



Australian Greyhound
Racing Association

MEDIA RELEASE

18th December 2015

Sky is the limit for Fantastic Laurels winner

By Mick Floyd

Six weeks after arriving their Pearcedale kennel, Fantastic Skye has given couple Kel and Jackie Greenough one of their biggest thrills in the sport after claiming the \$72,500 group 2 Laurels at Sandown Park Thursday night.

Fantastic Skye was sent to the boxes as the \$2.80 favourite despite running second in her semi-final last Sunday. She began cleanly to sit behind early leader Sweet Barbados (\$6.80) before railing strongly to assume the lead down the back straight. Once in the clear, Fantastic Skye raced away from her rivals to win in a race record 29.35 seconds. Sweet Barbados held on for second 4¼ lengths adrift, while Alpha Nemesis (\$32.20) finished a further half-head away in third.



Fantastic Skye proves too strong in the Laurels final (Pic Paul Munt)

The win was the biggest of Fantastic Skye's young career and was the culmination of an ambitious plan from owner Jason Fletcher. Following consecutive grade 5 wins at Wentworth Park, New South Wales based Fletcher sent Fantastic Skye to Kel Greenough specifically to target the series.

Continued on Page 2 ...

“Jason wanted to send her down early to get her acclimatised to the track because she is a little bit shy,” said Jackie Greenough, deputising for her husband, Kel.

“He sent her down in excellent condition. Very rarely does a plan come off like that but it’s nice when it does. I’m not even sure what the plan is next, her only goal has been the Laurels.”

The Greenough’s are no strangers to the group racing scene, having won many feature races around the country. However their first win in the Laurels was especially pleasing.

“It’s a special race, extremely prestigious,” Greenough continued.

“We’ve hardly ever been in it before. It’s not a race we’ve really targeted because we’ve never really had the dogs for it for various reasons, but it’s a real thrill to win a race such as this.”

Fantastic Skye is the second of her litter to taste group success following her sister Fantastic Dotty’s thrilling win in the group 3 Dapto Maiden win in August. Tonight’s \$50,000 first prize boosted her career prize money total to \$75,526 from just 18 starts.

Later in the night, eight time group 1 winner Fernando Bale made a triumphant return to Sandown Park, winning the Fee For All in 29.25. It was Fernando Bale’s 35 career victory and increased his world record prize money total to \$1,299,370.

Unfortunately the following day the Champion was found to have an injured his back and has been retired to stud. The curtain has come down on the most outstanding race career see since the likes of Chief Havoc, Zoom Top and Temlee.

After the placed runners the field finished in the following order 4th Polijuice Potion (\$6.70), 5th Rolanda Hooch (\$22.30), 6th Iyliss Bale (\$23.90), 7th Anberlin (\$32.80) and It’s All Talk (\$2.60).

Fantastic Skye is raced Jason Fletcher and trained by Kelvyn Greenough at Pearcedale in Victoria, she is a Blue bitch whelped September 2013 by Goodsey from Light Fantastic (El Galo x Dark Marne). Fantastic Skye has won 10 and been placed five times from her 18 starts and with the \$50,000 first prize for the Laurels it took her current stake earnings to \$75,526.

Recognized Australia wide as the pinnacle age restricted bitches classic the Laurels was first conducted by the Sandown Club in 1964 when won by Tara Princess. It is a very much sought after Group 1 event with the winner usually acknowledged as a very valuable brood bitch as well as most carve out a successful race career. It has also been proven over the years that most of the finalists are bitches that produce when they go to stud and some have become house hold names after producing some of the superstars of the sport. The Classic has found some outstanding winners over the years none the least 1965 champ Cheltenham Lass who later in her career was runner up and won a Melbourne Cup as well as runner up in an Australian Cup. Odious who went on to win an Australian Cup in 1976, Carrington Jade won a Melbourne Cup in 1976. Cavalier Queen won the Adelaide Cup in 1977. Pua To Burn won the 2005 Easter Egg and 2004/ 2005 Group 1 Sapphire Crown. Plus two other winners are Hall of Fame superstars Winifred Bale and Sandi’s Me Mum. The race will now continue to be staged in December after a revamp of the AGRA Group Race calendar commenced in July 2010 it considered a better age time for the young bitches and it will also coincide with the running of the Silver Chief for the same aged dog pups. Listed below is the Laurels Classic Honour roll highlighted by so many stars that enjoyed outstanding careers.

1964 **Tara Princess**, 1965 **Cheltenham Lass**, 1966 **Ever Present**, 1967 **Magic Fuel**, 1968 **Enapetic**, 1969 **Watch A Flash**, 1970 **La Rate**, 1971 **Lady Of Rome**, 1972 **Blackliner**, 1973 **Crete**, 1974 **Vibrant Lass**, 1975 **Odious**, 1976 **Carrington Jade**, 1977 **Cavalier Queen**, 1978 **Debbie's Wood**, 1979 **Jewel Of All**, 1980 **Sharonlee Girl**, 1981 **Sarah Kuda**, 1982 **Winifred Bale**, 1983 **Wee Rua**, 1984 **Select Girl**, 1985 **Little Nola**, 1986 **Autumn Leaf**, 1987 **Playgirl Bonnie**, 1988 **Dancing Vixen**, 1989 **Sandi's Me Mum**, 1990 **Witchery**, 1991 **Barb's Tune**, 1992 **To Perfection**, 1993 **Suzy Also**, 1994 **Victorious Road**, 1995 **Little Promise**, 1996 **Hanson Kelly**, 1997 **Moonambel Gem**, 1998 **Chersam Honcho**, 1999 **Labyrinth**, 2000 **Creative Whisky**, 2001 **Hail A Harley**, 2002 **Katella Bale**, 2003 **Dance Portrait**, 2004 **Pua To Burn**, 2005 **Maureen Shirly**, 2006 **Pure Burst**, 2007 **Miss Hot Gossip**, 2008 **Hybrid Theory**, 2009 **Boozeroo** and 2010 **C'est La Vie (June)** and **Up And Away (December)** 2011 **Stetson Donna**, 2012 **Gunda Bale**, 2013 **Ritza Hattie** and 2014 **Lamia Bale**.

*****Replay of the final can be viewed on the club's and AGRA website at:

www.sandowngreyhounds.com.au

www.agra.com.au

Thanks to Michael Floyd Sandown Racing Manager for story content.

For more information please contact:

Neil Brown

AGRA Publicity Officer

Tel: 03 97691234

Mob: 0423 129 950

nbrown@agra.com.au

Howard Ashton

AGRA Executive Officer

Tel: 08 8243 7100

Mob: 0438 042 838