

AGRA HALL OF FAME

Black Top

Black Dog

(Top Linen x Classy Jane)

Whelped February 1961

Breeder: Edna Hanson

Owner-Trainers: Frank Holmes

Racing Career span of 12 months

20 Starts - 17 wins - 2 seconds

1962 St Leger (Race Record), 1962 Vic Peters Classic (race, track and world record for 500 yards)

1962 Interstate Challenge



Black Top, a black dog whelped in February 1961, and registered at 70 lb., was owned and trained all through his racing career by Frank Holmes of Kellyville, who also retained the dog throughout his outstanding career at stud.

Bred by Mrs Edna Hanson of Birmingham Gardens from her outstanding race bitch Classy Jane, Black Top was a result of an association between breeder-owner Hanson and Holmes who at the time lived at Highfields (near Newcastle). Holmes had trained Classy Jane for Mrs Hanson and won the 1959 Bi-Annual Classic, Holmes' first important win after 35 years of preparing many winners.

After Classy Jane's retirement it was decided to mate her with Top Linen (a Wharminda descendant) while Classy Jane was by Gogodalla, who was exported to the U.S.A., from Glyetta, a daughter of Glyn Occa and Smooth Reply. Black Top has a double cross of Roccabright in his fourth generation remove.

As a reward for Frank Holmes' part in Classy Jane's win in the Bi-Annual Classic, Mrs Hanson promised him the pick of the litter.

Before the litter arrived, Holmes nominated the first black pup to be whelped as his pick and that pup was Black Top.

When the litter was six weeks old Black Top was the smallest and Mrs Hanson offered him the other next dog pup, a black and white, which she had intended to keep for herself.

After some deliberation, Holmes decided to stick to his original choice and it was agreed that Mrs Hanson would rear his pup with the others, the black and white pup turned out to be another star sprinter Keen Linen the inaugural Derby winner.

Black Top commenced racing with a first start win at Wentworth Park on July 28, 1962 he then ran second there before winning at Maitland. Black Top was then taken through the grades at Harold Park winning a Novice, Bathurst and Orange Stake as a lead up to the Vic Peters Classic, a series he made a clean sweep of winning the final in world and track record time for the 500 yards of 26.4/100ths.

Black Top's race career consisted of 20 starts for 17 wins and 2 seconds in a twelve-month period. He ran the then world record time of 26.4/100ths. for the 500 yards on three occasions, and five times missed the record by 1 / 100th sec., running 26.5/100ths. At Wentworth Park he got down to 31.2/10 sec. for the 580 yards, only 1110th sec. outside the course and world standard.

Black Top career included, winning the 1962 N.S.W. St. Leger (in 31.3 sec., a race record time), the Vic Peters Classic at Harold Park and the Interstate Challenge. Had the N.C.A.'s Greyhound of the Year award been in operation then, there is no doubt that Black Top would have received the title in 1962, for he stood clearly above his contemporaries.

He retired as Australia's highest stakes winner with 5,352 Pounds. His introductory stud fee set at 65 pounds 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 are vast and listed below, he served a record 1326 bitches and sired 6000 puppies earning approximately \$250,000 in service fees.

Because of his fine pedigree, success was certainly expected for Black Top at the stud, but it is doubtful if even his owner Frank Holmes, could have foreseen the spectacular career in store for his favourite.

Commencing his stud career in August 1963, Black Top's stock won approximately 10,000 races!

This marvellous money-spinner netted \$250,000 in stud fees for his owner, who refused several five-figure offers from the U.S.A.

By way of his progeny Black Top performed some 4 incredible feats including:

6 wins in 10- races at Harold Park and again at Wentworth Park;

7 wins in 9 flat races at Sandown, Victoria, and also Olympic Park, Victoria;

8 wins in 10 races at Goulburn, southern N.S.W.;

8 wins in 9 races at Richmond, N.S.W.;

All three placegetters in a Melbourne Cup, Australian Cup and a Richmond Oaks;

Topping the stud lists for a record six successive years;

Siring over 100 winners on the two Sydney city tracks for the first time (in 1966) and repeating the feat in '67, '68, and '69.

Black Top's progeny included Rose Moss, Zoom Top and Only Ten (each the best stayer in Australia of their time), The Shoe (recognised as the world's 500 yards record holder), Perfect Socks (Vic Peters Classic winner), African Ballet (Vic Peters Classic), Rokoko (Bi-Annual Classic), Top Kabana (the world's fastest Maiden Stake winner), Another Glitter (St. Leger), Swanston Lass (Australian Cup), Min's Doll (Christmas Gift), Cheltenham Lass (Lord Mayor's Cup), Top Lulubelle (South Sydney Cup), Arthur's Desire (National Derby), Romantic Top (N.S.W. St. Leger), Miller's Moss (sire of National Championship victor King Miller), Milimsimbi (won Harold Park Classic, Anniversary Cup and Melbourne Cup), Blackamoor Lad (Melbourne Cup), Petite Panther (multi record holder), Silent Ring (Harold Park Bi-Annual Classic), Heather Rev (Harold Park Association Cup), Top Bomber (sire of National Derby Winner Bomber's Gift), Cabernet, Holding, Chadford, Sheer Blonde, Fullock and Busy's Charm.

Only Ten won the Sydney Cup and was a Wentworth Park 790 yards record holder, until her time of 43.3 was bettered by another daughter of Black Top called Zoom Top. An AGRA Hall Of Famer she was an outstanding race bitch and rated by many as the best of all time, certainly the most versatile champion ever produced here. She won \$59,060 in prizemoney, also an Australian stakes record for her time and equal to over \$500,000 these days.

Zoom Top's successes include the Wentworth Park Gold Cup (twice), Harold Park Association Cup, Wentworth Park Sydney Cup, Richmond Oaks, South Sydney Cup and Dapto Silver Collar. She smashed or equalled track records at Wentworth Park, Dapto, Cessnock, Temora, Gosford, Bulli and Beenleigh, Queensland.

When the NSW NCA opened the Gardens Complex they could not have selected a better name for this major ongoing annual sprint feature. Black Top an icon of the sport, 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. There is no doubt we will never see another Black Top he was the one and only and a very worthy member of the AGRA Hall Of Fame.



By Neil Brown