

AGRA HALL OF FAME

National Lass

Black Bitch

(Chief Dingaan x Waroo Lass)

Whelped September 1982

Trainer: R.Dean, Owner: R.Zammit

Year of Induction 2003

1984 and 1985 NSW NCA Greyhound of the Year

Career Prizemoney: \$82,000

63 Starts: 40 Wins and 15 placings

Feature Career Wins Included:

1984 Coca Cola Cup, Gabba, 1984 Sun Toy Fund Cup, Wentworth Park, 1985 Sydney Cup Final, Wentworth Park

1985 Summer Cup, Wentworth Park, 1985 Sun Toy Fund Cup, Wentworth Park, 1985 Christmas Gift, Richmond

1986 Wentworth Park Gold Cup,

Career Track Records:

Gosford 689m (41.20), Wentworth Park 722m (42.70), Richmond 620m (37.20), Richmond 620m (37.03)

Richmond 537m (31.24), Dapto 722m (42.82).



For her brief but electrifying staying career, and outstanding efforts as a sprinter, National Lass was named New South Wales Greyhound of the Year in 1984,

and she claimed the prestigious award for the second time in 1985.

Injury brought a premature end to National Lass's career, although she did go on to have three litters, the best performed offspring was Little Deaver (by Worth Doing), which was the only greyhound in history to win the big NCA 'classic double' the 1991 St. Leger and 1992 National Derby.

Few greyhounds maintain a standard good enough to win their states highest award Greyhound of the Year once, let alone win it twice. Only the very special have achieved the honour such as Zoom Top, Winifred Bale and the mighty National Lass. Winner of the ultimate accolade in 1985 and 1986 the versatile champ raced brilliantly as a sprinter, middle distance performer and classic stayer. It's also unusual for champion bitches when they go to stud to produce greyhounds of equal ability as themselves. That was not the case with National Lass. The brilliant black bitch has been the dam of exceptional sprinter/stayers Denver, Little Denver and National Leader. Here's the story behind one of New South Wales very finest A.G.R.A Hall Of Fame National Lass.

THE BREEDING AND THE LITTER

National Lass was whelped in September 1982 by leading Victorian sire Chief Dingaana from the brilliant New South Wales producer Waroo Lass. It was Waroo Lass's second litter the first producing outstanding N.S.W stayer National Lee, Victorians Harper Valley and the dam of the brilliant Ginger, Rinaldi Lass, all to Temlee. Chief Dingaana's litter consisted of five dogs (2 black, 1 white and black, 1 white and 1 brindle.) Four bitches (3 black and 1 white and black.) Bred in Tasmania by Keith Gillie National Lass's sisters raced as National Babe, Allison Lee and Miss Waroo. While her brothers raced as Chief Waroo, Sunburnt Moss, Decorations, Leyrab and Tallyman. National Lass's owner Richard Zammitt also purchased Chief Waroo sometime after he bought National Lass he also proved a handy performer winning at Harold Park and several other races. As for the rest of the litter they all raced in different interests but, none reaching the highs of their famous sister. I asked Richie Dean trainer of National Lass how shipping agent Richard Zammitt came to buy the brilliant black bitch. "I had sold Richard a dog he raced with some success and he came to me indicating he wanted to get hold of a dog that was better. The pups were advertised in the Recorder, I suggested he go after a black bitch with a white tip the same markings as National Lee a bitch Richard had been wrapped in. When Richard called there were no bitches left but the breeder gave him the contact number of the nursing sister in Tassie that was rearing two she had bought as pups they were seven months at the time. In actually fact the woman only sold National Lass because she needed the money to put an extra room on her house, so it was lucky I guess."



THE REARING

National Lass was transferred to the Riverstone property of Richie Dean for rearing, breaking in and training. Dean explains how he rears. "We rear the pups in two-acre paddocks, Gipsy was no different. We put her in with two other pups about the same age, as she was when she arrived. I must say there was nothing special about her she kept to herself a bit but nothing that was any different to any other pup I've reared. All our pups get the same attention plenty of free galloping and heaps of good food."

THE BREAKING IN

Dean breaks in all the dogs he rears, and I asked him if the little black bitch with the white tipped tail showed any of what was to come." No, she didn't her times were only ordinary at breaking in. She certainly took to the caper alright no worries about that but gave me no indication she would reach the highs she did. I break my pups in at about 11 to 12 months old and in those days, I started them off at Paul Cauchi's and progressed them up to the racetracks. Gipsy didn't start to improve till she started racing and she kept on improving. It was remarkable the progress she made from breaking in stage."

