

Andrew's supreme calling

By Peter Foley

Best remembered for winning the race everyone wants to forget, Andrew Parramore became a trainer almost by chance. But it still puts a smile on his face each day.

Andrew Parramore rode I Reign Supreme to victory in the 2000 Ipswich Cup, leading most of the way. But behind him, carnage reigned.

The terrible incident started when Mushtak, who was running second, smashed both his fore-legs, causing a horrifying chain reaction.

Eight horses crashed to the turf, with I Reign Supreme the only one to escape the pile-up.

Four jockeys were taken to hospital, including Mushtak's rider Justin Sheehan, who suffered a deep cut to his head and severe rib injuries.

The incident is remembered as one of the worst falls on a Queensland racetrack.

For Andrew Parramore, what should have been a great day in front of family and friends, turned into a surreal experience. He should have been celebrating, but mates were down.

"My family was here - my mum and dad used to live here; they've both passed away now," Andrew said.

"I spent a bit of time here with family before I moved up to Toowoomba.

"It was a big deal and then, yeah, it was just flat.

"I didn't really know anything about it. It's just one of those things that you don't want to see happen."

I Reign Supreme is regarded as the best horse Andrew rode in a career that produced 718 wins, starting in Townsville in 1982.

"I was born in England and started my apprenticeship in Sydney, and then I went up to North Queensland and worked my way back down again," he said.

"I was based out of Brisbane for a while, then I went down south and got around Kembla Grange and had a fair bit of success there and then came back to Brisbane.

"Then I moved up to Toowoomba. I had a bit of luck riding around Toowoomba."

Andrew's last ride was on August 17, 2008, at Casino. He didn't have a post-career plan.

"I had no idea. Because I never really thought about retiring," he said.

"It was just one of those things that you knew your age is getting on and you're probably not riding as good as you want but you're the last one to tell yourself.

"As a jockey, you're thinking: I don't want to train; it's too much hard work, and you're not getting paid like you should be.

"When I was thinking about training, I went down to Gwenda Markwell at Kembla Grange and spent 12 months with her to get a feel for what to do.

"Then the owner of the horse I'd won a couple of races on rang and said: Why don't you take her? You can have her down at Kembla Grange.

"I think she won three races at Kembla Grange, and ran second at Randwick and third at Canterbury.



Andrew Parramore winning aboard McGill, trained by Darryll Strong, at Ipswich on November 28, 2001. (Andrew Parramore)

"It got me a bit keen. So I went to the sales and bought a horse. It was a cheapie; it only cost me \$5000 or \$6000 and I ended up winning 13 races with him, and 10 seconds, and about 12 thirds, and it really got into my head.

"I thought: Oh, I don't mind this. Naturally, it's not that easy but I've had a bit of fun all along.

"It's one of those things; once it gets in your blood. And I'm still riding work too; that's the enjoying part."

"I came off about eight weeks ago and dislocated my shoulder. So I've had a girl helping me."

Based at Grafton, Andrew had his first winner as a trainer in February 2009 and has since racked up 100 wins.

At Ipswich recently, he had another success when Weownachevy won his maiden. He backed that up at the Gold Coast last Saturday.

"It's nice to get a little horse that's coming through that makes the trip up the highway worthwhile," Andrew said with a smile.

"There's plenty of lows to go along with the little bit of a high. But it's fun. It keeps a smile on my face every morning.

"I've been getting out of bed at three o'clock since I was 14 years old. And the novelty hasn't worn off."



Weownachevy (second from left), ridden by Andrew Mallyon, races away with The Lawn Shed QTIS Three-Year-Old Maiden Plate (1350m). (Trackside Photography)

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