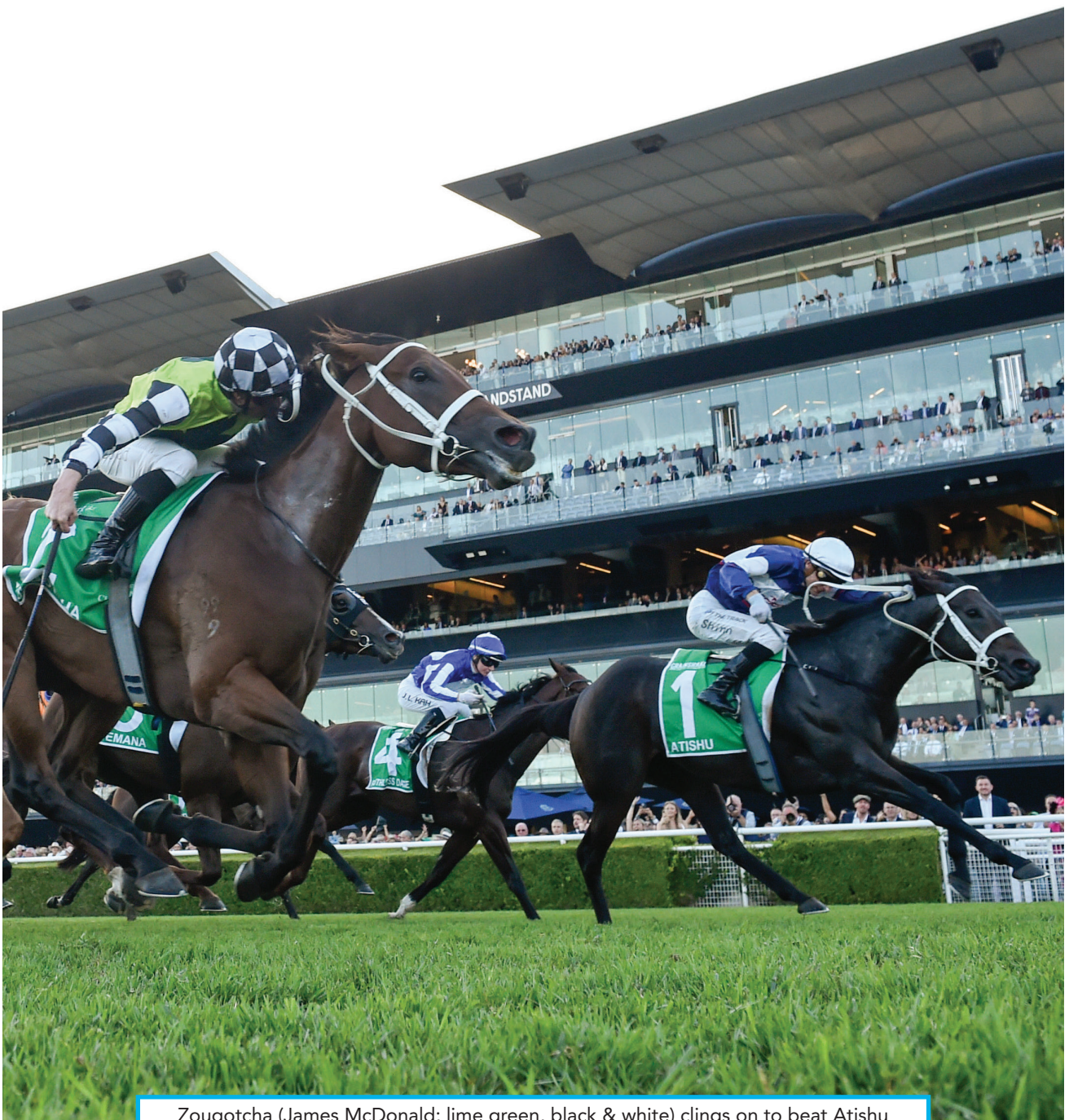


THE BERRY BADGE OF HONOUR

IT'S ONE OF THE MORE CHERISHED AWARDS IN HORSE RACING – THE NATHAN BERRY MEDAL – THAT HONOURS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR CHARACTERS IN THE JOCKEYS' ROOM

WORDS: MARK BRASSEL IMAGES: BRADLEY PHOTOGRAPHERS



Zougotcha (James McDonald; lime green, black & white) clings to beat Atishu (Blake Shinn; navy blue, white cap) in the final race for the Nathan Berry Medal last year

The Nathan Berry Medal will be up for grabs for the 12th time since being introduced into The Star Championships at Royal Randwick during the autumn of 2014.

