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It's all Snozz in the Black Top

Written by Adam Dobbin Greyhound Recorder

At a ripe old four years of age, Jason Mackay's star galloper Snozz (\$2.80) finally captured that elusive group race victory at The Gardens on Saturday night, successful in the Group Two Multicam Black Top.

Heading into the final as the fastest qualifier and a warm punters elect, a big crowd was on hand to cheer on the son of Bombastic Shiraz in the hope that he could claim a deserved victory in the \$35,000-to-the-winner feature.

Snozz had contested no less than 11 Group race finals prior to Saturday night, amid a career that has brought about 25 race wins, since opening it in March of 2008.

Beginning well from box eight, Snozz found the lead heading through the first turn with Victorian star Flash Of Light trailing through nicely. From there the issue was never really beyond doubt, with Snozz going on for 1¾ length win in 29.34, over Flash Of Light (\$7.40), who made late ground.



Snozz with the happy Mackay team after the Black Top (Pic Steve Whalland)

Daydream (\$8.00) was game in defeat, filling third, a further 2¼ lengths away.

The race wasn't without incident though with New Divide, Elite Blue Size and Bit Stressed all coming to grief on the first turn when there was some tightening.

Thankfully, New Divide and Elite Blue Size trailed the field in, while Bit Stressed failed to finish with a veterinary examination revealing a fractured wrist.

There were buoyant scenes at the presentation with leading Hunter Valley trainer Mackay full of praise for his evergreen sprinter.

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"Tonight was his night," beamed Mackay at the presentation.

"He's had every problem and injury in the world and there isn't a more deserving dog of a big race win. To do it at The Gardens is extra special.

"This one is really for the owners, they have stuck with him and I am just really happy for them that they got the victory they deserved," furthered the jovial trainer.

Mackay was also glowing in his assessment toward The Gardens and the direction it is heading.

On a champagne night of greyhound racing, leading Victorian mentor Bob Douglass, of Carlisle Jack fame, pulled off a hit and run mission, with Decembrist successful in the Lord Mayors Cup (600m). Whilst there were only four runners, it was a thrilling spectacle, with the Victorian claiming The Gardens 515m track record holder Velocity Cloud over the concluding stages.

The other feature on the card, 'The Macca', named after leading Hunter Valley race caller John McDermott, went to the Robert Smith-prepared, Clare Gordon-owned Lochinvar Marlow in 29.41s.

Unlucky not to have been in the Black Top final himself, Lochinvar Marlow trailed the smart Torrington Miss down the back straight before streaking away for a determined 29.41s success by 6¼ lengths.

After the placed runners the field finished in the following order 4th Nicholas's Habit (\$44.00), 5th Tuiaki (\$7.80), 6th New Divide (\$4.50) Fell 7th Elite Blue Size (\$4.90) Fell and Bit Stressed (\$18.30) Fell.

Snozz is a Fawn Dog whelped September '06 he is by Bombastic Shiraz from Special Osti (Placard x Elite Osti). He is raced and trained by Jason Mackay at Richmond Vale. The Group 2 Black Top Classic win took his record to 69 starts for 25 wins and 28 placings and prizemoney earnings of \$155,970.

The NSW NCA could not have selected a better name for this on going feature at the Gardens. Black Top by Top Linen from Classy Jane was an icon of the sport, he was raced by Frank Holmes of Highfields (near Newcastle) and his breeder Mrs. Edna Hanson bred him in Birmingham Gardens the suburb in which the Gardens track is located. He raced in the early 60's only contested 20 races for 17 wins and two seconds. He retired as Australia's highest stakes winner with 5352 Pounds. His introductory stud fee set at 65 pound was a record service fee in Australia. A breeding success of extraordinary proportions Black Top created his own dynasty which continually re-wrote the record books on greyhound racing in this country. The feature races his progeny won and the stars he produced are to numerous to list, he served a record 1326 bitches and sired 6000 puppies earning approximately \$150,000 in service fees. There is no doubt we will never see another Black Top, he was the one and only. Black Top was inducted into the AGRA Hall of Fame at the AGRA Awards night at Sandown in March 2008 and again in March 2009 in Perth when he went into the Sires category.

Previous winners of the Black Top **2005** Buddy Rich 29.41, **2006** Mojestic 29.87, **2007** One Tree Hill 29.44, **2008** Lochinvar Prada 29.65, **2009** Cindeen Shelby 29.64.





The Immortal Black Top in action

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