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# Orson Allen & Tornado Tears In the Box Seat For Wild Card

By Adam Dobbin Greyhound Recorder Website

THE introduction of the GCA wild card for the final spot in both the Group 1 National Sprint and Distance Championship Grand Finals has proven to be hugely successful since its inception back in 2009.

Designed to create further hype and intrigue around the National Championships, the wild card also rewards outstanding achievement, with the country's top ranked sprinters and stayers provided a security blanket if they fail to qualify for the grand final blockbusters via their respective state finals.



While the formula for which the wild card spots are awarded is fairly straightforward, it hasn't stopped some absorbing scenarios which have gone down to the wire over the years, with results from around the country causing a chain-reaction as to who gains the lucky last spot in the group 1 showcases.

The most famous wild card winner is undoubtedly champion Fernando Bale, the superstar galloper a remarkable 29.26 victor of the National Sprint Grand Final at Wentworth Park in 2015, following his shock defeat in the Victorian state final at the hands of Margins.

With the countdown now on to the Crocmmedia-sponsored National Sprint and Distance Grand Finals at Cannington on Saturday, August 24, we take a look at Greyhound Clubs Australia's group race rankings at the end of July, which will ultimately determine the wild card positions.

For the National Sprint, the equation for the Correy Grenfell-trained Orson Allen is fairly simple at The Meadows this Saturday night.

Qualify for next Thursday's Victorian Sprint decider by finishing first four from box one and regardless of his final finishing position, the Group 1 Perth Cup winner will book his National Sprint place at Cannington on August 24.

If Orson Allen doesn't qualify or happens to win the Victorian Sprint Final next Thursday, things become most interesting.

The next two highest ranked sprint runners are Sennachie and Feral Franky, the pair notable absentees from the series.

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That brings dual group 1 winner Dyna Patty into the mix - next in line for the wild card depending on Orson Allen's results.

Not surprisingly, Tornado Tears is front and centre as the highest ranked stayer, the champion son of Fernando Bale looking to defend his Distance title following last year's stirring group 1 victory at Sandown Park.

If the champ takes his place in the Victorian Distance qualifier next Thursday, he'll book a trip to Cannington, where he holds the track record, just by turning up.

Keeping a close eye on proceedings will be the connections of Blue Moon Rising, who is set to line-up in the NSW qualifier next Thursday at Wentworth Park, while other stayers in the fray include Double Gee, Veloce Nero, Bago Bye Bye, Poco Dorado and Rajasthan.

But given the one off nature of this year's National Distance qualifiers, Tornado Tears and Blue Moon Rising would both need to win their state events next Thursday to bring others mentioned above into the mix.

Next Thursday's all-star night of Nationals action promises to be most compelling, with the complexion of the wild card make-up only adding to the intrigue.

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