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Raw Ability's Adelaide Cup

By Katherine Ernst Australian Racing Greyhound

RAW Ability (Barcia Bale x Bugatti Flyer Mar '15) broke through for a deserved win at the highest level when saluting in the Group 1 Adelaide Cup (515m) at Angle Park.



Raw Ability races away with his first Group 1 the Adelaide Cup
(Pic Kurt Donsberg Greyhound Photography)

The black dog, trained in Victoria by Anthony Azzopardi, jumped well from box four and raced into second behind local hope High Eden Frost (Banjo Boy x Zardae Feb '15) in the early stages before slipping into top gear down the back straight, charging clear to score in an airborne 29.50.

Fellow Victorian Aston Dee Bee (Barcia Bale x Aston Elle Apr '15) rocketed home to grab second, with High Eden Frost a gallant third.

Continued Page 2...

Azzopardi said he rated his kennel star a chance heading into the \$75,000 final, but conceded he knew it would be a tough challenge up against a cracking field including group 1 winners Worm Burner and Striker Light as well as Sandown Speed Star winner Bewildering.

“I thought his heat run was very good, but I didn’t go there with high expectations – we went there knowing we had a chance but just wanting to enjoy the night and the result was beautiful,” Azzopardi told Australian Racing Greyhound.

“It was an amazing final. You could run the race ten times and get ten different results – it was the best betting race I’ve seen.”

The win was particularly special given it was the first group 1 win for Azzopardi and his wife Kylee Osborne as owners, having received Raw Ability as a gift when he was a puppy.

“Words can’t describe what that moment was like. I got a bit emotional because we own him and have had him since he was a pup – to see the little fella grow up into a race dog is really special.

“It’s an amazing feeling and I really want to thank Jackie Davis. We helped Jackie a fair bit when we were in Sydney, checking dogs, and she wanted to give me a pup out of the litter to say thanks.

“At first I wasn’t sure if we were going to take him because I had a couple of pups at the time and I didn’t really want anymore, but she came and delivered him to us.

“It was the best gift I have received in my life.”

Raw Ability stamped himself as a real star of the future with a brilliant victory in SA’s feature race.

History shows when Jason Thompson travels to Adelaide for the Cup series he doesn’t normally miss out highlighted by his past Adelaide Cup winners in Whippy’s Image in 2008 and El Galo in 2009 and Aqua Cheetah (\$8) didn’t disappoint on the big stage Friday night.

Raw Ability has now faced the starter 25 times, amassing 13 wins and five placings for \$125,000 in prize money earnings. Azzopardi explained he has always looked like being a star.

“He’s always been special. When I took him to The Meadows as a 15-month old pup he ran a FFA time when I slipped him box to box.

“Before I ever raced him I put him up against Zambora Brockie in a trial because I just wanted to see what he could do – and Zambora Brockie only beat him a length and a half.

“I knew then I had a serious dog.”

Raw Ability’s next start is likely to be the invitation-only Group 1 Topgun at The Meadows on October 28. A selection panel will decide the field which is set to be announced on Tuesday night.

Azzopardi is hopeful Raw Ability can continue his hot run of form now that he has broken his group 1 maiden.

“He has a group 1 to his name now – it’s funny how sometimes when you get that first one things seem to fall into place,” he said.

“I’m really looking forward to what’s next for him – I got a phone call on [Saturday] morning and it was a late invitation for the Topgun so hopefully he makes the final eight.

“It’s going to be a race full of the best dogs in the country, but he has a 100 per cent record at The Meadows so I think that race will suit him down to the ground.”

Azzopardi could have two in the race, with last year’s Group 1 Melbourne Cup winner Ando’s Mac (El Grand Senor x Brook’s Doll Jun ’14) also receiving an early invitation.

The fawn flash is in great form, winning a Prelude of the 2017 Melbourne Cup at Sandown Park on Thursday night, setting a personal best 29.29 over the 515m trip.

"I'll be very disappointed if he doesn't get a run in the Topgun – he won the Melbourne Cup and the Warragul Cup and his run on Thursday was second to none.

"It was probably one of the best runs of his career – he isn't the fastest dog I've had, but he is a very smart race dog and he knows how to win."

After the placed runners the field finished in the following order 4th Bewildering (\$2.80), 5th Zara's Entity (\$8), 6th Worm Burner (\$5.50), 7th Striker Light (\$15) and 8th Cairnlea Kenny (\$15).

Raw Ability is raced by Kylee Osborne and trained by Anthony Azzopardi he is a Black dog whelped March 2015 by Barcia Bale from Bugatti Flyer (Bit Chili x Midnight Lace). Raw Ability has won 13 of his 27 starts and has been placed on six occasions after the first prize of \$75,000 for the Adelaide Cup it took his current stake earnings to \$127,725.

Adelaide Cup Honour Roll

1972 **Bristol Miss 31.52**, 1973 **Valjuka 31.48**, 1974 **Bristol Sue 31.84**, 1975 **Turn Pillage 30.93**, 1976 **Golden Spur 30.80**, 1977 **Cavalier Queen 30.64**, 1978 **Riviera Tiger 30.49**, 1979 **Encanto 30.83**, 1980 **Youthful Prince 30.72**, 1981 **Lady Tornquest 30.45**, 1982 **Smithy's Belle 30.89**, 1983 **Superstar 30.36**, 1984 **Knocklaun Gold 30.24**, 1985 **Thundering Two 30.13**, 1986 **Farquhar 30.28**, 1987 **Club Edition 29.94**, 1988 **High Wonder 30.44**, 1989 **Kuriarkin 30.35**, 1990 **Sandi's Me Mum 30.23**, 1991 **Highly Blessed 29.95**, 1992 **South Road Sid 29.83**, 1993 **Croation Star 30.19**, 1994 **Perplexed 29.49**, 1995 **Forest Fin 29.33**, 1996 **Jurassic Vapour 29.55**, 1997 **Rare Deceit 30.12**, 1998 **Rapid Journey 29.34**, 1999 **Young Harrison 29.56**, 2000 **Jack Junior 29.32**, 2001 **Brett Lee 28.88**, 2002 **Brookside Bear 29.67**, 2003 **Waterview Star 29.34**, 2004 **Hotline Hero 29.56**, 2005 **Collide 29.52**, 2006 **Miss Spicy 29.46**, 2007 **Big Time Max 29.30**, 2008 **Whippy's Image 29.39**, 2009 **El Galo 29.45**, 2010 **Dyna Lachlan 29.48** and 2011-1 **Kilty Lad 29.39**, 2011-2 **Mepunga Nicky 29.45**, 2012 **Spud Regis 29.75**, 2013 **Ernie Bung Arrow 29.70**, 2014 **Allen Deed 29.48** 2015 **Fernando Bale 29.20** and 2016 **Aqua Cheetah 29.41**.

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