



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Bravo's Light Shines Brightly in the Temlee

By Gerard Guthrie and Andrew Copley GRV Website

Brett Bravo produced a training masterclass as star sprinter Striker Light returned to her brilliant best in the Group 1 Temlee (525m) at The Meadows on Saturday night.

A two-time Group 1 winner in early 2017, victorious in the Golden Easter Egg and National Futurity, Striker Light was having only her fifth start and second over '500' since running sixth in the Melbourne Cup on November 24 when she tackled the best sprinters in the land in the Temlee.

But despite a less than ideal preparation, Striker Light turned back the clock twelve months, opening up a massive mid-race lead en route to her third Group 1 victory.

"She's got extreme speed, but I knew for her to open up a big lead like she did there had to be trouble behind her. Watching the race I was just screaming," said part-owner George Farrugia.



*Striker Light with (from left) part-owner George Farrugia and partner Cheryl, number one fan Jack Stone, Laurie Farrugia (George's dad), Bronte, Kelly and Brett Bravo. (All Pics Clint Anderson)*

It was Striker Light's second appearance in the Temlee after she started \$3.90 favourite from box one in 2017, when fifth to Lightning Frank.

With the priceless advantage of the rails alley for the second year running, Striker Light was the \$5.30 second elect, with Melbourne Cup victor Aston Dee Bee, one of four Seona Thompson-trained invitees, the \$2.70 favourite from box two.

Striker Light was best to begin and she skipped away to what was ultimately a decisive advantage when there was trouble behind her on the first corner, staving off the strong-finishing Queensland Slick (\$9.90), the first reserve, as she scored by .61 of a length in 30.05sec, her 24th win from 45 starts.

The \$100,000 winner's purse took her career prizemoney tally past the \$550,000 mark.

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“I really want to thank five people,” George Farrugia said.

“Kelly and Brett, who had to scratch her from the Ballarat Cup because of injury and they’ve done an enormous amount of work with her to get her right.

“My Dad, who is here tonight. He got me into the sport. And my Mum, who is at home looking after our brood matrons. Lastly, I want to thank my beautiful partner Cheryl.

“I’m not the trainer but I think we will put her in the Australian Cup next and then have a crack at winning a second Golden Easter Egg. We may retire her after that because I want to take her to Black Magic Opal.”

## Fanta Bale Supreme in Battle of Britton

Champion stayer Fanta Bale continued her love affair with The Meadows when defeating boom kennelmate Rippin’ Sam to win the Group 1 Zoom Top (725m) in a hugely-anticipated clash that headlined the opening night of the Australian Cup Carnival.

Millionaire Fanta Bale gave Robert Britton his third victory in the invitation-only Zoom Top in the last five years, with the master distance conditioner having gone back-to-back in 2014/15 with Cheetah Zorro and Space Star.



And there’s every chance Britton will be back again next year with heir apparent Rippin’ Sam, which charged home to finish second in his first test at Group level, however Fanta Bale demonstrated she is in absolutely no hurry to relinquish her crown.

The Zoom Top victory completed a remarkable all-distance Australian Cup Carnival treble for Fanta Bale after she won the Rookie Rebel over 600m at the corresponding meeting last year before dropping back to 525m to take out the Australian Cup a fortnight later.

It was Fanta Bale’s eighth success at Group 1 level and four have come at The Meadows, with the daughter of 2013 Topgun hero David

Bale having announced her arrival in elite company when winning the middle-distance Hume Cup in October 2016.

“She’s just a machine. Whether she leads or comes from behind she finds a way,” Robert Britton said.

“We’ve never had a dog like her and I just hope it continues.

“She just keeps doing the right thing in her races every time.

“I should also recognise the young dog who ran second for us tonight (Rippin’ Sam). We’re really proud of him too.”

Fanta Bale started \$2.20 favourite from box four in the Zoom Top, with Rippin’ Sam the \$4.20 second elect.

Fanta Bale came out running and settled in second place behind Queenslander Champagne Sally (\$33.80) and after hitting the front in the home straight she forged clear to defeat the late-closing Rippin’ Sam by 2.14 lengths in 42.35sec.

It was Fanta Bale’s 40th win from 60 starts with the \$75,000 winner’s purse taking her career earnings past \$1,257,000, second only to superstar sprinter Fernando Bale with \$1,299,370.

And with Britton plotting a path towards back-to-back Sandown Cups, who knows how much prizemoney Fanta Bale will have banked when breeder Paul Wheeler decides it’s time for the breeding barn.

# Delbridge No Longer a Group 1 “Rookie”

Mark Delbridge celebrated an overdue and thoroughly deserved Group 1 breakthrough at Saturday night's star-studded opening to the Australian Cup Carnival when Dyna Dean was a dominant all-the-way winner of the Rookie Rebel (600m).

“This is my first Group 1 winner in 25 years in the sport. It's very special,” a delighted Mark Delbridge said.

“We've come close before. We had Tomac Bale, who led and got run down in the Adelaide Cup.”



