

Media Release



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CHAMP ROCKETS INTO CUP FINAL WITH RECORD RUN

If anything was missing from Fernando Bale's resume at present to edge him closer to "champion" status it was a track record. From just 26 career starts before this evening the freakish sprinter had won 21 times, landed four group 1 victories. earned \$630,000 in stakes and is being touted as possibly the "best ever" - but no track record.

That changed at 8.22pm this evening when the superstar exploded out of the red alley from the 425m start at Bendigo and carved out breathtaking sections of 6.42 and 11.17 then careered away for an 8 1/2 length victory in a track record time of 23.386, lowering the previous mark held by another speed machine Black Magic Opal by 0.031 or just on half a length.

The air temperature of 6.5 degrees was ignored by many of the big crowd on hand who ventured out to catch a glimpse of greyhound racing royalty in the flesh and when the official track record time was posted on the semaphore board a roar could be heard by a section of the crowd who had their wishes of witnessing something special granted.

Fernando Bale will now head into next weeks \$47,000 to the winner Southern Cross Ten Bendigo Cup final as one of the shortest priced Cup finalists in recent memory after being put up as a \$1.20 favourite by TAB.com.au.

The white and brindle rocket will wear the white rug (box 3) as he shoots for an incredible 15th win in succession and with around 3 1/2 lengths between he and his nearest rival on times posted in the heats only bad luck can cost Fernando Bale another major trophy.

Despite Fernando Bale's dominance there are no certainties in greyhound racing and the exciting heats proved that with only two favourites saluting. The other heat favourite to score was the ever

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consistent Ronray Spirit who led throughout for a 23.720 victory to make yet another country Cup final. Ronray Spirit will be shooting for a \$50,000 bonus on Friday night, a bonus offered by GRV for any greyhound that can win three Victorian country Cups in a calendar year - having won the Warragul and Warrnambool Cups to date in 2015. The Terry Reid trained former NSW sprinter has been put on the third line of early betting (\$9.50) for the final after drawing box eight.

Second fastest qualifier Shared Equity, who posted 23.604, will line up in her second country Cup final after making the Horsham Cup final a few weeks ago and is the second favourite at \$7.50 in early markets. The Angela Langton - Jeff Britton team will rug up two runners in the final, Shared Equity and Mepunga Armagh while Kel Greenough will be represented by two finalists in the speedy Billo's Pick and Breathing Fire. Billo's Pick has drawn inside Fernando Bale in box two and has the speed to make the favourite work hard should Fernando Bale make any mistakes at box rise.

Other heat winners were NSW visitor Paua To Roar for trainer Anthony Azzopardi and Blake Shillington's Fearless John.

The Group 2 Southern Cross Ten Bendigo Cup will be supported by the \$10,000 to the winner Diamond Vision Photography Winter Cup for the stayers over 660m, VBIS Maiden final of \$7,500 to the winner, the Ready To Race Mid Year Series (1st \$7,000) and the Railway Station Hotel Super Gobis final over 500m.

