

Costin's determined to succeed

WINONA COSTIN, 23, HAS BEEN DEALT MORE THAN A BUMPY RIDE IN HER EIGHT-SEASON CAREER BUT IS QUICKLY WORKING HER WAY BACK TO TOP FORM WORDS: JESSICA WATKINS PICTURES: JANIAN MCMILLAN



Winona heads to the barriers aboard Doc Cairns at Mudgee

Winona Costin – a self-confessed small sized jockey – has had to overcome a number of significant injuries throughout her time riding but indicates she has come out more determined than ever to succeed.

With racing running heavily through Winona Costin's bloodline, it is no doubt that was always going to be her chosen career.

Recalling memories of attending trackwork from the age of two with her father John Calvert, a retired professional jockey, you begin to see where her love of the sport began.

"I was always going to be a jockey.

I just love racing and I have so much passion for it," Costin said.

Costin commenced her apprenticeship with Kembla Grange trainer Mick Tubman. With a stable of only about five horses in work at a time, she still maintains a strong relationship with the team today. "Mick puts me on most of his stable. I pretty much ride all of his stable on raceday."

Located 101 kilometres away from Kembla Grange Racetrack up the Princes Highway is Royal Randwick. This was to be Costin's next point of call as an apprentice.

After completing a short stint with Gai Waterhouse she then transferred

into the stable of Peter and Paul Snowden.

"They (Snowdens) have been great supporters on and off the track the whole way through," Costin said.

The support network around Costin is strengthened by her racing manager Anthony Haining and long-time mentor Jon Grisedale.

Costin credits Haining for his help throughout her career: "He's been with me from the start and is like family now and always helps through the hard times."

Notable achievements of Costin's career include the 2013-2014 Kembla Grange Apprenticeship Title, the Mona Lisa Stakes on Bouzy Rouge

in 2014, the Sydney Metropolitan Apprenticeship Title for 2014-2015 and the Australian Female Jockey Championship winner.

Her time in the saddle has not been without hurdles. In what could be described as a run of bad luck, Costin was left on multiple occasions with serious concerns for the future of her riding career.

When asked about her injuries Costin giggles: "How much time do you have?"

One of the major 'setbacks' she recalls is a brain injury that was sustained at the Kembla Grange trials back on 12 October 2016.

A severe concussion which resulted in five-months of recovery proved more harmful than originally thought.

"I ended up having to travel to Melbourne to get a clearance after a couple of neurologists in Sydney wouldn't clear me," said Costin.

"The last head injury was the one that made me realise how much I do love racing.

"When I was in the neurologist's office and they told me that I should find a different career, that was when I was like 'no that is what I'm always going to do'."

After five long months out of the saddle, Costin made her return to race riding in March of 2017.

Days after her race return, Costin ventured out to the town of Wellington for their Racing NSW Country Showcase meeting, the Wellington Boot.

In what continued her run of bad luck, Costin was bucked off her mount, Shudabeen shortly after the start.

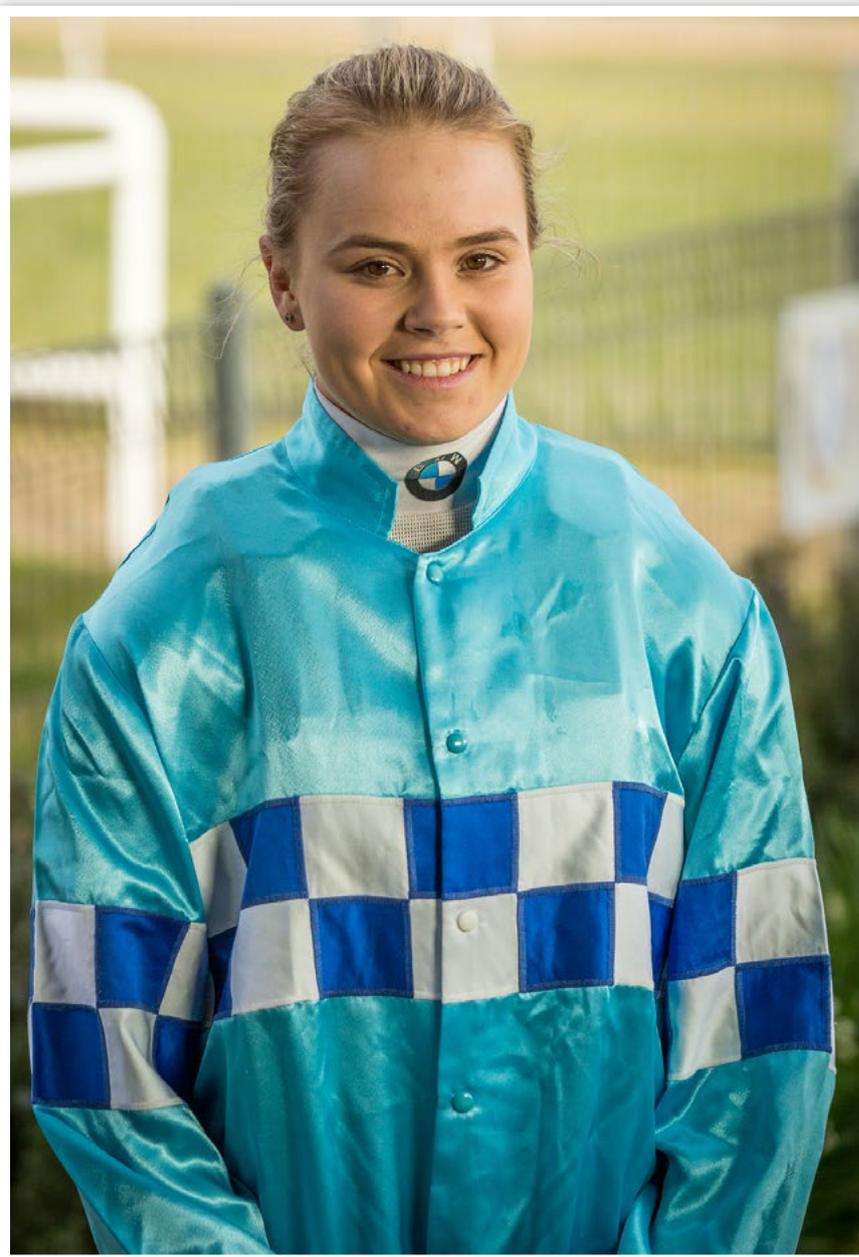
Sustaining breaks to both arms that required screws and plates Costin was again forced to the grandstand.

"Breaking both my arms was just hard. It was hard work having both arms broken," Costin said.

When others would have accepted if Costin had doubts into her future, her strength and resilience to get back into the saddle shone through.

Costin said: "Racing is always what I have wanted and this is still what I want. You've got to get back up on the horse and do what you love. I mean, injuries are part of the game but it's worth it."

Following these 'setbacks' Costin's



Talented jockey Winona Costin – has overcome some tough times

name will now often be found in form guides riding in races around country New South Wales.

"Country meetings have a great relaxed environment. I do quite a few road trips now with a few other people, so they are always a lot of fun."

When not attending a race meeting or riding trackwork, Costin's other passion lies with her show ponies.

Despite not showing for a few years, Winona remains enthusiastic to get back into it.

"I've always had my ponies there and just jump on every now and again, so hopefully in the next year I will be back in the show ring."

With Costin's only thought of retiring being that "It will be in a very long time", her avid interest in the breeding industry looks set to continue her involvement in the sport.

"I would love to get into the breeding side of things, I've always enjoyed the breeding with the show and riding ponies. I've bred a couple of my own riding ponies. I would love to get into that after racing." **RNSW**