Dyna Dean had put the writing on the wall that a middle-distance feature trophy was well within his grasp when running a close third to Hecton Bale in the Listed Maidment Memorial over 595m at Sandown in January, beaten only half a length, with champion Fanta Bale splitting the pair.

After winning his next two starts over 595m at Sandown, Dyna Dean was a \$12 chance from box four in the \$75,000 to-the-winner Rookie Rebel, with Melbourne Cup runner-up Chasin' Crackers the \$2.40 favourite from the rails.

Dyna Dean came out running to open up a handy early lead over Chasin' Crackers and the son of Kiowa Mon Manny and Prue Bale produced a flawless front-running exhibition as he condemned Chasin' Crackers to another feature race minor placing, scoring by 3.87 lengths in 34.31sec.

“I almost missed the race because I was busy watching Reece Mastin sing,” Mark Delbridge's Lisa laughed.

“We also had Allen Makoto, who was run down by Renegade Chief in a Group 1 (Silver Chief). We also had Flash Of Light, who won a lot of Group races.

“Mark never thought he would win a Group 1. To win one is such a great pay off for all the hard work.

“We start at 7.00am each day and finish at 4.30pm on a good day and it's pretty much non-stop either working with the dogs or maintaining the property. If we are racing we sometimes won't get home until 2am and then we're up at 7am again the next day. Sean Coulson helps us with taking dogs to race at the provincial tracks.”

Dyna Dean has now won five of his last seven starts and 17 from 42 overall and he will drop back to 525m for next Saturday's Australian Cup heats.

Dyna Dean gave the Wheeler family a Group 1 race-to-race double, following Fanta Bale's victory in the Zoom Top over 725m.

After the placed runners in the Temlee the field finished in the following order: Poke The Bear (\$9.20), Bewildering (\$7), Raw Ability (\$6.10), Out Of Range (\$12.90) and Kouta Mayhem (\$27.70).

Striker Light is raced by George Farrugia and is trained by Brett Bravo, she is a Black bitch whelped March 2015 by Kc And All from Pretty Fancy (Brett Lee x Sweet Fancy). Striker Light has won 24 of her 45 starts and has been placed on 10 occasions and with the \$100,000 first prize for the Temlee it took her current stake earnings to \$564,360.

The Temlee became part of the Australian Cup Carnival in 2003 listed are the past winners.

**2003 Excite Ability, 2004 Hotline Hero, 2005 Paua To Burn, 2006 Closing Argument, 2007 Slater, 2008 Whippy's Image, 2009 El Galo, 2010 Fedex, 2011 High Earner, 2012 Radley Bale 2013 Cintiarna, 2014 Zelemar Fever, 2015 My Bro Fabio, 2016 Dalgetty and 2017 Lightning Frank.**

After the placings in the Zoom Top the runners finished in the following order: Quick Jagger (\$4.60), Packey Keeping (\$17.40), Ebby Ripper (\$12.60), Scott Keeping (\$15.80) and Jalapeno (\$20.80).

Fanta Bale is a Black bitch whelped August 2014 by David Bale from Ucmé Typhoon (Dodgem By Design x USS Mysterious). Fanta Bale is raced by Paul Wheeler and trained by Robert Britton. She has raced 60 times for 40 wins and 14 placings. After adding the \$75,000 first prize for the Zoom Top her stake earnings stand at \$1,257,975. 2<sup>nd</sup> on the all-time stakes winning list.

Listed below are the past winners of the Zoom Top.

**2003 Tears Of Jupiter, 2004 Irinka Barbie, 2005 Rocky, 2006 Slick Galore, 2007 Miss Grub, 2008 Miss Brook, 2009 Gunnadoo Magic, 2010 Drill 'Em, 2011 Blue Lorian, 2012 Miata, 2013 Destini Fireball, 2014 Cheetah Zorro, 2015 Space Star, 2016 No Donuts and 2017 Burn One Down.**

After the placings in the Rookie Rebel the runners finished in the following order: Extreme Magic (\$3.70), Henry (\$15.10), Hecton Bale (\$4.80), Royal Intention (\$26.70) and Brueghelino (\$12.40).

Dyna Dean is a Black dog whelped June 2015 by Kiowa Mon Manny from Pure Bale (Go Wild Teddy x Zambora Bale). Dyna Dean is raced by Brendan Wheeler and trained by Mark Delbridge. He has raced 42 times for 17 wins and 12 placings. After adding the \$75,000 first prize for the Rookie Rebel his stake earnings stand at \$139,135.

Listed below are the past winners of the Rookie Rebel.

**2003 No Shame, 2004 Shamira Bale, 2005 Malfoy 2006 Paua To Burn, 2007 Train A Journey 2008 Jamazz, 2009 Bo Frazier, 2010 Flash Of Light, 2011 Symmetry, 2012 Lektra Jay, 2013 Proven Impala, 2014 Hawk Alone, 2015 Cosmic Wise, 2016 Dyna Double One and 2017 Fanta Bale.**

For more information please contact:

**Neil Brown  
GCA Publicity Officer  
Tel: 03 97691234  
Mob: 0423 129 950**

**David Simonette  
GCA Executive Officer  
simonette78622gmail.com**