

# *Raffle pup a nightmare, then a star*

---

## *Flashback*

*Back in the late 70s Ipswich railway shunter Brian Holliday went to Capalaba for a day out. He came home with a greyhound pup and started the ride of a lifetime ... with a hiccup or two along the way.*

*Journal Editor DAVID BRASCH talks to Brian about Megsieloo.*

---

## **The Megsieloo Story**

**DURING** the cold days of winter in Ipswich, Brian Holliday's leg often starts to hurt ... and he immediately thinks of Megsieloo.

Megsieloo and Brian road a roller coaster to success back in the late 70s and early 80s, success that was virtually thrust upon both of them.

"I went along to the dogs at Capalaba," said Brian, now 48. "It was the first time I had ever been to a greyhound race meeting. It was the opening day of the new track at Capalaba and I went along with a friend."



*Brian Holliday accepts his raffle prize, a six month old pup by Mister Oollee- Kabisa Gem.*

During the day, a raffle was run. Take your pick, a colour TV or a greyhound pup, then six months old by Mister Oollee-Kabisa Gem. Both sire and dam had been Queensland greyhounds of the year.

Breeder Alan Beetson had donated the pup to charity. "I'd picked a couple of winners on the day, so I bought a few tickets in the raffle for \$1 each," Brian told The Journal. "And the first ticket I bought won. I picked the pup and took him home that day." It was Megsieloo.

"The next week I was going to Cairns on holiday so I sent the pup to Jimmy Downey on the Gold Coast who was to rear him for me," said Brian who at the time had no intention of training the pup himself. Jimmy reared Megsieloo and gave him his first start, a fifth at Casino on September 30, 1978.

"Jimmy had just bought a butcher shop and told me he would not be able to train the dog for me, so I started training him myself," said Brian.

Megsieloo then finished third at Capalaba for Brian and fell in a qualifying at Beenleigh after that.

It was at his next start, on January 20, 1979 that was to prove a fateful day for man and beast ... Megsieloo was to win a Maiden at Tweed Heads and Brian's life was about to change in a big way.



*Brian and Megsieloo.*

While Megsieloo was charging away from his maiden rivals to win by three lengths, Brian was in the catching pen, hoping up and down to get a good view of his first winner as a trainer. "I didn't realise the lure was coming," he said. With every hop, he was getting closer and closer to the running rail.



*Megsieloo strides away to win his Maiden at Tweed Heads in January 1979. His owner-trainer Brian Holliday is seconds away from being hit by the lure speeding past the catching pen.*

The lure smashed into Brian's left leg shattering it. "I don't remember much about it," he said. "In fact, I only remember the dogs coming around the home turn."

Brian was rushed to the Tweed Heads Hospital, but was then transferred to Ipswich Hospital on his mum Isabel's advice so he would be close to home while recovering.

"I don't even remember being taken to hospital at Tweed Heads."

He was off work from that fateful January 20, until July.

Friends rallied around.

"Some friends who had come to the Tweed with us that day took my car home, and Graham Hooper who lived just a few houses away from us at the time, took over training Megsieloo," said Brian.

Peter Striboss even had him for a few starts and a couple of wins.

"Once I was back on my feet, I got him back home and started training him again."

Megsieloo repaid Brian Holliday for that day's anguish with 18 wins, 10 seconds and seven thirds from 67 starts.

In all he won \$8016 in stakes, which included \$2000 for his all-the-way victory in the 1980 Queensland Cup.

He also won four races at the Gabba, an Anniversary Stake at the Gold Coast, finished second to Doc McDuff in the Skippa Trophy at the Gold Coast and third to Camaieu in the Gold Coast Cup.

The Queensland Cup, so long part of greyhound racing history in this state, was his crowning glory.

Megsieloo downed Red Leonard and Mister Malcolm scoring by six lengths in the 539m final in 31.60, just .09 outside the track record.

Such stars as Olympic Annie, Wings Of Steel and

Brendan John were unplaced.

"The cup win was such a big thrill for me and my family," said Brian who was presented with his trophy by Llew Edwards, then Deputy Premier.

"I retired him and put him to stud where he got a couple of bitches, and some of them won half a dozen races each," said Brian.

Megsieloo lived until he was 13 years old.

Since those heady days, Brian has kept his kennel to only a couple of dogs at a time and he has kept up his search for another Megsieloo.

Little Fifi, which he trained for Bill Moawad and was a litter sister to Pretty Wanderer, was a handy performer including a win over her illustrious littermate at Ipswich.

Megsa Folly made the Ipswich Auction final.

At the moment he has a couple of retired dogs at home as company for Megshape (Shape Shifter-Tammy Tambosity) a winner of just one race.

"I'm taking it a bit easy having only the one dog," he said. "I still enjoy it.

"When my first dog was so good I thought this was an easy game.

"I soon came down to earth."

And Brian has still got the scars to prove that.



*Brian is still training today. He has won with Megshape, the only dog he has in work.*