

ARROWFIELD ROYAL SOVEREIGN STAKES

In Focus

The big change

The move this year of the Royal Sovereign Stakes from February to be part of The Championships in April has changed the historical complexities surrounding the feature sprint for three-year-olds.

Not only has the race moved into a different time slot, but it is now open for horses of both sexes after being restricted to colts and geldings since it was held for the third time in 1981.

Interestingly, the first time the Royal Sovereign was run in 1979, it was won by a filly, Acamar, who was a daughter of Royal Sovereign, the former top colt after the race was eventually named after—it was called the Sovereign Stakes when Acamar won.

The switch to an open race and the move to be part of The Championships has given the Royal Sovereign an increased significance as the race for our best young sprinters at the prime time of the season.

The Royal Sovereign has always been a race for the stars. Champions such as Lonhro (2002), Dance Hero (2005), Assertive Lad (2001), Best Western (1982), Exceed And Excel (2004) and Danewin (1995) have won it.

The Slipper connection

Two Golden Slipper winners—Dance Hero and **Guineas** (1998)—trained on to win the Royal Sovereign Stakes.

Last year's Golden Slipper was won by the filly Overreach, who beat the **Peter Snowden**-trained **Sidestep**. Snowden has targeted the Royal Sovereign with Sidestep, who hasn't raced since winning the Listed Darby Munro Stakes, also over the 1200 metres at Randwick, on March 29, and will also have **Safeguard** running.

Snowden won the Royal Sovereign with El Cambio in 2008.

Hawkes to the top

John Hawkes has trained three Royal Sovereign winners—Lonhro (2002), Hire (2000) and **Guineas** (1998)—which places him equal top with **Gai Waterhouse** and **Bart Cummings**.

Hawkes, who now trains in partnership with his sons **Wayne** and **Michael**, will saddle up the promising **Chautauqua** in the Royal Sovereign.

Chautauqua came with a powerful finish to beat all but In Cahoots in the Listed Gosford Guineas (1200m) on April 6.

Cummings, now training in partnership with his grandson **James Cummings**, will run the filly **Shamalia**.

Cassidy's race

Jim Cassidy— five wins—leads the winning jockeys list for the Royal Sovereign Stakes by one from Hugh Bowman. However, Cassidy hasn't won it since Rouslan in 1994.

Cassidy has the mount on promising filly **Thump**.

The battler's hope

Phil Atkins is a self-confessed battler from Maitland. The trainer was shaking after recording his biggest win when **In Cahoots** (\$26) won the Listed Gosford Guineas (1200m) on April 6, but the gelding is on his way to town for the Royal Sovereign.

Atkins, who trains only six horses and rides his own work—"I do everything"—paid \$10,000 for In Cahoots at the 2012 Inglis Scone Yearling Sale.

Notable winners

Shoot Out	2010	Assertive Lad	2001	Coronation Day	1993
Dance Hero	2005	Guineas	1998	Shaftesbury Avenue	1990
Exceed And Excel	2004	Catalan Opening	1996	Hula Chief	1986
Lonhro	2002	Danewin	1995	Best Western	1982