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Aqua Cheetah wins the Dapto Megastar Final

By Jeff Collerson thedogs.com.au

Aqua Cheetah (\$2.70) lifted his earnings to \$302,000 when he got up in the last stride to win Thursday night's Group 1 Crownbet Dapto Megastar.

The Seona Thompson-trained greyhound prevailed by a neck from the Jodie Lord-trained Asa Barboza (\$10.10), with early leader Barking Bad (\$11.50) a head away third.

Barking Bad was unlucky as he was checked going through the first turn and while he hit the front on the back straight, the early bump prevented him obtaining a big break.

Aqua Cheetah's owners Ian Robertson, his wife Tia, and their friend Mark Morgan, bred the greyhound after being presented with Dalta Bale, a female greyhound from the famous Paul Wheeler breeding farm near Young.

Dalta Bale won nine races but was no world beater, winning just once at Wentworth Park and even losing in two appearances at Sydney's suburban Non-TAB track, Potts Park.

"We liked Dalta Bale's bloodlines so asked her trainer Margaret Bannerman if she would consider letting us breed from her," Robertson recalled.

"We got Dalta Bale in exchange for a couple of pups from any litters she whelped and Aqua Cheetah is the great result we received.

"We have been blessed as Aqua Cheetah has given us a wonderful ride but when they went across the line on Thursday I thought he had been beaten. I was a few metres past the post and from my angle I thought the inside dog, Asa Barboza, had won.

"After calling up the finish on my phone I realised Aqua Cheetah had got there."

"It was a fabulous night because although Tia, a veterinary nurse, had to work, I had our two daughters, Piper, aged 12, and Indiana, nine, with me at the track.

"Seona and Jason Thompson are wizards but I must give credit to Hunter Valley trainer Jason Mackay, who had Aqua Cheetah throughout his Megastar campaign.

Continued Page 2...

“Aqua Cheetah beat Mackay’s greyhound Riley Tokaam in a Megastar heat and finished ahead of him again in the final but Jason cared for our dog as if he was his own.”

Until Thursday the Dapto Megastar was among the few Group 1 races the all-conquering Thompson kennels had failed to win, with their dogs El Brooklyn and Proven Nitro finishing fourth and third respectively in the 2012 and 2013 finals.

Aqua Cheetah is now poised to attempt back-to-back Adelaide Cup wins, with that series scheduled for October 5 and 13.



Aqua Cheetah centre stage, after winning the Group 1 Dapto Megastar. Pic: Adam McLean

After the placed runners the rest of the field finished in the following order. Rohan Hill (\$5.90), Where Art Thou (\$5.80), Riley Tokaam (\$6.10), Zambora Cross (\$11.40) and Another Gangsta (\$28.90).

Aqua Cheetah is raced by Mark Morgan and trained by Seona Thompson he is a Red Fawn dog whelped March 2014 by Cosmic Rumble from Dalta Bale (Pure Octane x Cynthia Bale). Aqua Cheetah has won 24 of his 66 starts and has been placed on 20 occasions after the first prize of \$75,000 for the Dapto Megastar Cup it took his current stake earnings to \$302,193.

Listed below are the previous winners of the Megastar. The race has now been won by some very handy sprinters

The first winner of the Megastar Dapto invitational in 2010 was Mr Metz and in 2011 it became a Group 3 event and was won by Oaks Road in 29.94. In 2012 the race was elevated to Group 2 status and was won by Bye Bye Bucks in 29.75, then in 2013 the race became a Group 1 event when won by Peter Rocket in 29.81, then 2014 Tommy Brislane won in 29.82, in 2015 Fantastic Dotty in 29.51. Last year’s winner was Let It Develop in 30.02.



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