



Four-time Gr1 winner Saintly broke down twice

ROSS BRUNT of Racehorse Conformation Scientific Research demonstrates how champion racehorses expose themselves to greater risk of breakdown than average gallopers.

# WHY CHAMPIONS BREAK DOWN

**M**ost leading trainers will attest to how it's always the fast ones that breakdown. Many smaller trainers will recall how the one they had been waiting a lifetime for succumbed to injury after only a few starts or never even made it to the track.

Many modern day champions have also fallen victim or have been greatly restricted by this curse. The list is almost a who's who of Australia's greatest racehorses of recent times, including Kingston Town, Saintly, Dulcify, Better Loosen Up, Northerly, Lets Elope, Might And Power, and perhaps the fastest and arguably the most injury prone of them all, Placid Ark. Even our present day champions, Weekend Hussler, Takeover Target, Apache Cat and Melbourne Cup winner Efficient, have had their run of bad luck, and at the time of writing have either just retired, are off the scene with serious injuries, or are on the comeback trail. This list cannot possibly take into account what must be numerous potential champions never given the opportunity to show their true worth on the track.

Champion racehorses are the elite of thoroughbreds. Without doubt, they are the ones that create public interest and excitement, and attract the crowds that flock to the big race days. With this in mind, what affect on horseracing did Saintly, Dulcify and Placid Ark have when they all hopelessly broke down near the peak of their careers, with the latter two being destroyed?

It is generally agreed that the thoroughbred as a breed is evolving into an increasingly fickle and injury-prone line of bloodstock. Without doubt, this may be considered as a result of human rather than natural selection, as the stallions that are chosen to breed from each generation are by preference predominantly the fastest, rather than the soundest. Inbreeding, which tends to attract conformation flaws, is also popular amongst some.

How seriously is conformation and its relation to soundness taken when owners or studs select stallions for their broodmares? This is a dilemma that may only compound over future generations with the ever-increasing likelihood of concentrated speed breeding.

Can the Australian horseracing industry really afford to consistently lose these genuine champions to injury? And can any action be taken to minimize this?

In theory, champions should possess a balanced conformation with an efficient, trouble-free and correct technique. These are normally traits that are associated not only with performance, but like-



To read the rest of the story: **SUBSCRIBE NOW →**

# NOT GETTING BREEDING & RACING? LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING SUBSCRIBE NOW!

## CURRENT ISSUE INCLUDES:

- ▶ Why Champs Breakdown
- ▶ Unsoundness Myth Debunked
- ▶ Playing God: New Opportunities For Breeders
- ▶ US Expert Flags Soundness Conformation Factors
- ▶ Australian Easter Yearling Sale Special



**\$89\*** INGLIS EASTER



**PLUS FREE**

Subscribe now for only \$89\* & also choose a **FREE 1-year subscription** to either Australian Art Collector or Luxury Travel magazine

\*Australian subscribers only. For overseas rates, contact Merissa Borg on +61 2 8204 1009, or email [mborg@breedingracing.com](mailto:mborg@breedingracing.com)

**TO SUBSCRIBE, PLEASE CALL MERISSA BORG  
ON +61 2 8204 1009, OR EMAIL MBORG@BREEDINGRACING.COM**