



NEW SOUTH WALES HARNESS RACING CLUB LTD.

MEDIA RELEASE

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SECOND COMING TO NEWCASTLE

Kiwi reinsman David Butcher has been in enough Interdominions to know one race doesn't make a championship.

Even when that one race dents your confidence and that of an army of punters.

Butcher finished second in two heats of the Watpac ID10 at Harold Park last Friday but the placings could hardly have been received differently.

Our Awesome Armbro's second to Blacks A Fake was treated like a win because it propels him most of the way into Sunday week's \$1million final.

But while Changeover earned the same amount of points by finishing second to Atomic Ark in the opening heat, his performance was rated a disaster by some.

The \$2.2million earner led and was run down by the Queensland outsider, seeing Changeover's odds for the final balloon out to \$9 with some bookmakers.

But Butcher, who has not only won an Interdominion Final but finished 2nd, 4th, and 5th in a final, says he is not overly concerned.

"Sure, winning would have been better but I don't think people realise how hard he pulled during the race," he explains.

"Because I am not the sort of driver who leans out the back of the cart when they pull people can't tell but he was really getting into it, so much so I had to take another grip on the reins at the bell.

"He can do that when he is fresh and he had only had one easy race for a win in the last five weeks before last Friday.

"And I probably didn't help it by going off the gate so hard at the start. I just didn't want to get back on the small track."

Butcher thinks Changeover will strip fitter and more relaxed at Newcastle on Saturday night where he has the widest draw of the seven Kiwis in the series.

"On the bigger track it shouldn't matter so much and I think I will be able to drive him quieter early."

As for the final?

"A lot can change in 12 days and our first job is to make it there.

"But if he does he can still win it because the draws and where they settle in the final will be crucial."

Butcher would, of course, have the option of switching to Changeover's stablemate Our Awesome Armbro should he look

the better chance in the final, which he is almost assured of making after drawing the ace for his heat on Saturday night.

But that would cause some family friction, as Our Awesome Armbro's regular back-up driver is David's brother, Philip, who looks certain to take the reins at Tabcorp Park, Menangle, on Sunday week.

"He was very good on the first night and had I got more room in the straight I think he would have pushed Blacks A Fake closer," says Butcher.

"At this stage I am optimistic they should both make the final."

With fellow Kiwi pacers Monkey King, Bondy and Baileys Dream all recording huge performances last Friday night there is great confidence in New Zealand the Interdominion title won by Mr Feelgood last season can be defended.

But Butcher is not quite so parochial.

"Our horses are going well but a lot will depend on the barrier draws.

"These horses will be very fit by the time they get to the final and even on the big track the horses up front won't be stopping.

"But it should be a great race."



Newcastle - Saturday 27th February
Tabcorp Park Menangle - Sunday 7th March



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