

AGRA HALL OF FAME

Winifred Bale

Fawn and White Bitch

(Temlee x Emiline Bale)

Whelped August 1980

Owner-Trainer: A.Wheeler Jnr.

Year of Induction 2003

Career Prizemoney: \$100,740

1982 and 1983 NSW NCA greyhound of the Year

81 Starts: 41 Wins and 28 placings

Feature Career Wins Included:

1982 Sandown Laurels, Sandown, 1982 NSW St. Leger, Wentworth Park, 1983 Appin Opal, Appin

1983 Ladies Bracelet, Harold Park, 1983 National Futurity, Wentworth Park, 1983 Richmond Oaks,

Richmond, 1983 National Sprint Championship, Harold Park

For her ultra-consistent efforts, Winifred Bale was crowned New South Wales Greyhound of the Year in 1982.

In 1983 Winifred Bale, in fantastic form, completed a clean sweep of all major races for bitches conducted in New South Wales, including the Richmond Oaks, Ladies Bracelet, National Futurity and Appin Opal.

Winifred Bale was retired after suffering a dropped back muscle, and in a gala presentation dinner, the classy bitch was crowned 1983 NSW Greyhound of the Year for the second consecutive year.

Winifred Bale will remain an inspiration to newcomers and experienced breeders alike in their quest to unearth that elusive champion.



Winifred Bale with Allen Wheeler

In the early 1970's the name of Allen Wheeler became synonymous with greyhound racing. A retired Naval man, by using innovative breeding, rearing and training methods and just plain hard work, built up a stud and racing establishment that was, the envy of those less energetic and the pride of those who love greyhound racing.

With the invaluable support of his wife June, his daughters Sharon and Lorraine and sons Paul and Allen Jnr, Allen Wheeler made an indelible mark on Sydney racing. From the Wheeler kennels emerged a long list of champions and top class racers that annexed most of Australia's major races and filled the Wheeler trophy cabinet to overflowing.

The dynasty since Allen Senior's passing has been continued by the family and in the main by son Paul who is acknowledged as Australia's most prominent breeder and owner. The Wheeler breed is recognised overseas as well where he has exported winners to both New Zealand and the United States. Not frightened to experiment Paul Wheeler and his family have become innovative by way of using exports to enhance their Australian bred stock always looking to improve their breeding methods and knowledge to further advance the locally bred product. Indeed it has become an almost rare sight as it was in the 70's and 80's for a major final field not to contain at least one Wheeler trained or bred greyhound.

Prior to 1982 Allen Wheeler had failed to take out greyhound racing's most coveted award, the New South Wales Greyhound of the Year title. In 1975 Odious, a brilliant bitch who had been sold by Wheeler after her first start, was a

finalist for the award while in 1977 Wheeler had his first finalist in Emiline Bale. In 1979 he had Mercia Bale as an unsuccessful finalist, but in 1982 he made it third time lucky when his magnificent bitch Winifred Bale took out the award.

In August, 1980 the Wheeler's former champion racing bitch Emiline Bale whelped a litter of puppies sired by the great Victorian, Temlee. At the time the Wheeler family could certainly never have believed that one puppy, a red fawn and white bitch, would emulate the feat of the great Zoom Top and take out two successive Greyhound of the Year titles. That bitch was of course Winifred Bale and it was a feat that was to be equalled 84/85 the following two years by fellow Hall Of Fame inductee National Lass, the three bitch's stand as the only ones to do it.

Winifred Bale was the outstanding member of a fantastic litter that included the excellent sprinters Billy Bale and Gwendalyn Bale, the latter proving to be a regular sparring partner for her illustrious sister in many of her races.

Allen and June Wheeler had commenced breeding on their own behalf in 1968 with a litter by Miller's Moss out of Speedy Chariot. In 1971 Allen Wheeler took out the inaugural Sydney City Owner's Premiership, a feat he continued to achieve in 1972, 1973 and 1974, the year it was scrapped. After finishing third in the 1972 Sydney City Trainer's Premiership he won in 1973, 1974, 1981 and 1982.

