

SPORT

Old Hughie: Race honours a trotting legend

BACK in 1980 a group of trotting enthusiasts got together to form the Victorian Square Trotters Association as a way of raising the profile of the ugly ducklings of the industry, the "square-gaiters". Pacing was all the rage, and while not moribund, trots racing was lucky to get a couple of events at any meeting.

Bridgewater's Hugh Redwood was elected VSTA president after the Maryborough meeting, and the group worked on ways to make trotting better known and more popular.

Inglewood trotting trainer Trevor Ralph joined as treasurer and then secretary in 1982, back when he had an impressive dark head of hair and trotters "were considered distant second cousins" to pacing horses.

The association had yet to decide how best to breathe life into trotting.

"It was stagnant," Ralph said. "A lot in the industry didn't like trotters – they galloped, they were headstrong, they were unreliable."

Eventually, it was decided to create a feature race for trotters as part of a race day only for square-gaiters. The template was an American race called the Hambletonian Stakes, a major event for three-year-old trotting horses named after a 19th-century stallion known as "the father of the American trotter".

The VSTA decided to establish a classic event for two-year-old trotters. But what to call it?

Hugh Redwood was gravely ill and in Inglewood Hospital, having handed over the presidency to Dick Lee. "I had the privilege of going up to the hospital to tell Hughie we were naming it after him," Ralph said. "We had a meeting on the Sunday and on Monday the committee said you can go and tell him. Old Hughie was that thrilled, he was in tears."

The first Redwood, with prize-

money of \$3500, was held at Maryborough Harness Racing Club in 1986, shortly after Hugh's death.

On Sunday, the latest edition will be run, with trotters racing for \$75,000 in stakes in the group one event.

The day is a feast for square-gaiter fans, with 10 events to be run, all for trotters, including the Victorian Trotters Derby, also with \$75,000 prizemoney.

Ralph said the Redwood, run over 2200 metres from a standing start, now had legendary status among trots trainers.

Three-year-olds had the Derby, and there were many feature races for four-year-old trotters.

"We thought it would be a point of difference, as there were only a few races for two-year-olds," Ralph said.

"We hoped they would then grow into Inter-Dominion horses. It was something we could hang our hats on."

The first Redwood was taken out by Young Trouper. Ralph reckons the best horse to have won the race was Wagon Apollo in 1993, which went on to run second in an Inter-Dominion.

The Redwood is now a carnival over three days, with races on Friday, a dinner dance on Saturday, and the main event on Sunday. From the days of struggling to get a single trotting event on a race card, by 2002 the Maryborough meeting had two full days of square-gaiters on the track – eight races on Friday and 10 on Sunday.

Ralph, now 72, spent 13 years as secretary-treasurer of the VSTA, all the while trying to get hold of a potential Redwood winner himself. "For people with trotters, I would say, the Redwood is their first choice. It's got history, prestige – people just want to win it."

Ralph has never had a runner in the Redwood. He has hopes with a yearling next year.



Trevor Ralph holds a photograph of Dick Lee and himself with the famous Redwood trophy. LH PHOTO

Six in the wickets for Boort juniors

BOORT Yando comfortably defeated Wedderburn Band in their junior cricket clash on Saturday, with Wedderburn struggling to 9-35 off 25.3 overs chasing 92 for victory.

Six Boort bowlers took wickets, with Owen Byrne claiming 2-3 off three overs, and Tristen Zanker 2-4 off two.

Opener Beau Hartnell, who backed up in the seniors later, was Wedderburn's best with 14 off 42 balls.

The Band's struggle with the bat was highlighted by Eli Clarke, who faced 23 balls without scoring before being bowled.

For Boort, three of the top four batsmen retired not out, with opener Owen Byrne making 23, Cooper Gooding 13 and Jacob Malone 16.

Zane Polkinghorne took 2-11 off three overs for Wedderburn.

BRIDGEWATER Bulls' 4-83 off 30 overs wasn't enough to hold on against a strong Kingower

team, which made 5-110 in response.

Opener Lewis Lonsdale followed up his 50 retired not out last week with 33 retired not out for the Bulls, but only Nate Harrison (13 not out) was also able to make it into double figures.

Ten Kingower juniors had a bowl, with four taking a wicket each. Matilda Rose took 1-1 from her single over, clean bowling Isaac Ferguson.

