

National titles target for two sides of Rolph family



Peter, Hassell and Steve Rolph with Albion Park distance star Buzzarana.

By
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EVERY time a Hassell Rolph trained greyhound skips around Albion Park on the way to another victory, there's a back-up crew there to lead the cheering. It's the same in the fight ring. While the Rolph camp is having a great trot with middle distance star Buzzarana, it is also on fire in the fight ring with Hassell's son Peter recently retaining his Queensland middleweight title. But then sporting endeavour in the Rolph household has been taken for granted for many years. Hassell and his two sons, Steve and Peter, have been sports mad, and successful at it. Hassell was a Norths rugby league junior who rose to A Grade playing halfback from 1964-73. He made one appearance for the Brisbane side during that time, and still plays touch footy. Peter and Steve both played soccer

and joined Little Athletics as youngsters, and even today play in the same touch footy team. Steve played halfback and fullback at Brothers, made a Brisbane school side and played Colts for Valleys until knee problems forced him out of the game. He is even now contemplating a return to the game in a league out at Samford. But, apart from Buzzarana, Peter is the champ of the Rolph camp. He was 16 when he headed off to the PCYC at Everton Hills and linked up with former Australian champion Paul Moore. "I was playing halfback for West Arana Leagues Club and to keep fit I decided to go to the gym and take up boxing," said Peter. Nine months later he had his first fight, a state schoolboys bout which he lost. Dad wasn't impressed. "I thought he could have one fight to get it out of his system, and then when he lost that first fight, I thought it might be best to let him have another one so he could win one," said Hassell. But at Peter's second fight he won the state junior Golden Gloves title. Paul Moore had that much confidence in a youthful Peter Rolph. "I couldn't stop there," said Peter. Moore left to head to Sydney soon after and asked Peter to go south with him to continue a fight career. Peter wasn't keen. So dad became his trainer. "I had only ever lost one fight in my boxing career," said Hassell. "But I only ever had one fight, when I was 17. It was at the Redcliffe Showgrounds. Anyone

who gets into a boxing ring is tough." Hassell put his league and then greyhound training experiences into practice training his son for his fight career. "It's like greyhounds, training is a lot of commonsense, although we do a few little things differently to some and those things seem to work," said Hassell.



Buzzarana shows no fear of state middleweight champ Peter Rolph.

Peter is keen to take on Sakio Beka, the present Australian middleweight champ for his title, but is also considering dropping in weight to junior middleweight to take on Daniel Dawson from Perth who is Australian champ in that division. And he has even sparred with golden boy Anthony Mundine and is a devout fan. "If I had to pick someone in a Mundine v Danny Green bout, I would go with mundane. He'll be too quick," said Peter.

“The Anthony Mundine I know is completely different to the Anthony Mundine the public sees.” Peter Rolph, 28, also has a greyhound handler’s license. “I even did a bit of work experience when I was at school at Tony and Maree Zammit’s kennels,” he said. “It was a great week.”

It was Steve, 29, who actually talked his father into a return to greyhounds.

Hassell had been given a greyhound back in 1984 by a workmate Terry Hayes at Queensland Transport.

“Terry had a dog called mount Malleray who had won five and then broke down. He bred a litter out of Spirit Of Chance to his dog and gave us a pup,” said Hassell.

“We got him home at six weeks and knew nothing about training dogs. Jack McDonald, the lure driver at the Gabba then and now at Albion Park, was a great help giving us all the basics.

“We talked to everyone at that time and from this formed our own training program.

That dog, which we called Moo Man, had the run of the house to the stage where he would even push my wife Pat off the lounge.” Moo Man won seven races.

The Rolphs couldn’t understand the dog’s weight variations during that time. Hassell’s daughter Kellie solved that when she owned up just a couple of years ago that she

would often slip Moo Man biscuits between meals.

“We would always stress out about his weight,” said Hassell. During Steve’s stint in the Brisbane school side he met up with Chris Essex, son of trainer Robert Essex. It was Steve who convinced his dad he was due to get back into greyhounds.

Big Fella Fred won first up at Capalaba and the boys once again thought it was too easy. Hassell approached Merv Miller to buy ready-made racing dogs soon after. Duke Of Hampton won 13 races, including six of his first nine, Joe Dundee was a city winner, and Home Invader was a winner before dropping a back muscle.

And then along came Fiery Tramp (Acacia Ablaze-Rambling Rose) who was an outstanding galloper winning 26 races, 12 at Albion Park and runner-up to Roanokee in an Ipswich Cup final.

“We got him from Helen and Keith Mills and he won in 31.02 around Albion Park and won from 366m to 630m,” said Hassell.

Like Me Mum was another smart galloper who won 11 for the kennel and is still racing in Bundaberg.

Buzzarana is the best since Fiery Tramp and a potential star stayer.

“We got him from Merv Miller,

broken in at 16 months but it wasn’t until we put him around on sand tracks that he showed his real potential,” said Steve.

Buzzarana, to time of writing, has won 16 races from 42 starts and from 15 runs over 600m or more has won nine times.

The boys have since bought an Awesome Assassin-Lovely Portrait bitch, from the next litter to Group 1 winner Dance Portrait (by Bobniak).

“Yes, you can say we are very happy with the way things have gone,” said Hassell.

Buzzarana is being set for the National Distance series, and Peter is chasing a national title himself.

“There’s no doubt I can win,” said Peter. Or was that Steve, or was it Hassell, who said that?

	Malawi
	Malawi's Prince
	Duchess Marina
Token Prince	Amerigo Man
	True Temptation
	Bay Supreme
BUZZARANA	West Cape
	Toss The Teddy
	Flag The Fawn
Pallara Princess	Hopeful Supreme
	Chasseresse
	Dance Frenzy