making it career win number nine.