

AGRA HALL OF FAME

Temlee

Brindle Dog

(Tivoli Chief x Temora Lee)

Whelped March 1972

Owner: Ray Hocken, Trainer: Frank Cray

Year of Induction: Tasmania 2006

Racing Career span of 15 months

37 Starts - 25 wins - 3 placings

1974 National Sprint Championship, 1974 Maturity Stake, 1974 Lord Mayor's Trophy

1974 Victorian Greyhound of the Year, Total Prizemoney \$26,000



When we remember the great champions that have had the most significant contributions to greyhound racing there is one name that is close to the top of the list Victorian Superstar Temlee. Not only was he the most outstanding sprinter of his time but his overall influence on the breeding scene has not been equalled before or since the great champion stood at stud. As a race dog he excelled at Olympic Park holding the sprint track record for an unprecedented 10-year period, a feat that has been unequalled on any city track in the history of the sport. Temlee raced in greyhound racing's golden era during the 70's and if Lizrene was the queen of that time, Temlee was most certainly the king. Crowds turned up in large numbers during this period and their favourite sprinter was the powerful brindle dynamo.

A brilliant race career was cut short by injury but as his conception seemed an act of fate so was his career at stud. A career that rewrote the record books in a manner that would place him among the best of all time. Here's the story behind one of our most remembered greyhounds, Temlee.

THE BREEDING AND THE LITTER

Temlee was whelped March 1972 by top New South Wales galloper Tivoli Chief (Tivoli Dreamer x Heather's Ile) from the lightly raced New South Wales bitch Temora Lee (Mister Moss x Venetian Babe). Tivoli Chief was an unproven sire at that stage standing at Tony Marino's Diamond Creek property in Victoria. He was later to become one of Australia's leading sires of the 70's. Temora Lee was bred by the country's leading breeder at the time New South Wales Tony Duke. Duke ran a large-scale breeding and selling property at Lower Portland. On a trip to Duke's in search of a well-bred brood bitch Sale greyhound racing identity Tom Davidson bought Temora Lee for \$800, but due to injury she never raced in Victoria.

Not long after the purchase Davidson passed away but prior to his death he requested his greyhounds be humanely put down. Fortunately, family members could not bring themselves to have this done and gave Temora Lee to friend and former Sale club President Barry Bailey. He was to choose Tivoli Chief as the sire and although the litter was registered in the name of Mary Davidson, Bailey paid the stud fee and whelped down the litter.



When the litter was eight weeks of age Bailey's friend Frank Cray suggested to Maffra Hotelier Ray Hocken he buy a pup. "I went down to Bailey's at Sale to have a look at the litter. Frank Cray had trained a couple of dogs for me but we hadn't had much luck. I don't know why I picked Temlee there was no reason you know what pups are like they all looked the same. He was just one of the brindle dogs I liked." Hocken paid \$135 for the brindle pup that was later to race as Temlee. The litter consisted of eight pup's four dogs and four bitches.

They all raced with different degrees of success with some of the bitches enjoying enormous results when it came their turn in the breeding barn. The other dogs in the litter raced as Garfield Luck, Temtiv and Tivoli 's Double. While the bitches raced as Cray's Dream, Rattlin Rosie, Temora Blue and Viola Lee.

REARING

Frank Cray reared the young pup at his Sale property I asked Hocken about his set up. "Frank had a couple of runs for pups he always had youngsters there coming along. He'd rear them then break them in ready to race. I don't think he did anything special just reared in the normal way with plenty of room to run around.

Early on Temlee became very sick, and the vet told us he had a bad bout of hepatitis and distemper. Frank did a great job to help the pup to recover. He had him inside for weeks treating him with tablets and stuff. If it wasn't for that intensive care, he could have been lost. Barry Bailey offered me a replacement when the pup was sick, but I decided to stick with my original pick and as it turned out, lucky I did."

BREAKING IN

I inquired of Hocken if Temlee showed any of what was to come at breaking in. "Yes, we knew he was going to be very good. Frank broke him in and he was a natural. He just did everything right straight away. He was a real hard chaser as a pup you could see all he wanted to do was

race. He trialled just outside the Sale track record before his first start, so he was always going to be a handy dog. We never thought he would reach the heights he did. He certainly gave the family a great deal of pleasure.

I raced a few after him but never enjoyed much more success. It didn't really matter that much after you had been lucky enough to race a dog like Temlee."

