

# AGRA HALL OF FAME

## Flying Amy

Brindle Bitch

(Amerigo Man x Tenthill Flyer) Whelped May 1992

Trainer: R.Ball

Owners: M.Ball and P.Tedford

Year of Induction 1999

### NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

59 starts: 42 wins, 5 seconds, 5 thirds

Career prizemoney \$354,105

1994 and 1995 Queensland Greyhound of the Year

Track record-holder Albion Park 520m

Major career wins included:

1995 Eukanuba Cup Final 520m Albion Park

1995 National Sprint Championship Grand Final 511m Sandown

1994 and 1995 Gold Coast Cup Final 457m Gold Coast

1994 Queensland Puppy Classic 520m Albion Park



Only very special greyhounds capture the imagination of the entire greyhound racing fraternity, gaining them both acclaim and wide spread recognition. This was the case with the Ebenezer excitement machine Flying Amy. The brilliant brindle bitch burst

onto the scene with a list of records and outstanding performances that had the greyhound public shaking their heads in amazement. Here is the story behind arguably Queensland 's fastest and most popular greyhound to race, certainly a fitting member of the Australian Greyhound Racing Hall Of Fame.

Long-time Queensland friends, Merv Laffey and Eric Tedford, had successfully raced the beautifully bred Tenthill Flyer (Chariot Supreme x National Queen), the black bitch had been very handy on the track, so they decided to breed a litter from her. Laffey and Tedford selected Amerigo Man as the sire, for no apparent reason other than the fact that Amerigo Man was one of Australia 's leading sires at the time. He was impeccably well bred with an outstanding success rate, the litter was whelped on the 2nd May 1992, and it consisted of five dogs and three bitches. The dogs raced Austwide, Optima One, Tenthill Man, Tenthill Rebel and

Bounding Andy. While Flying Amy's sisters were Don's Regret and Justa Flyer. Besides the outstanding deeds of the champ, the rest of the litter performed very well with some of them being better than others. As depths of litters go, it compares favourably with some of the best consisting of a number of well-performed dogs.

After selling most of the litter, part owner Eric Tedford was left with two pups, Flying Amy and Bounding Andy. Tedford reared the pups on his property at Toowoomba, like plenty before them they had the free run of the farm. They galloped to their heart's content in open paddocks by day and were locked up and fed by night. They developed beautifully in their tender months receiving a great deal of individual care and attention, from Tedford and his wife Phyllis.

Eric Tedford transferred Flying Amy and Bounding Andy to the Ebenezer training establishment of his friend and greyhound trainer Ron Ball. The Tedford's and Ball's had met five years earlier through Merv Laffey but had never raced a dog together. Ball explains how the pups broke in, "Eric was originally going to sell them, but I convinced him to at least wait until they were broken in, that's how my wife Mavis became a part owner. We bought a half share at that particular stage. The pups were 11 months old when they arrived, I kept them for about a month, before sending them to Bevan Williamsons to be broken in. They had a normal breaking in period of four weeks, breaking in better than average. Williamsons had a cut off time of 21.50, Amy ran 21.10 with her brother about the same, but it was nothing startling. Some pups have broke in well under 21, running in the 20 and 80's. When I bring pups home, I give them a month off before I start their pre-race preparation. It consists of a lot of straight work, free galloping first, and then behind the lure, I then move on to the circle tracks. Flying Amy improved very rapidly, I could tell by the way she was coming up the straight, she was something special. She was very mature for her age, her first run over 288 at Ipswich she ran 16.95. In fact, she was so forward, we decided to start racing her. She was only 16 months old when she won her first start at Capalaba over 366 and she ran 20.88".



Flying Amy has an interesting story surrounding her name. It dates to the 1930's when a young Eric Tedford, was living in Toowoomba, he witnessed the arrival of the famous English aviator Amy Johnson. Johnson had flown from London to Australia in a single engine aircraft, arriving in Darwin in 1930. Tedford never forgot the day Johnson flew into Toowoomba and with a kennel name of Amy it was only natural to call the champ Flying Amy. It certainly turned out an apt name as some of the record-breaking times she recorded, we would have been forgiven for not thinking she was flying.

