



NSW News

Gary Clark

LOVE and commitment have seen two young trainers capture the potential of one promising young chaser after disaster struck last year.

Wesley McDonald and Kylie Isbister are to be married on Valentine's day (February 14) after meeting a few years ago on their home track at Cowra.

The couple, both 24, have different career backgrounds but have family interests in the sport. Wesley was on racetracks from the time he opened his eyes, both his grandfather and uncle are bookmakers. Kylie was introduced to greyhound racing through her new family members.

For Kylie romance in the family has taken a few different turns. Her mum has re-married and settled on a property at Cowra with about 60 dogs.

Kylie gained her first dog Princess Honcho, from her ex-boyfriend and, like mum, second time around has proved fruitful.

A vet nurse in Orange, Kylie hopes to one day have her own practice but it is her knowledge in this field that has played a major part in the success of the couple's latest success.

Princess Honcho won 11 races including two at Penrith in slick times before producing a litter to Awesome Assassin of six pups. The star is Awesome Partner which seems appropriately named. He has now won eight races from 13 starts but his career looked finish after a heavy fall at Wentworth Park in June last year.

Sustaining injuries to both shoulders, the bad luck was to follow. A month later the dog got glass in his foot and after surgery had a further 10 weeks on the sidelines.

The only form of exercise was swimming and it was six months of care, determination and patience that saw the dog return at Cowra in December, finishing third in a hot country field.

Since then he has had four starts and his opposition has struggled to stay with him.

Victory at Cowra and Richmond by 10 lengths saw him make his return to the track that started the long term setback.

Awesome Partner held little fear for the city circuit in an impressive three lengths win followed with another brilliant 30.22 victory the following week.

He is just a few weeks short of being eligible for the National Derby but the way he is progressing the Golden Easter Egg could well be his next mission, a race that Wesley says is the ultimate.

"If I had a choice at just one special moment in greyhound racing, winning the Easter Egg would be it," he said.

Prior to his fall, Awesome Partner broke the Cowra track record before winning a feature \$3000 final at the track, the biggest thrill so far for the couple. According to Wesley, a greenkeeper by trade, the drama

of last year has been a blessing in disguise. "He (Awesome Partner) is a far better dog this time in, maybe the two injuries that forced him away from the track has worked wonders."

It all started for Wesley when his brother gave him a greyhound, named Irinka Bob, as a gift and it resulted in his first winner. He



can't remember his actual first dog but you can never forget your first winner.

The couple, who have been together for the past two years and sharing the racing experience, are just days away from walking down their own home straight to receiving their gold rings of commitment.

Young they may be, country bred they are, one thing is for sure, Awesome Partner will have a night off on February 14.