THE NAME

"We didn't think too hard about his name. We just left out the o. r. a. of his mother's name and made it one word. As it turned out it seemed to suit him and when you think how many times it's been referred to over the years it's stood the test of time okay. It was lucky we didn't call him something that was ordinary." Hocken said. Temlee's kennel name was simply "Tiger" I bet there's been plenty of brindles called "Tiger" over the years.



THE OFFERS

As always, I asked how many offers were made for the champion. "We had a few throughout his career particularly early on but he was never for sale. I don't think we gave them a second thought. You don't race dogs like Temlee every day of the week.

I remember there was a very big offer from a Sydney Syndicate after his racing days were over to stand him at stud but again we didn't consider it. But they had assumed correctly he was going to make his mark at stud.

THE INJURIES

Temlee raced virtually injury free for the fifteen months he spent on the racetrack. His career was cut short after 37 starts when on the 25th of November 1974 at Olympic Park. The brindle flying machine cracked a bone in his left hind leg. It was fitting that if his career had to end it was at the track he had made his own.

Over the 33 years that greyhound racing was conducted at Olympic Park. Temlee would rate as one of the best if not the best to have raced there.

THE BIGGEST THRILLS AND BEST PERFORMANCES

I questioned Hocken as to his fondest memories of the champ. "No doubt I think the biggest thrill we got was when he set the record at Olympic Park. It was such an outstanding run and to record that time was very special. Winning the National Sprint Title was also a thrill. Plus, those trophy races we also got a big kick out of. The whole family was involved when we raced him, and we enjoyed every minute of it. Likewise, all of my customers at the Hotel were wrapped up in the racing side of Temlee. It was very special to have raced a dog as well acknowledged as what Temlee has been over the years and still is today."



THE RACE CAREER

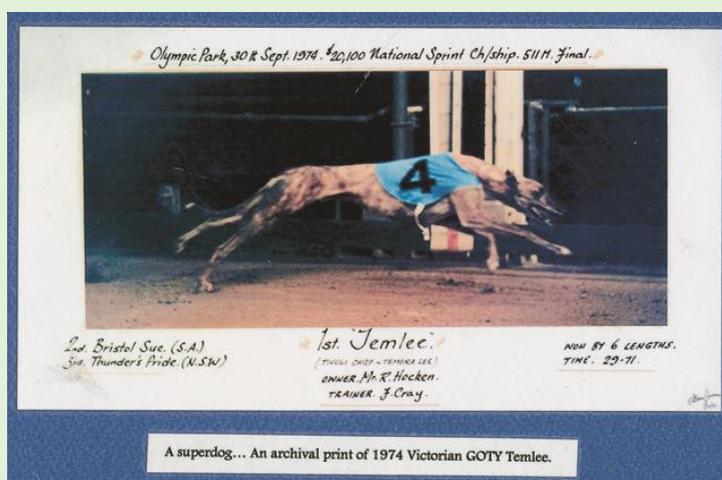
Temlee raced for the first time at his home track of Sale. On the 11th August 1973 at 17 months, from box five he won by six lengths in a B.O.N. 29.20 for the 484 metres. It was only 2/100ths outside the record. A record he equalled at his fourth start.

The champion raced 37 times for 25 wins and three placing's. He won a total of \$26,000 in prizemoney.

Temlee was judged the 1974 Victorian Greyhound of the Year. The prize was a good one in those days a brand-new car.

Temlee only raced for 15 months but his short career contained many highlights. His favourite track was Olympic Park. He won 13 of his 19 starts there. His best performance being his track record run of 29.67 on the 25th of March 1974 in the Autumn Trophy final. Temlee's major racetrack win was in the final of the National Sprint Championship. In an outstanding performance from box four he ran a brilliant 29.71. The field included Bristol Sue, Thunders Pride and Coolamaroo.

His other major highlights included the 1974 Maturity Stake final when he beat Sylvan Prince and Shanghai Star. He also won the Lord Mayor's Trophy in 30.25, beating Kiwk Metal. He was a finalist in the 1974 NSW Derby and the 74 Melbourne Cup. Besides wins at Sale and Olympic the champ won at Wentworth Park, Sandown and Traralgon.



Neil Brown originally did the above interview used in this tribute with owner Ray Hocken in February 1996. Ray passed away in 2001 and his wife

Bev has given Neil Brown permission to publish the above as it was told to him at that time.