

# The Farm's 'LARRIKIN MAX'

IN THIS MONTH'S PROFILE WE CATCH UP WITH  
ONE OF WARWICK FARM'S MOST LOVED  
CHARACTERS, MAX COCKS



Max Cocks – enjoys learning from  
everyone around him

INSET: Trainer Joe Pride with Max Cocks



**M**ax Cocks is a name many involved in racing would know, particularly if they've visited Warwick Farm.

He's not a trainer, jockey or big punter, but his passion and enthusiasm for racing is second-to-none.

Whether it's a midweek meeting in Sydney or a Sunday night in Hong Kong, Max knows his horses and his form. His love of racing will be life-long.

Max is an absolute fountain of knowledge on all things pertaining to the racehorse and knows every stallion standing at stud and can list their successful progeny, with race times thrown in.

Max is as large as life and at the barrier trials he hands out the jockeys' colours for all of Joe Pride's horses – he is like a bag-man with a shopping bag full of colours.

When it came time to do work experience in high school, Max wanted to be involved in racing and, being from Western Sydney, Warwick Farm Racecourse was the logical option.

After his placement, Max was hooked. He enjoyed learning from everyone around him, particularly trainer Joe Pride.

He regularly caught up with Joe while he was exercising his horses in the afternoons and it was here that Joe asked Max to join his team at Pride Racing in September 2012 and Max readily accepted the opportunity.

Supported by the government on disability payments, Max is only able to work part-time but he makes the most of that time doing what he loves.

His duties at the stable include mucking out boxes, rugging horses, putting horses on the walker, and bringing the stable pony home from the track.

Max also attends all Warwick Farm barrier trials, making sure the Pride jockeys have the correct colours as well keeping them on their toes with his racing banter.

The support of his friends and colleagues at Pride Racing and the racing community have assisted him through the loss of his beloved mother last year.

Max's mum shared his interest in racing, as did Max's grandfather who was a keen punter.

*Corey Brown is Max's all-time favourite jockey and they regularly catch up for a chat at the races and the trials.*

The charity, '4Tracks4Kids' began in 2010, raising funds for the Sydney Children's Hospital.

Having lost a cousin to cancer, Max jumped at the chance to support the cause, participating in the walk from the racetrack at Warwick Farm to Rosehill Gardens, Canterbury Park and Royal Randwick tracks, then on to the Sydney Children's Hospital.

Following the death of Nathan Berry, Max again participated in the walk in his honour. Max hopes the event returns so that he can continue his support.

Max attends the races at least once a week, with Warwick Farm remaining his favourite track, followed by trips to Randwick with friends.

The most amazing run Max ever witnessed was at Flemington from the best racehorse he has ever seen –

Lonhro.

"His win in the 2004 Australian Cup was just magic. Trapped inside, I thought he was gone, then he got out and won. He was a champ."

Racing has provided Max with an opportunity to use his enthusiasm and his excellent knowledge of form to become an insightful addition to Pride Racing.

Joe loves having Max in the stable: "Not only does Max bring life to the barn and keep us up-to-date on world-wide form, he is also a quintessential larrikin," Joe Pride said.

Racing NSW veterinarian, Meg Brownlow, said: "This is a really important story on a couple of levels.

"Firstly, Max has a disability, which in some people's view would mean that he should never touch a thoroughbred racehorse or work in a stable environment, and secondly, because Joe Pride has displayed the most amazing patience and humanity in not only providing Max with employment, but giving him a sense of purpose and empowerment.

"We all see Max at Warwick Farm as he frequents the trials, hands out colours to jockeys and tells us all about the form of various horses; why they ran poorly, where they were blocked for a run at the 800 metres, where the jockey went wrong in the ride, and the like.

"We marvel at his knowledge and his all-consuming passion for things pertaining to the racehorse.

"The NSW Thoroughbred Racing Industry is vast and there are places within it for people like Max – they make life richer somehow.

"And Joe Pride should be congratulated and others encouraged to follow his example." **RNSW**