The Medal is named in honour of the former top jockey who passed away in April of that year and is awarded to the most successful jockey over the 12 races of The Star Championships.

Nathan Berry was 23yo and in a brief but successful career booted home 351 winners with his biggest victory aboard Unencumbered in the Magic Millions in January '14.

Nathan had also won Group Three races on Malavio (Tramway Stakes), Va Pensiero (Run to the Rose) and Unencumbered (McLachlan Stakes).

Nathan's twin brother Tommy has scaled the heights of racing having landed 1694 winners including 37 Group One wins and 177 Stakes races.

"Nathan touched a lot of people, probably more than I ever knew about," Berry said.

"Medals such as the Bart Cummings and the Theo Green are awards that are named in honour of some of racing's greats who had been in the game for a long time.

"However, Nathan was only in racing for a short time of around 10 years, so this Medal ensures his legacy.

"When the Medal was introduced, it was not long after Nathan had passed away and it was still very raw for the family.

"Everyone enjoyed being around him so to receive the honour of this Medal being named after Nathan speaks volumes of his character.

"Joe Moreira [joint winner in 2023] rode against Nathan in Singapore when he was transitioning to head to Hong Kong to ride. Joe remembered Nathan quite well and they had some great times together.

"In fact, all the jockeys spent time with Nathan at some stage and through the normal ups and downs of life, they had nothing but respect for him."

Tommy Berry was overwhelmed to tie with James McDonald in the very first edition of the Nathan Berry Medal in 2014.

"That was so good to win the Medal that first year with James – it left me with a great feeling, and I felt it was just meant to be," Berry recalled.

"And to win it jointly with James was amazing as he is not just one of the world's best jockeys, but he is truly a great friend.

"Looking through the Honour Roll and the riders to have won the Medal since is remarkable.

"The Medal I won has a very special place in my heart and sits proudly on the mantelpiece, and my kids are also super proud and love looking at it."

The Nathan Berry Medal is determined by a 3-2-1 basis across the 10 Group races in The Championships as well as the Finals of the Country & Provincial Championships, with the winner announced at the completion of Day 2 of The Championships (Saturday 12 April).



The first Nathan Berry Medal in 2014 when James McDonald & Tommy Berry dead-heated



The prized Nathan Berry Medal



James McDonald & Joao Moreira share the spoils in 2023



Tommy Berry presents the medal to J-Mac in 2021

In the event of a tie, the winner is he/she who has ridden the most winners – if a similar number, the Medal is declared a tie.

The Nathan Berry Medal is distinctive as it features his initials 'NJB' on the Medal in the same font Nathan had on his racing jodhpurs and is adorned by a dark and light blue ribbon – the colours he carried on Unencumbered.

In a grandstand finish to the 2024 edition, James McDonald arrived late to claim the Nathan Berry Medal in the final The Championships event.

McDonald scored three points on Zougotcha when she prevailed by a nose in the Group 1-Queen of the Turf Stakes (finishing on 10 points) defeating Blake Shinn on Atishu; had the placings been reversed McDonald, Shinn and Damien Lane would all have ended up with nine points. *RNSW*

HONOUR ROLL

2024	JAMES McDONALD
2023	JAMES McDONALD/JOAO MOREIRA
2022	NASH RAWILLER
2021	AMES McDONALD
2020	GLEN BOSS
2019	HUGH BOWMAN
2018	BLAKE SHINN
2017	HUGH BOWMAN
2016	HUGH BOWMAN
2015	HUGH BOWMAN
2014	TOMMY BERRY/JAMES McDONALD