



Champs: Smooth Satin and his champion trainer-driver Steve Turnbull. Picture: THE WESTERN ADVOCATE

Neighbours foil \$2m horse kidnap attempt

By ADAM HAMILTON

A BRAZEN attempt to steal champion pacer Smooth Satin is being investigated by police.

Two men were disturbed trying to load the \$2 million gelding on to a float on Tuesday night.

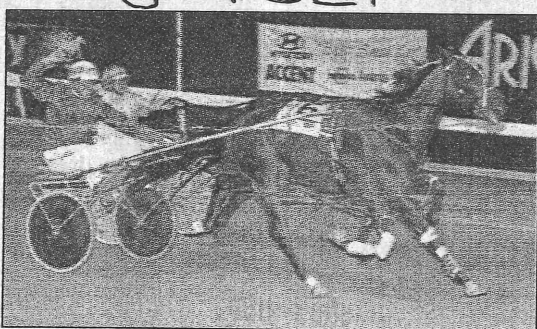
They panicked and left him tied to a fence about 100m from his stall.

Smooth Satin is Australia's most valuable pacer after winning harness racing's two top events — the InterDominion and Miracle Mile.

He was recently crowned Australasian Grand Circuit champion and, at six years, is at his peak with up to three more years at the top.

The attempted theft happened at trainer Steve Turnbull's stables outside Bathurst.

Turnbull's wife, Jenny, said the would-be thieves must have been preparing to demand a



Another win: Smooth Satin at Harold Park.

ransom. "He's worthless to anybody else because they can't race him and they can't breed from him," she said.

"That's the worst part of it, the motive has to be money. Thankfully the horse is fine, there's not a mark on him.

"But we're devastated somebody would try to do something like this. It's so scary.

"It's not a matter of

the money he's worth to us — it's the fact he's the horse we've always dreamed of having.

"He's a family pet to everybody here."

The incident recalled the famous kidnap at gunpoint of Irish stallion Shergar in 1983 in what was rumoured to be a botched IRA operation.

Shergar, valued at tens of millions as a stud prospect, was never found.

Smooth Satin has already won \$1,053,666 in prizemoney with 31 wins and 15 placings from 52 race starts.

The theft was foiled when Cath Hewitt, who lives less than 100m from Smooth Satin's stall, heard a noise just before 8.30pm and went outside to investigate.

She saw two people walking a horse towards a trailer.

"Cath called out and one of the guys said he was Craig (Turnbull), who's my brother-in-law," Mrs Turnbull said.

"Bernie (Cath's husband) ran up the driveway just as the guys were driving off. He found Smooth Satin tied to a fence about 100m from his stall."

Det-Sgt Laura Thurtell, of Bathurst police, said a trailer found about 10km from the Turnbull stables was being examined forensically.