In 1975 the Wheelers moved their establishment from Eastern Creek to the Oaks, near Camden. The next year June Wheeler took out the Sydney City Female Trainer's Premiership with Allen coming second in the Male division.

By the time Winifred Bale commenced racing late in 1981 the Wheelers had won two N.C.A. Derbies, an N.C.A. Futurity, a Summer Cup and numerous trophy events with such outstanding dogs as Steelflex, Tintawin, Dynabolt, Mercia Bale, Emiline Bale, Busy's Bullet, Tenderbook, Maestro, Bumper Star and Proven Sharp among others.



Winifred Bale in action winning another feature

Winifred Bale commenced racing at only 16 months of age on December 11th 1981 in a 400 metre Maiden at Richmond. From box two she jumped straight to the front and raced away for a strong victory with her litter sister Gwendalyn Bale running third. Ironically it was to be nearly 15 months before Winifred Bale would again win a race in front of her sister.

The champ backed up a week later for another win again over 400 at Richmond both wins her only two appearances in 1981.

During 1982 Winifred Bale contested 39 races for 16 wins, six seconds, eight thirds and nine unplaced runs (four fourths), collecting \$54,050 in prizemoney.

She had won the New South Wales St Leger, the New South Wales Elimination Final of the National Sprint Championship and the Sandown Laurels. She finished second in the N.C.A. Futurity and third in the Harold Park Classic, Young Star Classic and Richmond Oaks. Additionally, Winifred Bale was a finalist in the Coca Cola Cup (fourth), National Sprint Championship (seventh) and Appin Opal (scratched).

Interestingly, among the 16 nominations for the 1982 NSW Greyhound of the Year award were the three litter-mates Winifred Bale, Gwendalyn Bale and Billy Bale, a unique performance. However, the final four greyhounds for the title were the Harold Park specialist Bobby Rich, champion stayer National Lee, the mighty 'Blue Flash' Promises Free and Winifred Bale. These last three were all progeny of the great sire Temlee.

Winifred Bale raced 40 times during 1983 for 23 wins, nine seconds, five thirds and just three unplaced runs (two fourths) for over \$60,000 in prizemoney. She had won the National Sprint Championship, the N.S.W. State Final of the Championship, the N.C.A. Futurity, Ladies Bracelet, Richmond Oaks, Penrith Oaks and Appin Opal as well as running third in the Melbourne Cup. She had won 13 races at Harold Park in seven months to take her into the record books with 18 wins over the sprint distance.

The champion raced for the last time on December 17th 1983 she took her place in a heat of the Christmas Gift at Harold Park, this had followed a let up from racing and split webbing suffered in a trial earlier in the month.

From box three Winifred Bale begun only fairly and thereafter was never in the hunt, coming in a long last behind Acacia Park. After the race it was found that she dropped a back muscle and Allen Wheeler had no hesitation in retiring her immediately.

One amazing feature of Winifred Bale's career is that she clashed with her litter sister Gwendalyn Bale on 24 occasions throughout her career. Winifred Bale came out the victor with 12 wins to Gwendalyn Bale's eight.

