

**Media Release**

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**Cran's crazy run set to continue**

We are not yet two months into the new season and West Melton trainer Cran Dalgety has already saddled up 17 winners. Following on from his personal best 113 wins last season, Dalgety's team is out of the blocks early and flying.

And to give you some idea of the potential strength of the stable one only needs to look to the number of three-year-olds Dalgety has registered on his books with HRNZ – a whopping 37!

While many might see Mark Purdon as having the top end sealed up, the numbers and overall strength of the Dalgety team has put him in a position to challenge Purdon on all fronts this season.

As well as a huge amount of young, emerging stock Dalgety will welcome back others to the fray. Raging Bull is poised to return from injury this week at Addington. Smart five-year-old Matt Maguire is building up to resumption also and the horse with nearly 500 owners, Franco Harrison, is less than a month from an eagerly awaited race track return.

HRNZ caught up with Cran Dalgety to discuss his rollicking start and prospects for the remainder of the season.

"Well, they say you're only as good as your last game. That is the approach we're adopting. We're striving to be better and improve each season. If we go into cruise mode we'd end up chewing on the dust of others."

There's a chance Dalgety can tackle Mark Purdon for premiership honours and shift the balance of power in Canterbury harness racing this year. Amongst the quality team an arsenal of 37 three-year-olds could be dynamic.

"I'm confident we'll go good and have lots of winners. It's great just to be up there competing with Mark (Purdon) but to be realistic it will be tough to compete with him all season long."

It's not the first time Dalgety has battled it out with Mark Purdon though. The pair used to battle for a seat in the smoko hut at Roy and Barry Purdon's back in the eighties. Dalgety was amongst elite alumni that worked for the Purdon juggernaut back when Comedy Lad, Luxury Liner and Christopher Vance ruled the roost. The likes of Brent Mangos, Derek Balle, Todd MacFarlane, Phil Jeffries, Tony Barron, Paul Ellis, Rocky Haddon and of course Tony Herlihy helped add the polish to one of the all-time great harness racing teams.

Since those days and stepping out on his own in 1992 Dalgety has racked up 795 training wins in New Zealand and one would suggest the magical milestone of 1000 will be knocked off within two years from now.

Dalgety's tremendous resources aren't restricted to established horses either. Some 27 two-year-olds are being developed by David Moore in the 'two-year-old barn'. A strike force that will no doubt develop into a formidable one once the juvenile racing season kicks off around Christmas.

On the flipside stable star Smiling Shard was a notable omission from the NZ Cup nominations but Dalgety is upbeat about his long-term prospects.

"He's had a troublesome ankle and he's done plenty of swimming. With the Cup gone the pressure's off and he seems okay but we know he'll need to be 100% to compete at that top level again. "

One of the most promising horses in the stable is Raging Bull. He returns to racing at Addington this Friday night and Dalgety is suitably excited.

"He's ready to go. We would have preferred a mobile first-up but he's flying and is a bit of x-factor. He missed the bulk of last season with an ankle problem too and a wee quarter crack issue on the way back. These days he's a replica of his old man (Christian Cullen) and we're looking forward to Friday night."

Andrew Morris