



Australian Greyhound
Racing Association



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SILVER CHIEF: Wright glad he got it Wrong

GRV Website

2016 was greyhound racing's year of the hobby trainer, and 2017 kicked off in much the same fashion with Lightning Frank (\$3.60) landing Mathew Wright his first Group 1 winner in tonight's Silver Chief (525m) at The Meadows.



Wright is a fencing contractor who trains a small team of six greyhounds at Allansford, just five minutes from Warrnambool. He watched on in disbelief as Lightning Frank stormed home to snare the \$100,000 first prize, much to the delight of his region of owners, the Hashtag Syndicate, who celebrated long into the night.

Mathew and father Kevin first got involved in greyhound racing 25 years ago when Mathew was just 14 years of age, with Lightning Frank lifting the pair to new heights.

"He's the best greyhound we've ever had by panels," Wright said after Lightning Frank came from behind to win in 29.97sec.

"We had a greyhound called Off Tap (won 43 from 75), who was an absolute flying machine, but she was a short courser."

Despite Lightning Frank posting a brilliant 29.66sec (best) in his semi-final win – his 12th victory from 21 starts – Wright entered the \$145,000 Silver Chief final with little confidence.

"Being drawn in box five I wasn't very confident because the six dog (Lorenzo Blue) tries to cut in (to the rail). I really expected (\$2.50 Fav) Thirty Talks to win from box one, and had he not got injured he would've won," Wright said.

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Thirty Talks, the highly-decorated Queenslander and \$2.40 favourite, entered the Silver Chief with a prize money bank balance of almost \$300,000, more than all seven other Silver Chief finalists combined.

However, he led before dropping a back muscle in the run, opening the door for Lightning Frank to swoop.

“The Hashtag Syndicate is made up of three lads and their dads, and they all just love going to the races to watch their dogs race. Lightning Frank is about the fourth or fifth greyhound they’ve owned after buying him as a young pup, and I’m really happy for them.”

Wright knew Lightning Frank was something special when he was 16 months of age, although he did take some convincing.

“We put him out of the puppy boxes at Warrnambool at 16 months of age and he ran so fast that we just assumed the clock was wrong because race dogs don’t even run that time. We didn’t think any more of it until we put him around again two weeks later and he ran just as fast.”

“When he did that I thought, his potential was pretty scary, but I wasn’t getting carried away because for all we knew he might not be able to run more than 400 metres, let alone handle two turns.”

Lightning Frank has turned out to be everything Wright had hoped for, and he is hopeful his star will gain a run in next month’s invitation-only Group 1 Temlee (525m) at The Meadows. In the meantime, however, he has a \$100,000 first prize to think about.

“Half the prize money goes to the owners, while part of my share will go towards buying dad a new ride-on mower, because I accidentally ran his one into a tree a few weeks ago,” he said.

Wright said he was delighted to be able to continue the flourish of Group 1 wins by hobby trainers over the past 12 months in Victoria.

“It’s been a great year or so for hobby trainers like myself. Twelve months ago Andy Stewart won the Silver Chief (with Midwinter), while Dustin Drew, who like me is from down Warrnambool way won the Maturity with Kilty Express, and Dundee Osprey has won three Group 1s,” he said.

Gerry O’Keeffe and Matthew Lanigan are other Victorian trainers to have won their first races at Group 1 level in the past 12 months, providing plenty of hope to others.

“There’s thousands of trainers like me,” Wright said. “We’re just battlers waiting for that one really good dog to come along and it’s such a good feeling when it happens.”



In the Silver Chief after Lightning Frank the placed runners the field finished in the following order 2nd Reefton Treasure (\$5.40), 3rd Lorenzo Blue (\$34.50), 4th Rockstar Troy (\$23.30), 5th Duty Free (\$36.10), 6th Matt Machine (\$6) 7th He’s Loaded (\$24.60) and Thirty Talks (\$2.40).

Lightning Frank is a Black dog whelped September 2014 by Black Magic Opal from Kirabilli Abbie (Vapour WhilPremier Fantasy x Pearlee Surprise). He is raced by the Hashtag Syndicate and trained by Mathew Wright at Allansford in Victoria. He has now won 13 races and been placed on five occasions from his 22 starts. The Silver Chief first prize of \$100,000 brings Lightning Frank’s overall prizemoney to \$161,985.

Happy Team post race at the Meadows (All Pics Clint Anderson)

The Classic is one steeped in tradition, first being run in 1964. Directors of the Melbourne Greyhound Racing association saw fit to name The Classic after the greyhound "Silver Chief" who was whelped in 1936 and owned by Ray Herbert. Silver Chief was a "Waterloo Cup" winner in 1939 and performed admirably on the speed coursing circuit as well. He raced in both Melbourne and Sydney and was keenly sought after for stud duties once his racing career was finished.

The cream of racing have won this event referred to as the Derby of Greyhound Racing. Champions such as Plunder Road, Black Diro, Satan's Legend, Tempix, Chariot Supreme, Ginger, Light of Fire and Awesome Assassin to name a few. Many have gone on to produce sons who have also won the Classic.

The mighty Tempix won in 1978 then produced sons who won in (81) Tempix Image and Bold Assail in 1982. Australian super sire Chariot Supreme won the race in record time in 1983. His progeny took out the honours in 1986 (Hopeful Supreme), 1989 (Autumn Chariot) and 1991 (Bomber Gleeson). In recent years Light of Fire won in 1994 then produced greats such as Awesome Assassin and Kantarn Bale. Awesome Assassin went on to sire 2005 winner Ben's Fury. Jason Thompson has a unique record training five winners of the great race.

Listed below is the star studded Silver Chief honour roll.

1964 **Barunah**, 1965 **Spartan Prince**, 1966 **Phantom's Return**, 1967 **Lord Baden**, 1968 **Dupondy Two**, 1969 **Plunder Road**, 1970 **Black Diro**, 1971 **Michael Takiri**, 1972 **Getaway**, 1973 **Flash Gordon**, 1974 **Petillant**, 1975 **Nigger Chimes**, 1976 **Fritz Mactavish**, 1977 **Satan's Legend**, 1978 **Tempix**, 1979 **San Remo**, 1980 **Mork The Stork**, 1981 **Tempix Image**, 1982 **Bold Assail**, 1983 **Chariot Supreme**, 1984 **Rumpus Pappa**, 1985 **Supreme Spot**, 1986 **Hopeful Supreme**, 1987 **Calamity Kid**, 1988 **Ginger**, 1989 **Autumn Chariot**, 1990 **Enfield**, 1991 **Bomber Gleeson**, 1992 **Nevik**, 1993 **Plugger Fever**, 1994 **Light Of Fire**, 1995 **Zealous Guy**, 1996 **Awesome Assassin**, 1997 **Hotshot**, 1998 **"Not Held"**, 1999 **Jamella Prince**, 1999 **Kantarn Bale**, 2000 **Dave's Mentor**, 2001 **Burali Bale**, 2002 **"Not Held"**, 2003 **Jimmy Neutron**, 2004 **Big Daddy Cool**, 2005 **Ben's Fury**, 2006 **Closing Argument**, 2007 **Meticulous**, 2008 **Regal Thyme**, 2009 **Fedex**, 2010 **Enry Walt** and 2011 **Kilty Lad**, 2012 **Godsend**, 2013 **Renegade Chief**, 2014 **Ollie Bale**, 2015 **Above All** and 2016 **Midwinter**.

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