As with great champions, their race career is worth reading just in case we forget how outstanding they really were in their prime. Amy had 59 starts for 42 wins and 10 placings with a total prizemoney of \$355,205, an Australian record. She had three Group one wins in the 1995 Coca-Cola Cup and 1995 Eukanuba Cup as well as the National Sprint title at Sandown in 1995 winning in 30.08 from box five. She also won two Queensland Greyhound of Year awards, 1994 -1995 and two Gold Coast Cups 1994 -1995. Other victories included the Premier's Cup, the Toowoomba Cup, Queensland Futurity, Albion Park Puppy Classic, Albion Park Constellation, three State of Origin Titles, a Toowoomba Young Guns, the Dapto Shootout and a Sandown match race. Amy recorded sub 30-second times at Albion Park on no less than nine occasions and held the record at 29.73 over 520 metres. She also had the honour of having a bus and street named after her, along with a limited print of only 200 copies produced of a painting featuring the champ.

During her illustrious race career Ron Ball told me they had two substantial offers for Flying Amy, " We were offered \$50,000 from a Queensland owner after 10 starts. Then sometime later we knocked back \$100,000, which came from Sydney. We never considered selling her at any price, you would have no chance of ever getting another dog anywhere near as good, so we were not about to sell to anyone ".

Because of the way Amy raced it caused her to suffer several serious injuries. Among those injuries included two torn pin muscles, both needing operations performed by top veterinarian Graham Beh. She also suffered an injury to her front toe that needed an operation to remove the first joint. These injuries kept Flying Amy out for about two months at a time. She also had torn abdominal muscles that kept her off the scene for another lengthy break, she also suffered a number of niggling minor injuries throughout her career. On all occasions the champ returned to race as well as ever. Finally, a re-occurring injury took its toll, and ligament damage to a toe on her near right foot due to a compound fracture Amy had suffered in a heat of the '96 Adelaide Cup. This was to bring about her retirement in May of that year. The most unfortunate part regarding her injuries it did cost Flying Amy starts in races like the Coca-Cola Cup and a Top Gun. Amy's nature was to always try 100% whether that be a run up the straight at home or a major final, it made no difference to the Ebenezer speed machine.

I asked Ron Ball what performances he considered to be Flying Amy's best. " I think the first Gold Coast Cup win was one of her best, it was such a good field. You don't race against seven dogs as good as that and win too often. I reckon her win in the Premier's Cup at Wentworth Park was outstanding, as well as the win in the State of Origin series at the same track. Any Group one race is special so to win the Coke-Cola Cup and the Sprint Championship are hard to forget. We also got a big thrill from the match races at both Sandown and Dapto. The crowds where just fantastic those nights, it certainly was a great privilege to have raced a dog like Flying Amy ".

Some champions of the Flying Amy calibre never produce pups anywhere near what most people think they might. Not so in Amy's case, in her first litter of eight pups to Credibility, she produced a stunning fawn dog, by the name of Just The Best. He recorded fantastic times on a number of tracks and at one stage early on, he was hailed as being as good if not better, than his famous dam. Unfortunately, injury robbed us of enjoying a lot more of him racing. Owner-trainer Paul Felgate retired him to stud, and he proved an instant success. After only a few years he has become one of the most sought-after sires in the country. Just The Best has produced several Group winners and many outstanding dogs and is set to do so for some time to come, he is firmly established as one of the leading sires in Australia. His demand will have him in the record books along with Amy name in pedigrees of many brilliant greyhounds to race for a long period to come.

In total Amy produced 28 pups that were named from litters to as mentioned above Credibility January 1997, Light Of Fire in October 1998, Bobniak in September 2000, and a final to Awesome McLaren whelped May 2001. If fair to say other than the first litter she certainly hasn't produced another Just the Best but there have been handy race dogs.

We were saddened in early November 2001 to learn that the champion had passed away. Returning from Ipswich greyhounds on October 30th, that year Ron Ball found Flying Amy in a distressed state, rushing her to his local vet Dr. Alby Wellstead, she was found to have a twisted bowel and couldn't be saved, losing her life on the 31st at nine years of age.

"It was very sudden, as she had been in excellent health and as bright as a button. We have buried her at her favourite spot on the property. She loved digging and spending time in the same position under a particular tree, since she was a pup, so it had to be where we laid her to rest. I might be bit biased, but I think she was as good as any we have seen race, and it was a great privilege for us to be associated with such a wonderful greyhound", Ron Ball said.

Flying Amy will long be remembered as both a great champion and a real darling of her time, popular with greyhound fans right around our great nation. She takes her place as a worthy member of the AGRA Hall Of Fame.