



Australian Greyhound  
Racing Association

## MEDIA RELEASE

*30th July 2017*

# Mepunga ‘Blazes’ to Maturity Glory

By GRV Website

Jeff Britton won the Group 1 Maturity Classic for the second time in four years on Saturday night when Mepunga Blazer (\$2.00) defeated kennelmate Paradiso Lass to reign supreme in the \$100,000 to-the-winner age feature.

Both Mepunga Blazer, which started even-money favourite, and first reserve Paradiso Lass, which secured a start following the scratching of star Queenslander Fast Times, were able to overcome wide draws in the Maturity to give Britton a rare Group 1 quinella.

“It was a real nice surprise they were both able to get across from wide draws. It must’ve been the right side of the track to be on tonight,” said Britton, who won the 2014 Maturity with Mepunga Hayley, which like Mepunga Blazer, was bred and raced by successful breeder Barry Smith, Britton’s partner in many feature race successes.



**Mepunga Blazer races away to win the Maturity Final (All Pics Clint Anderson)**

“With Mepunga Blazer drawn in box six I was worried about him getting knocked over badly but he was able to get through the first turn without too much of a touch.”

Mepunga Blazer, a son of Britton’s 2011 Adelaide Cup heroine and Maturity finalist Mepunga Nicky, started a warm favourite in the Classic despite his awkward alley, courtesy of a scorching 29.64sec semi-final victory, while he also won his heat of the three-week series in a slick 29.97sec.

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Aston Dinnigan (\$7.10) led from box five, while Mepunga Blazer showed great acceleration after a slow getaway to be sitting ominously in a close second rounding the first turn, with Britton's second finalist Paradiso Lass (\$) crossing into third.

In a commanding display, Mepunga Blazer railed to the lead in the back straight and dashed clear, defeating the hard-closing Paradiso Lass by 1.53 lengths in a fast 29.81sec, with Shadale (\$9.10), trained by Jimmy Redenbach, grabbing third.

Mepunga Blazer has now won eight of his 14 starts, including five from seven at The Meadows, while he'll now head to Sandown Park for Thursday night's National Sprint Championship heats.

"I couldn't really see from behind the boxes but then I saw that both mine had got around the first corner basically untouched," Britton said.

"I knew the leader (Aston Dinnigan) wasn't overly strong and my two are strong so I was just hoping that nothing went wrong from there."

"Mepunga Blazer drives into the first corner really well at The Meadows, which he did again tonight. He hasn't handled the first turn as well at Sandown when he was younger but he's a bit more experienced now so we'll see what happens in the National Sprint heats on Thursday."

"He'll be up against the big boys in the Nationals, so we'll see how he handles it."

"Paradiso Lass is getting better and better all the time. Her record could easily be better because she hasn't really been blessed with box draws – she's had a lot of wide draws – and she hasn't been in a lot of easy races either."

It was a night for the favourites at The Meadows, with superstar Burn One Down careering away with the \$25,000 to-the-winner Destini Fireball Stayers Final (725m) earlier in the meeting.

Trained by Seona Thompson, Burn One Down dominated betting on the Destini Fireball, starting at \$1.50, and the result was never in doubt as he defeated Mick's Angel by six lengths in 42.59sec, improving his sensational record over 725m at The Meadows to 10 from 13.



After the placed runners in the Maturity the field finished in the following order 4<sup>th</sup> Aston Dinnigan (\$7.10), 5<sup>th</sup> Opal Nera (\$4.60), 6<sup>th</sup> Trixta Rox (\$10.40) 7<sup>th</sup> Dyna Jerry (\$46.80) and Lady Charlotte (\$38.50).

Mepunga Blazer is raced by Barry Smith and trained by Jeff Britton at Anakie in Victoria. He is a Black dog whelped June 2015 by Barcia Bale from Mepunga Nicky (Premier Fantasy x Mepunga Diamond). Mepunga Blazer has won seven of his 14 starts and has been placed on two occasions after the first prize of \$100,000 for the Maturity Classic his current stake earnings stand at \$135,795.

The Maturity Classic was first held at Olympic Park in 1970 when won by talented sprinter Phantom's Heir first prize at that time was \$1250. The prizemoney increased marginally until 1975 when it went to \$3,500. In 77 it was \$5,600 and jumped to \$7000 in 79 before going to \$10,000 from 1980 until 1987 the year the mighty New Tears won the race. First prize went to \$15,000 for seven years then to \$20,000 for two years and reached \$30,000 in the year 2000. In 2001 it was worth \$40,000 and the Classic was won by AGRA Hall Of Famer Brett Lee. It was elevated the next year to \$50,000 then again last year the final went up to \$75,000 and then in year 2012 an increase to \$100,000. Listed below is the Maturity Classic Honour roll highlighted by some of the many stars that enjoyed outstanding careers after winning the feature.

**1970 Phantom's Heir, 1971 Linden Lad, 1972 Nulla's Call, 1973 Shan's Tempest, 1974 Temlee, 1975 Warranwood Girl, 1976 Aaron King, 1977 Overflow Love, 1978 Satan's Legend, 1979 Marajax, 1980 Worthy Weston, 1981 Murchison Champ, 1982 Rocky Pyramid, 1982 Wynlee Spirit, 1983 "Not Held" 1984 Broken Cup, 1985 Storm Glade, 1986 Pharaoh's Mask, 1987 New Tears, 1988 Hay Dinney, 1989 Best Of Blue, 1990 Eureka Man, 1991 Enfield, 1992 Executive Class, 1993 Keystone, 1994 Refur, 1995 Northern Legend, 1996 Royal Honcho, 1997 Running Gold, 1998 Adrenalin Storm, 1999 Coriole, 2000 Acacia Dee, 2001 Brett Lee, 2002 Rocka Cockatoo, 2003 Hall's Northern, 2004 Hallucinate, 2005 Poetic Magic 2006 Train A Journey, 2007 Run's House, 2008 Paddy's Flame, 2009 Aston Trivett, 2010 El Grand Senor, 2011 Shereen Bale, 2012 Barcia Bale, 2013 Marcus Joe, 2014 Mepunga Hayley, 2015 Fernando Bale and 2016 Kilty Express.**

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