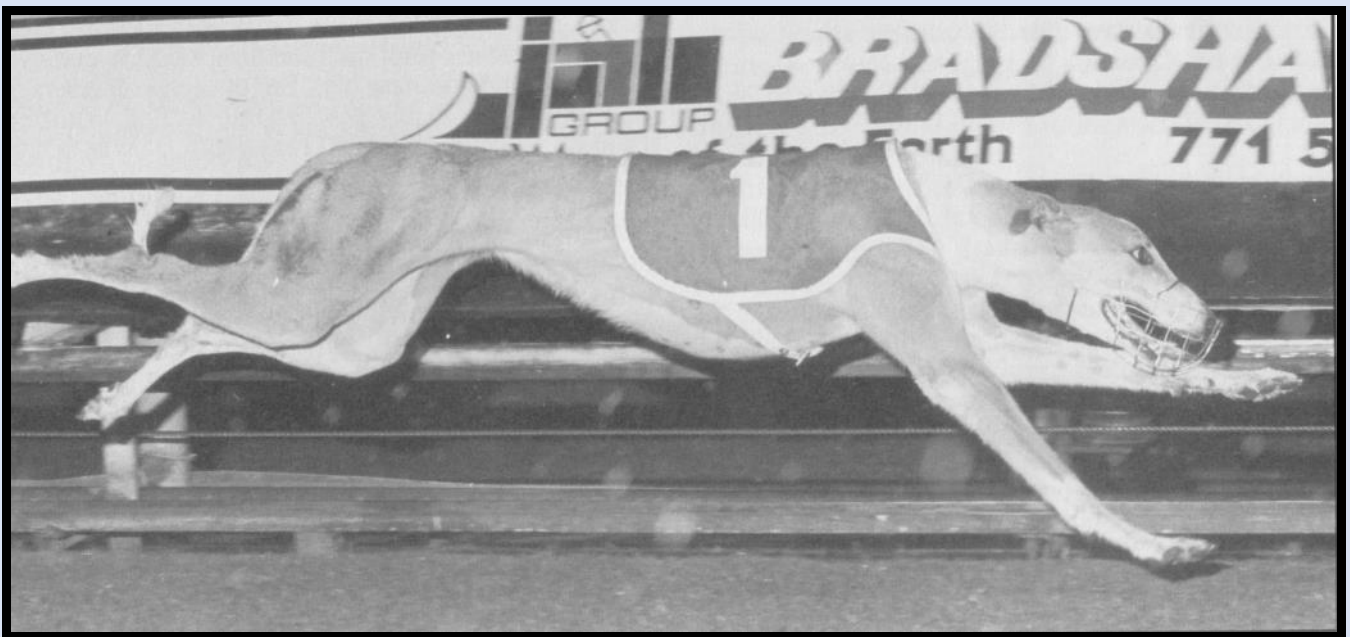
Winifred Bale also finished ahead of her litter sister in the remaining four races, which neither of them won. It is interesting to note however, that after nine clashes Gwendalyn Bale had notched six wins to Winifred Bale's one. The result of the 1983 New South Wales Greyhound of the Year award was considered by many to be a forgone conclusion: Winifred Bale easily. And so it proved with this striking red fawn and white bitch becoming only the second greyhound to win the ultimate accolade for two successive years.

All told, Winifred Bale raced 81 times in her career for 41 wins, 15 seconds. 13 thirds and 12 unplaced runs (sixth fourths) for an Australian record of \$100,740 in prizemoney, the first dog to ever reach the magical six figure mark. She made the finals of no less than 18 major racing events, winning 10, placed second in one, third in four and scratched from another. She won on six of the seven tracks at which she started over distances from 274 to 537 metres (only, failing over the 558 metres at the Gabba) but, interestingly, never ran a track record.

On retirement Winifred Bale proceeded to whelp some six litters over the next seven years and it's fair to say like many other champion race bitches she never produced one as good as herself. Her best pup to race was probably Kylie Bale who won the inaugural Dapto Classic, she was from a January 1988 litter by Rikasso Mick, one of eight pups she later produced top class race bitch Cerin Bale. Other handy race dogs included Christine Bale (May '85 Acacia Park) won 13 races at Harold Park and the Appin Opal. Anthony Bale, a member of the August '84 Peter Glider – Winifred Bale litter, was also a good metropolitan chaser.

All tolled Winifred Bale whelped 39 pups from the following litters Peter Glider August 84, Acacia Park May 85, Glider's Son July 86, Rikasso Mick January 88, Chariot Supreme December 88 and Silver Ball January 91.

It was a proud night for the Wheeler family at the Burswood Casino in Perth, September 2004, when Allen Junior accepted the plaque honouring Winifred Bale's induction into A.G.R.A Hall Of Fame. The brilliant fawn and white sprinter certainly deserves to be there and she takes her place along side the immortals of the sport.



“The Mighty Winifred Bale”

By Duncan Stearn & Neil Brown