



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**A Queensland Sprinter & Victorian Stayer  
Secure the National Titles**

THE RAPIDVITE National Sprint and Distance Championships at Wentworth Park last Saturday night promised high drama, fierce rivalry with no quarter asked or given. And, when light rain settled the dust after the last of 10 races, it was high speed which made all the difference in each of the two Group 1 features.

The National Distance had a genuine sentimental favourite in Miagi (\$1.70).

His track record had been shattered by Chinatown Lad in the opening race of the night when the Tasmanian became the first dog to break 42 seconds for the 720 metre trip at Wentworth Park. The brindle dog posted 41.93 in a stunning display and some two hours later Miagi, from box eight, was expected to all to his already peerless local record of 10 wins from 11 starts at the journey.

But there was a fly in the ointment.

Victorian Mantra Lad (\$4.20) began safely and, as expected, soon took the lead and when his supporters looked for Miagi to make a move forward, the black dog was languishing towards the tail of the field, quite wide on the track.

Such was Mantra Lad's acceleration, he posted 16.01secs for the first 280m, just .03 outside Ballerina Dancer's quite brilliant track record. The section stunned a number of the crusty, hard-nosed Wentworth Park regulars.

In the middle stages, Mantra Lad held a four lengths break over fellow Victorian Rebel Angel (\$15.00) but the leader was within reach and a stirring battle was imminent.

Before the home turn Rebel Angel drew to the hindquarters of Mantra Lad and, some 30 metres before the line, looked set for victory but he failed by a mere neck in a smart 42.30.

Chinatown Lad's sister Fallen Zorro (\$5.00) worked home gamely to finish third and, after running off the track at the end of the home straight, did a remarkable job to be beaten only 1 1/2 lengths.

Risk It, in running fourth, posted a creditable 42.52 while Miagi battled gamely to finish fifth (42.66) yet was never a winning chance.

Mantra Lad is by 2005 National Sprint Champion Pure Octane out of Al Fresco and is owned by Martin and Fiona Hallinan.

The Hallinans have had their share of success at the elite level but Mantra Lad victory represented a career high for trainer Graham Jose.

## AUSTRALIAN GREYHOUND RACING ASSOCIATION

"He's a terrific dog and I'm just thrilled for Graham," an excited Hallinan said from his home at Clergate near Orange in NSW's central west.

"We had faith that he could lead but the last 50 metres was always going to be the worry if he cramped but, in the end, we got there."

Interestingly, Hallinan bred and reared Mantra Lad and also looked after Pure Octane and Miagi as puppies.

"To be honest, I would have been happy to run second to Miagi tonight ... he's a champion, but we won and are over the moon."



**Mantra Lad leads all the way to win the National Distance Championship**

The field in finishing order after the placings with starting price, Risk It \$8.00, Miagi \$1.70 fav, Nicely Done \$31.00, Token Ned \$151.00 and Tayza \$26.00.

Less than an hour after Mantra Lad's offering, an incident packed National Sprint was secured by Queenslander Knocka Norris.

The multiple track record holder had posted a cracking 29.82 in a solo trial at the track seven days earlier and all-but replicated the offering when he led from the first turn to score by a clear 7 1/2 lengths in 29.83 (5.50, 13.98).

And, after a clean start, Knocka Norris (\$2.70) made his own luck.

He drove to the rails just before the first turn, 'cleaned up' Snozz (box two), tightened All Caution (four) and, only a fraction of a second later, Tasmanian Light Ice Lad failed to handle the first turn and put paid to the rest of the field.

The incident saw Knocka Norris skip clear and it also allowed Mountain Of Love (\$13.00) to come along the rails (after being slow to begin from box six) and be second at the half-way mark.

As desperate as he was, Mountain Of Love made no impression on the Reg Kay-trained brindle dog and the winner's margin - and the time - told the story.

All Caution (\$3.60) managed third, a clear 10 1/2 lengths from the winner and the run was full of merit.

The National Championships now head to Cannington in 2009 and it quite possible that both Knocka Norris and Mantra Lad could be there to defend their titles.



**The brilliant Knocka Norris was way too good in the National Sprint Championship**

The field in finishing order after the placings with starting price, Snozz \$3.50, Hendrix \$9.00, Drink Driver \$51.00, West On Paris \$41.00 and Light Ice Lad \$51.00.

**\*\*\* Pictures Courtesy Greyhound Recorder**

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