

Bird-chasing barker banished to the bush



Colin Walker and stepson Nick Reinke after Smoke Da Kenny raced away with the Gordon Legg Butchery Stake at Moree on Saturday.

SMOKE Da Kenny – a troublesome greyhound with an eye for the birds instead of the winning post – redeemed himself at Moree on Saturday for Warwick trainer Colin Walker.

The blue-fawn dog, banished to the bush because of its incessant barking, scored an easy win in the Gordon Legg Butchery 5th Grade (421m) – his first start for the Walker kennels.

“I’ve only had him for a week,” Walker said.

“He was trained at Tweed Heads and belongs to a solicitor and a heap of other blokes in Sydney.

“He plays up so much that they couldn’t have him at Tweed – he barks day and night.

“They gave him to me because I’m out in the bush, and I can put up with him.

“I thought I’d bring him out here to Moree to give him a bit of confidence, and that win will do him the world of good,” he said.

Springing from box three, Smoke Da Kenny (\$4.40) stalked early leader Bevan Banner (5/4fav) to the home turn before dashing away at the top of the straight to score by one-and-a-half lengths.

Bevan Banner held on for second with Royal Odyssey (5/2) four lengths away third.

Saturday’s win was in stark contrast to Smoke Da Kenny’s previous effort under bizarre circumstances when 12

lengths last at Tweed Heads.

“He’d won a maiden and final at the Gold Coast and last Saturday at Tweed he moved up to win a race but a plover ran out on to the track,” Walker said.

“It went straight under the running rail about eight or 10 lengths from the winning post and was right on the dog’s nose – he stopped dead in his tracks and poked his head under the rail to try and get it.

“The other dogs went past the winning post and he was still standing there on his side.

“They (stewards) were going to put him out for non-chasing until they saw what happened,” he said.

Walker, with the help of 14-year-old stepson Nick Reinke, prepares a small team on the outskirts of Warwick on Queensland’s Darling Downs:

He plans to back up Smoke Da Kenny in the Gold Coast Bulletin 5th Grade (429m) at The Parklands tonight.

“I’ve only ever got about four or five in work and win the odd race here and there,” he said.

“I’m only a hobby trainer and have been coming to Moree for 20 years – I bring dogs out this way that can’t win races at the harder tracks.

“I’m on a disability pension and my wife, Michelle, works at the meatworks at Warwick – she’s the breadwinner and I stay at home and do the housework,” he said. “And Nick loves the dogs too – he’s my right-hand man.”

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