

THE STAR CHAMPIONSHIPS

ALL SET TO ROLL OUT

THEY'RE ABOUT TO FLY FROM THE BARRIERS IN THIS YEAR'S GRAND FINALS OF AUSTRALIAN RACING – THE STAR CHAMPIONSHIPS AT ROYAL RANDWICK

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More than \$25 million in prizemoney will be offered during the 12th edition of The Star Championships commencing on Saturday 5 April.

The Championships condenses two of the world's great racedays in Sydney and with TAB markets in full swing, we look at some of the top fancies for the dozen Championships races:

DAY 1 GRAND FINAL SATURDAY 5 APRIL

\$4M THE STAR DONCASTER MILE (1600m)

It will be an open The Star Doncaster Mile this year with TAB installing **Gringotts** and

Linebacker the \$6 equal favourites after they had won the Group 1-George Ryder Stakes and Gr 1-Randwick Guineas respectively. Next in the market for this time-honoured event is talented Victorian galloper **Another Wil** (\$8) followed by a clump of top-notch gallopers on \$11 – **Ceolwulf**, **Moira**, **Swiftfalcon** and **Tom Kitten**. Popular mare **Fangirl** is next in the betting at \$15 along with **Lindermann** and **Royal Patronage**.

\$3M ASAHI SUPER DRY TJ SMITH STAKES (1200m)

Dashing sprinter **Joliestar** (\$3.50) heads the TJ Smith market and the mare seems like she's

been around for longer than just 12 starts where she has recorded five wins and five placings. The unbeaten **Private Harry** (\$4.50) keeps rising to the occasion and is now five from five after easily winning the Gr 1-Galaxy. Next in line is the exciting grey **Briasa** along with honest mare **Sunshine in Paris** who are both rated \$6 chances.

\$2M AUSTRALIAN DERBY (2400m)

Kiwi galloper **Willydoit** leads the Australian Derby charge at \$3.50 after he was impressive powering away with the New Zealand Derby. **Aeliana** was beaten a lip by **Broadsiding** in



(L-R): In an epic finish, Gringotts (Tommy Berry) holds off Ceolwulf (Chad Schofield-3rd) and Fangirl (James McDonald-2nd) in the George Ryder Stakes at Rosehill Gardens



Queen Elizabeth favourite Via Sistina and her admirers after winning the Ranvet Stakes at Rosehill

the Gr 1-Rosehill Guineas and she shares the second line of betting at \$6 with **Shanwah** who won his fourth successive race in the Gr 2-Alister Clark Stakes at Moonee Valley. Another Kiwi **The doctor of flove** (\$8) was second to Willydoit in the Derby and is likely to make the trip over the ditch.

\$1M INGLIS SIRE'S' (1400m)

The Kris Lees-trained **Rivellino**, who finished fourth in the Golden Slipper behind Marhoona, is a \$4.50 equal favourite with **Wodeton** who was runner-up and arguably should have won the race after having a chequered passage down the straight. State Visit (\$6) has only raced twice but flew home when placed behind Skyhook in the Gr 3-Pago Pago Stakes. Next in the market is Victorian **Vinrock** at \$8 who has won his only two outings including a last start win in the Gr 2-VRC Sires' Produce at Flemington.

\$1M EVERGREEN TURF COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS FINAL (1400m)

The \$3.50 favourite is **Gallant Star** (in from \$6) who deserves his place on top of the market having been runner-up in the race last year. The gelding showed he may even be better this time around with a sizzling win in the Western Championships at Coonamble. That was after resuming, having previously won the Barn Dance

at Randwick in November by five lengths. **Know Thyself** (\$4.50) arrogantly won the Northern Wildcard at Scone. The gelding has always promised plenty and is now ready to deliver. The Matthew Dunn-trained pair of **Fukubana** (\$6) and **Tribeca Star** (\$7) are next in the market.

DAY 2 GRAND FINAL SATURDAY 12 APRIL

\$5M QUEEN ELIZABETH STAKES (2000m)

Chris Waller's **Via Sistina** has recorded 12 wins and seven placings from 23 starts and is now rated one of the world's best gallopers so she justifies her short \$1.75 quote. **Ceolwulf** (\$6) stepped up last campaign with victories in the Gr 1-Epsom and Gr 1-King Charles Stakes. He was narrowly beaten at his third run back in the George Ryder and looms as the logical danger. **Dubai Honour** (\$8) won this race in 2023 and seems to be in good form overseas, while last year's tearaway winner **Pride of Jenni** (\$8) looks like she's back to her best with an all-the-way win in a Group 2 at Caulfield last time.

