



## EVERYBODY'S SWEETHEART

Every so often in harness racing you encounter something that brings a lump to your throat or has you jumping with joy – or both. Something that keeps on surfacing among your thoughts simply because it makes you feel good.

It goes without saying that encounters of that kind, if widely experienced, bring a benefit to harness racing that's beyond measure and price. Who knows how it happens? It just does.

I remember a galloper years ago called Jollair. He'd go out for his prelim and racegoers would gasp when they saw how lame he was. You could almost hear Jollair chuckling.

The jockey had to let him amble back to the crowd where the horse would take a bow.

Allow me to introduce everybody's sweetheart, My Everything, a big, lion-hearted mare who's really no star but who's a rocket from a standing start and who has an indefinable charisma -- an aura that's created almost a cult following in the bush.

Kids want to pat her, racegoers gather to look at her in the parade ring, strangers send her money and Thank You cards and bettors cheer even when they've done their dough on her. And in her lifetime, a lot of punters have done their dough on her.

Everybody on course and a lot of people off it genuinely wanted her to win Busselton Trotting Club's Sweetheart Series, designed by the successful South-West club specifically to offer increased opportunities to fillies and mares.

With consistent racing over six weeks, she went within an ace of doing that – one point, in fact – but it was her win on the second night of the Busselton carnival that brought her fame and had her proud owner-breeder, Charlie Callahan, waxing lyrical.

Charlie and trainer Harry Miller, who drove Jackie Scott to victory in the WA Pacing Cup 43 years ago, are both in their seventies. My Everything is 10 – and that Busselton win was her first and only in 97 starts.

In a letter to the Club this month thanking the committee and patrons for the carnival's 'usual success', Charlie hastens to point out: 'My Everything gave you a bonanza in publicity at Gloucester Park on Pacing Cup night – and the following week, when they played the tape of her winning.'

It was an eventful night. Big-striding My Everything forgot the near misses in those many races. She led the field from start to finish to break her duck with the century of win-less starts dangerously close.

Judged on the cheering, it could have been an Inter Dominion final.

'People send My Everything cards and letters,' Charlie told Track Bred. 'One woman sent her \$20 for a bag of oats after her win. Children wouldn't let their parents take them home

from the Busselton meetings until they saw her go in the float and said goodnight to her.'

My Everything's story does read like fiction; it's the sort of story harness racing needs, along with the out-and-out champions, to attract people to it.

Years ago, Charlie bought a big tip-dray for \$500 from well-known owner-breeder Jim Wooldorton. Jim threw in a mare called Apollo Dale to sweeten the deal. Needless to say, with the way Charlie loves his horses (he's now down to five from eight), Apollo Dale became one of the family.

Jim Wooldorton had the good performer Racy Rate and Jimmy Wayne at the time. Apollo Dale was by Jimmy Wayne from Apollo Queen by Waitaki Elect.

Apollo Dale went to Racy Rate. When it came time to foal, she walked up and lay down right outside Charlie's bedroom window and presented him with My Everything.

'Margaret', as Charlie calls her, found she loved people when she was a foal and nothing's changed. She also loves racing – though there are a few nines and eights and sevens peppering her long form-line, and still only one "1".

Charlie's learnt to look in the float if she's "missing". She often puts herself in there and waits patiently for a trip to the races.

It's a wonder she'll go anywhere near a float. Three years ago, while on her way to the races, a road train crashed into the float and ran over the top of it. My Everything was horribly injured, but Charlie never thought of having her put down.

'Margaret? Ripped her from end to end,' Charlie recalls. 'She had a huge wound, deep and eight inches wide from her chest right back along the side and through to the back leg.'

'The vet stitched her up in layers – internally first, then he stitched the muscle layer on top of that, then he stitched the skin on top of that. It took two hours. She was in a paddock for two years, recovering.'

Four or five days a week and every week, Margaret is taken down to the Apple Tree Play Centre in the outer Perth suburb of Cannington, not far from Harry Miller's stables in Orange Grove, so she can see all the small children, several of them handicapped. They pat her, feed her, talk to her.

'There's also a bus that carries handicapped kids and that'll pull up for ten minutes or so when the driver sees her at the Play Centre so the children he's looking after can join the fan club,' Charlie said.

'She just loves kids -- babies especially. She knows houses in the area where there are babies and she'll stop there, too. And dogs; she loves dogs. And swimming. We put a long rope on her and she just walks into the river on her own and off she goes.'

The WASBA and all her admirers and Track Bred wish him luck and continuing joy in the breeding and racing game.

It is nice to breed and race a horse who's a really great winner – but Charlie Callahan and his mate Harry Miller have proved that it can be even nicer to breed and race a winner who's a really great horse.