

Home is hope for Anthony

By Peter Foley

Racing is full of uncertainty, but Anthony Allen knows one thing for sure: whatever happens on the track is quickly put into perspective back at home.

Anthony started his racing career in his hometown of Grafton, working first for David Campbell before spending two years with trainer John Shelton.

At 17, his 18-month-old sister Indiana died while she was waiting for a liver transplant.

He has a tattoo on his back, a tribute to Indiana and a permanent mark of the loss that has stayed with him.

"It was one of those tragedies that you wish didn't happen," Anthony said.

"It was early in my career and it was a bit rough, but work and riding kept me busy.

"Getting a tattoo was a way of representing her."

Anthony moved to Queensland about 15 years ago and finished his apprenticeship with Brisbane trainer Steele Ryan.

"I came up here and set the world on fire a little bit," he said.

"That's what the claim does, when you get the opportunities."

A highlight was riding five winners in a day on July 14, 2012.

Steele advised a stint with Gerald Ryan in Sydney, believing the move would help Anthony's career.

Riding with the big boys was daunting at first, sharing the jockeys' room with the likes of Jim Cassidy and Nash Rawiller, but he enjoyed the challenge.

Back in Queensland, Anthony earned a reputation as a dependable jockey, building to 700 winners. Then the horse of his racing life arrived in 2021.

Incentivise emerged on Ipswich Cup Day, with a 10-length romp in the Provincial Stayers Final (2500m) for Toowoomba trainer Steve Tregoe.

It was one of nine dominant victories in a row for Incentivise, with the streak taking in wins at Toowoomba, Eagle Farm and in the Tattersall's Cup.

Anthony was his jockey and a big part of the gelding's development; he knew he had great potential. But a stable change to Peter Moody dashed his dreams.

Incentivise crashed the 2021 Spring Racing Carnival, winning the Makybe Diva Stakes, Turnbull Stakes and Caulfield Cup with Brett Prebble in the saddle.

He ran second to Verry Elleegent in the 2021 Melbourne Cup, which turned out to be his last start.

"One of my big supporters was Steven Tregoe and obviously that horse upcoming was really nice to watch and I saw him develop into a really good horse," Anthony said.

"Looking back on it, obviously it's not the highlight, but at least I can see I was a big part of that horse's career.

"Obviously I would have loved it to be me. But it is racing and it's just how the cookies crumble."



Anthony Allen and Divil A Bit (centre) get the better of Canya Berich (right) and Kalamia King (left) to win the Poco Vino Maiden Plate (1700m). (Trackside Photography)

Anthony and his wife, former jockey Lani Allen, have two children. Their daughter Poppy was born by Caesarean section on December 28, 2023, after a scan found no heartbeat.

"We had little Poppy and at 37 weeks, she passed away," Anthony said.

"It was rough for me and my wife. It's one of those things where we all had high hopes, and then when it happened, there was a grieving process.

"Every day's a battle, but we're still happy that we have a chance to have that little girl named Poppy."

The couple's son Hugo arrived a year later. A child born after loss is often known as a Rainbow Baby, as in a rainbow after the storm. But Lani and Anthony have a different interpretation.

"We call Poppy the Rainbow Baby," Anthony said. "We call him the Hope Baby because he gave us a big hope.

"He's really good. Now he's 19 months old; he's fine, making a mess, walking, talking and watching Paw Patrol and stuff like that.

"Like, coming home, straight away, he wants me to play. He keeps mum busy all the time."

At Ipswich last Thursday, Anthony rode another winner on Divil A Bit, a gelding trained at Beaudesert by emerging trainer Ruby Chatterton.

"Obviously every trainer you ride for, you want to win, but today was Ruby, and it was just awesome to get the job done," he said.

"They're a really nice crew and they're slowly getting into training, getting some results. That's my second win for them in a matter of three rides."



Anthony, Hugo and Lani Allen at their home in Brisbane. (Racing Queensland)



Ipswichturfclub

IPSWICH

RACING POWERED BY

IPSWICH TRIBUNE TODAY

ipswichturfclub.com.au

