

Jackson's itching to ride again

A beaming Jackson Murphy after winning aboard Aimalac Bobby at Lismore



THE RESOLVE OF JOCKEYS CAN BE TESTED TO THE LIMIT IN THE AFTERMATH OF A RACE FALL, BUT APPRENTICE JACKSON MURPHY IS CHAMPING AT THE BIT TO GET BACK INTO THE SADDLE

WORDS: MARK BRASSEL PICTURES: TRACKSIDE PHOTOGRAPHY

The racing world held its collective breath as five young jockeys came crashing to the turf in the opening race at Taree on May 23.

One of those involved was Jackson Murphy; the just turned 20-year-old receiving serious injuries that sidelined the hoop for a number of weeks. His mount was Blinkin Rules, a seven-year-old grey who crashed into the back of the first horse to fall, Bazza's Boy.

"I had one stride to think about it," Jackson recalled. "I tried to steer my mount around the fallen horse but there was a horse to my outside so I couldn't move out any further and pull my bloke away from the strife.

"I landed on my horse's neck before he stumbled and I then bounced off his knee and started rolling when I hit the ground. The last horse actually tripped over me."

Jackson said he lay winded for a few minutes.

"My Dad was on course and he was there straight away along with the paramedics. I was conscious the entire time.

"I've watched the replay countless times and I think we can all count our lucky stars. I'm feeling good considering the injuries."

But the apprentice jockey has lost none of his passion for riding and cannot wait to get back into the thick of things.

Jackson had only a handful of rides to his name before landing a winning double at Wauchope on Boxing Day last year aboard Calgary and Mind Freak. He has now ridden 14 winners throughout the Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers Regions.

In fact, the jockey had scored another winning double at Kempsey on Beside You and Floral One, just two days before the spectacular Taree fall.

"I felt great after that double; I was on top of the world before the fall. I suppose there are certain things



Jackson Murphy coaxes the best out of Aimalac Bobby in their Lismore victory

in life you can't control," he said philosophically.

"I absolutely love riding and it's heartbreaking I'm out for a few weeks. The first thing I said to my Dad after the fall was 'damn, now I can't ride for a while'."

The fall put Jackson out for around six to eight weeks but he believes he is fortunate, considering the injuries he received.

"Half my spleen was split and I had internal bleeding. I also cracked a couple of ribs and had severe bruising. The Doctor told me I must rest to fix my spleen."

Murphy is apprenticed to Wauchope trainer Grant Prosser who was glowing in his praise of the young rider.

"Jackson is a really good kid – he's very polite, a hard worker and has the right attitude," Prosser said.

"He came to me through Malcolm Fitzgerald [Racing NSW Training Officer] who knows Jackson's father, Tony, quite well.

"He lived on the Central Coast and was with Steve Farley [trainer] before he came to me and he has been going along great. It's just a shame this fall

occurred and he's out for a while."

Murphy had never really been around horses as a kid, although there were stable visits.

"Dad had horses with Mr Farley and we used to go to the stables so that's where I got the bug.

"I love the atmosphere of Sydney racing and I was hooked after going out to Royal Randwick one day.

"Weight-wise, I don't really have any problems – probably the opposite.

"I don't have a strict diet and look after myself by eating healthy, so sometimes I struggle when I'm too light at around 45 kilos and have to carry a lot of dead weight [lead in the saddle to make up the weight]."

Jackson returned to his Mum and Dad's home at Lake Munmorah from hospital at the start of June to recuperate and was told he cannot do anything strenuous for three to four weeks or his spleen could rupture.

"It's quite hard not doing much except watching the live races and heaps of replays," Murphy said.

"I can't wait to get back in the saddle – it's my life and there's nothing else I'd rather do than ride." **RNSW**