THE NAME

I asked Dean if there was anything special about the naming of National Lass. "Right from the start we were hoping to emulate National Lee, so the name was a direct attempt to follow the same naming as her famous half-sister. It certainly worked out well, it was the name we wanted, and Gipsy was able to make it famous."

THE OFFERS

Dean told me the offers came thick and fast for National Lass and they came at different times of her career. The first really big offer was \$80,000 it was in the middle of her racing career. The biggest offer owner Richard Zammitt knocked back was \$100,000. Although the offers were considerable Zammitt never contemplated selling his champion at any price.

THE INJURIES

Dean explained National Lass raced very soundly throughout her race career. " She lead all the way in most of her starts so she never got knocked about much. She had sore wrists early on and they played up a couple of times, which cost her some time off. She also cracked a fibula bone in her back leg at the Gabba that also cost her some time. Of course, her career was cut short when she dropped a back muscle at Wentworth Park in May 86. I think she could have continued racing, as she was racing well at the time."

THE BIGGEST THRILLS

In a race career with so many highlights I asked Richie Dean what were his biggest thrills while racing the champ." I got a tremendous thrill when she won her first big race the Coca Cola Cup at the Gabba. She had made a few finals at that early stage without winning so I got a kick out that win. I think one of her best performance was her first start over the distance. It was at Gosford over 689 metres; she came out of box five and won by 20 lengths smashing the track record running 40.73. It was previously held by Zoom Top at 41.20 set in 1969. She held that Gosford record for well over 10 years. Gipsy also loved Richmond she always raced well there I remember trialing there one night and she ran 23.13, Brother Fox went round the same night and ran 23.16, I offered to trial together but they wouldn't be in it."

AT STUD

National Lass was a great success at stud and what a producer. She whelped no less than eight litters and 54 pups. She whelped her First litter to Brother Fox in July 87(4d/4b) her second to Pretty Short, April 88 (6d/5b) and produced the brilliant Denver. Her third litter was to Worth Doing whelped November 89, (4d/5b) producing outstanding race dog and sire Little Denver. National Lass's fourth litter was to Amerigo Man whelped March 91, (3d/3b) from this union came National Leader and National Bobby. Her fifth litter was to Carnival Boy October 91 (2d/5b). National Lass in July 92 whelped six pups to West Cape (2d/4b) and again in February 93 she had six pups to Ginger (3d/3b) whelping her last litter to Ballargi in September 1993, producing two pups one of each. As well as the above mention stars she has produced many top-class performers among her many pups.

THE RACE CAREER

National Lass's race career commenced in a 400-metre maiden at Richmond January 27th, 1984, she won by five lengths in 23.53. She raced for the last time at Wentworth Park on May 5th, 1986. Overall, she had 63 starts for 40 wins 12 seconds and three-thirds only being unplaced eight times. Her prizemoney totalled



\$82,000. National Lass's record as a stayer is quite remarkable she had 34 starts for 28 wins four placings and two fourths. She contested 12 major finals winning six and her longest winning sequence was 14, winning eight on end at Wentworth Park twice and 10 in a row at Richmond. As mentioned earlier she held the Gosford 689 record at 40.73. While during her career she held records at Wentworth Park 42.48, Richmond 620 twice at 37.20 and 37.03 plus she lowered the Richmond 537 mark to 31.24 a record set in 1982. Besides being judged N.S.W G.O.Y. 84/85 her feature wins included the 84 Coca Cola Cup at the Gabba in B.O.N. 32.60, the 84 Sun Toy Fund Cup, the 85 Sydney Cup, Summer Cup, Richmond Christmas Gift, Betterment Cup, Southern Beaches Cup, Richmond Anniversary Trophy and the 1986 Wentworth Park Gold Cup. National Lass also won the 86 state Elimination of the National Distance Championship running second in the Gabba final to Kirsty's First. During her star-studded career National Lass raced and beat the very best sprinters and stayers of her era, some of which were household names of greyhound racing in the 80's. There has being very few as good as her and it might be some time till we see another as versatile as the mighty National Lass.

By Neil Brown