

Long wait for Group 1 over for the Doctor



NSW News

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AFTER three years of building their empire, owners Mark and Nicola England finally received the ultimate reward last month when Nulkaba Lass won the National Futurity.

With a passion to race their own greyhounds it was an ambition of Mark's to become one of the country's leading owners.

His business mind and sporting heart were a combination that made it work.

Venturing into a new industry at the turn of the century made it difficult for England to establish his ideas. He not only needed the dogs but property, staff and trainers, all of which were to come through contact and advice.

As he purchased his racing stock, it was where he met trainers Andy Lord and partner Jodie Gilbert. The first year was a learning experience.

To travel to country tracks like Goulburn and watch maidens win, was satisfaction. And the purse strings opened even more.

Mark was determined to also breed and numbers started to grow



Nicola and Mark England

rapidly.

The workload for Nicola also became demanding with a three year old and another baby on the way, the administration side of their business was also increasing to the extent where a manager was needed.

During the 2003 season, Mark was learning quickly about the industry in NSW and the people involved in it. His desire to go to the track with the family became unbearable after some incidents which had him wondering if it was worth proceeding any further.

His job with Auto Group Auctions had him travelling interstate frequently and the long hours meant

he sometimes had no idea where the dogs were racing and the results that were coming.

Soon after, Mark had enjoyed a Group 3 success with Addict's Actor at Wentworth Park but speculation started to surface about his relationship with Lord.

Reports of splits were filtering around the tracks. England stopped his sponsorship of Carnet which added fuel to the fire.

His goal to set up a greyhound empire in two states was becoming more of a burden, to the extent he stayed away from the tracks.

When he appointed Mick Hooper as his racing manager it allowed Mark and Nicola to break away from the stress of the past year.

Their daughter arrived and Mark was able to work towards his initial plans.

The winners flowed, doubles at Wenty, feature races wins, he was starting to enjoy it again. But last month was the moment he had waited for. It wasn't his first Group 1 starter, but it was his first Group 1 winner.

Waiting to strike along the back,

chasing leader Knockabout Wilma, Nulkaba Lass closed in on the turn but she had a fight on her hands as the Victorian refused to sit down. Nulkaba Lass drove to the line a narrow winner of the Futurity. England had organised a special function on track that night for his owners, partners and friends and how timely the result. His voice almost gone at the presentation, he looked a very relieved man. His speech dispelled the rumours about he and trainer Lord. The harmony between owner and trainer was obvious. This is a man who owns probably the largest property in Australia, at

Sale in Victoria, and also has a major property at Bringelly in Sydney from where Lord trains. England has a staggering 720 dogs including around 100 broodbitches. Lord has won the Sydney trainer's premiership the past two years and is headed for his third, all due to the input of England. No one could deny Mark his moment of glory. It has been a long hard battle, running through obstacles he didn't realise would be there. It has been patience, self control, good advice and the desire to see the Doctor's Kennels empire make its mark.

England was a major loss to this industry in NSW when he resigned from the board of GRNSW. His behind-the-scenes work earned him respect from many who know him. A keen AFL follower and a good cricketer which is where the now famous "DR" name came from, England is not concerned about the money. He just wants to enjoy his dogs with his family and gain satisfaction from the work already put in.