Kingower openers Tyler Murphy (33 retired not out) and Morgan Lonza (29) put on 89 to pass the Bulls' total without loss.

Emma Kilby took two of the four wickets to fall to bowlers, finishing with 2-3 off two overs.

Boort Yando v Wedderburn	
Boort Yando	
O. Byrne retired not out	23
S. McClelland b A. Thomas	0
C. Gooding retired not out	13
J. Malone retired not out	16
B. McPherson c&b B. Cramp	1
L. Boyd c B. Hartnell b Z. Polkinghorne	6
T. Zanker b K. Cramp	0

D. King retired not out	3
C. Hird c B. Hartnell b Z. Polkinghorne	0
F. Arnold not out	6
L. King not out	1
Extras	22
Total	5/91
Bowling: B. Hartnell 6-4-10-0, A. Thomas 5-1-24-1, Fill-in 5-0-12-0, B. Cramp 5-0-17-1, K. Cramp 3-0-10-1, Z. Polkinghorne 3-0-11-2.	

Wedderburn	
B. Hartnell c S. McClelland b T. Zanker	14
A. Thomas b D. King	2
Fill-in lbw F. Arnold	6
Fill-in c F. Arnold b T. Zanker	3
K. Cramp c C. Gooding b S. McClelland	4
B. Cramp b O. Byrne	0
E. Clarke b B. McPherson	0
Z. Polkinghorne run out T. Zanker	0
J. Cramp c L. King b O. Byrne	0
Fill-in not out	0
Extras	6
Total	9/35
Bowling: L. Boyd 2-0-3-0, C. Hird 4-3-2-0, D. King 2-0-3-1, J. Malone 2-0-8-0, F. Arnold 2-0-4-1, L. King 4-2-3-0, T. Zanker 2-1-4-2, B. McPherson 2-3-2-0-1, S. McClelland 2-0-4-1, O. Byrne 3-2-3-2.	

Kingower v Bridgewater	
Bridgewater	
L. Lonsdale retired not out	33
C. Alexander b T. Murphy	2
N. Harrison not out	13

N. Wickham c T. Murphy b H. Leach	0
X. Power retired not out	4
I. Ferguson b M. Rose	0
H. Kilby retired not out	2
J. Birthisel not out	2
E. Kilby b F. Lonza	0
G. Kilby not out	0
Extras	27
Total	4/83
Bowling: T. Murphy 6-0-15-1, R. Leach 4-0-9-0, X. Wilson 5-0-10-0, M. Lonza 4-0-7-0, J. Penrose 2-0-13-0, F. Lonza 3-0-11-1, H. Leach 3-0-7-1, M. Rose 1-0-1-1, A. Wilson 1-0-2-0, E. Wilson 1-0-3-0.	

Kingower	
T. Murphy retired not out	33
M. Lonza c N. Wickham b J. Birthisel	29
R. Leach retired not out	2
X. Wilson retired not out	5
J. Penrose b J. Birthisel	0
F. Lonza retired not out	2
H. Leach retired not out	2
M. Rose c I. Ferguson b E. Kilby	2
R. Murphy c C. Alexander b E. Kilby	0
T. Schodde run out H. Kilby	0
E. Wilson not out	0
Extras	35
Total	5/110
Bowling: C. Alexander 5-0-32-0, L. Lonsdale 4-0-18-0, N. Harrison 3-0-8-0, X. Power 3-0-5-0, I. Ferguson 2-0-11-0, N. Wickham 2-0-1-0, J. Birthisel 2-0-0-2, H. Kilby 2-0-7-0, V. Harrison 3-0-5-0, G. Kilby 1-2-0-6-0, E. Kilby 2-0-3-2.	

IN BRIEF

■ PERFECT weather greeted players on Tarnagulla Golf Club's final day for the season.

The longest drive prize was taken out by former women's club champion Faye Newlan.

Nearest the pin was a close-run thing, with Peter Sander-son winning the prize by a mere five centimetres.

The overall women's winner on the day was Faye Newlan, with Robyn Ravenhall finishing as runner up.

In the men's competition, club stalwart Dave Shay won by a single stroke. In second, by a count back, was junior player Jeremy Cassar. Close behind in third was Leo McCartin.

■ PYRAMID Hill and District Lawn Tennis Club is gearing up for its annual junior doubles tournament.

The matches will be played on November 10, with all juniors welcome.