\$2M SCHWEPPE'S SYDNEY CUP (3200m)

Former Irish mare, the Gai Waterhouse/Adrian Bott-trained **Alalcance**, is the \$4.50 favourite after her impressive wins in the Listed-Randwick City Stakes and Gr 3-Manion Cup. The mare's

only chink is she has not raced beyond 2400m but the way she's going, you would think she will stay the trip. **Desert Hero** (\$8) is a lightly raced gelding from the stable of William Haggas owned by King Charles so he must be respected. **Warmonger** (\$8) won the Queensland Derby by 10 lengths in the winter and showed a return to form when runner-up to Alalcance.

\$1M ASAHI SUPER DRY AUSTRALIAN OAKS (2400m)

Treasure the Moment is a firm \$2.50 favourite and deserves the status having impressively won her last six starts in Victoria including the Gr 1-VRC Oaks and three Group 2 events. She only has to handle this way of going and she should be winning another Oaks although connections were also toying with a Derby start and she was not entered prior to the Vinery Stakes (29 March). Leica Lucy (\$3) has looked good winning her past four starts in NZ and they were two Group 2s and two Group 3s. **Aeliana** (\$4.50), as previously mentioned, was narrowly edged out by Broadsiding in the Gr 1-Rosehill Guineas and she is the only other horse under double-figure odds.

\$1M TAB QUEEN OF THE TURF STAKES (1600m)

Honest mare **Fangirl** heads the market at \$2.50 and being a nine-times Stakes winner, is obviously the one they have to beat. At her last start she was wide the entire trip when beaten a nose by Gringotts in the Gr 1-George Ryder. Stablemate **Atishu** (\$4.50) is always a danger in these types of events, and she is in advance of \$8 chances **Amelia's Jewel** and **Lady of Camelot** who has not won a race since the Golden Slipper, but she has been placed on six successive occasions since, all in Stakes events.

\$1M ARROWFIELD 3YO SPRINT (1200m)

Outstanding filly **Autumn Glow** is the commanding \$1.90 favourite



Chad Schofield celebrates as Ceolwulf wins the King Charles III Stakes at Royal Randwick



Sydney Cup favourite Alalcance (Tim Clark) runs away with the N.E. Manion Cup at Rosehill



Autumn Glow and James McDonald power away with the Darby Munro Stakes at Rosehill

after overcoming a setback to win her fourth race from just as many starts. The youngster will be further improved and just keeps getting better with each start. It could be a great clash with another unbeaten performer in Private Harry (\$4.50) taking out his fifth race when successful in the Gr 1-Galaxy. Triple Stakes winner **Switzerland** (\$8) was having his second run from a break when unplaced in the Gr 1-Canterbury Stakes and no doubt he will derive benefit from that effort. A large group is then on \$11 – **Clean Energy, First Settler, Growing Empire, Lady of Camelot and Traffic Warden.**

\$1M POLYTRACK PROVINCIAL-MIDWAY CHAMPIONSHIPS FINAL (1400m)

Honest gelding **Matcha Latte** is the \$4.50 popular elect after he led all the way in the Newcastle qualifier. The bay had been placed in three previous starts, and he is going to prove tough to run down. Kembla galloper **Well Timed** (\$6) has always shown above average talent and has been specifically set for this after third in a qualifier last year where he missed the cut for the Final. He will be cherry ripe after running up to win at Hawkesbury and just ran out of gas. The Kris Lees-trained **Lord of Biscay** and **Welcometobarbados** (Paul Murray) are next as \$8 chances.

\$1M PERCY SYKES STAKES (1200m)

Golden Slipper placegetter **Tempted** is the \$2.80 favourite. The filly powered home to claim the Gr 2-Reisling Stakes before only getting clear air late when beaten in the Slipper but the way she charged home, the 1400m is going to be right up her alley. **Inkaruna** (\$4.50) was having just her second start when placed behind Tempted in the Reisling and will also relish the step up to 1400m. **Memo** (\$8.50) improved to claim the Gr 3-Magic Night with trainer Peter Snowden bypassing the Slipper for the Sires'. **Dream Side** was runner-up to Memo and is next in betting at \$8. **RNSW**