



Auckland Reactor - best pacer in New Zealand

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[Auckland Reactor and Mark Purdon - winning today's NZ Free-For-All](#)

Auckland Reactor made it 14 from 14 and proved himself the best pacer in New Zealand with an emphatic success in the \$300,000 Woodlands NZ Free For All (2000 metres) in national record time of 2:21.8 at Addington Raceway in Christchurch this afternoon Friday 14 November.

The big Addington crowd stood and saluted its latest champion with a rousing ovation of the kind that is only reserved for idols.

Changeover might have been their champion on Cup Day in world record time but the crowd that had been primed for the "Show Down on Show Day" was always in Auckland Reactor's corner.

The cynics that maintained he had not been beaten a top horse maintained he was vulnerable. They reasoned he would have to step up a couple of notches.

But nobody told Auckland Reactor or Mark Purdon who drove him as if he was the best horse in the field.

The freakish son of boom sire **Mach Three** had been billed by many as the Young Pretender but the boy walloped the men with a showing that reflected his grit and guts as much as his class and brilliance.

There is no escaping the fact that the Internationally-owned \$4 million star is the complete package of mobile start racing.

Auckland Reactor, revealing an incredibly competitive attitude, moved mid race to sit parked without a trail or cover outside Tuesday's Cup hero Changeover who got away with a sedate early sectional in front.

David Butcher had seemed to be getting away with murder so to speak. Mark Purdon sensed the time had come to put his champion in the race and Changeover firmly within his compass.

Auckland Reactor threw down the gauntlet to Changeover early in the run home.

In a bitter two horse war that brought the crowd to its feet, Auckland Reactor was clearly strongest and was untroubled to beat Changeover's stable mate Awesome Armbró by a length and three quarters.

Changeover was a length away third, gallant, but humbled by the undisputed champion of the country's raceways.

Auckland Reactor's 2:21.8 for the mobile 2000 metres erased last year's winner Waipawa Lad's 2:22 from the New Zealand records scroll.

The winner's time represented a mile rate of 1:54, the leaders' home in 54.4 and 27.8

Fame, they say, is somewhat fleeting. Changeover's connections will now be the first to remind you of that after today's much awaited feature.

Not even the cynics would have expected any horse in the country to sit parked outside Changeover and beat him home decisively, but Auckland Reactor made it look easy.

Auckland Reactor's success was a replay of his NRM Sires' Stake triumph a year earlier when he surged forward, sat parked and kicked again for a runaway win.

Southland trainer the late Dave Todd, the man who made Cardigan Bay, told the writer many years ago, so did Cup Kings Cecil Devine, that horses which could kick well from the "death seat" in top company were true champions.

Cardigan Bay could do it, and so can Auckland Reactor in Gr 1 class.

"I pulled the plugs today with \$300,000 at stake and I tapped him up a little with the whip...I could see Changeover okay but I didn't know where Gotta Go Cullen and those other horses were," driver Purdon said after.

"I think that nice easy run on Cup Day topped him off perfectly and improved him without hurting him for today," he added.

Purdon said his ace would fly to Sydney on probably Monday week (24 November) for the Miracle Mile four days later at Harold Park in Sydney.

"The Harold Park track will make it tough no matter what he draws...I had been hoping the race would have been run on the bigger new Menangle circuit (1400 metres)"

Purdon said New Zealand's latest King of the Paceways would be based with legendary New South Wales horseman Brian Hancock, a great mate of his father Roy Purdon, for the duration of his Miracle Mile campaign.

Mark Purdon said that all going well it was only a matter of time before Auckland Reactor would be campaigned in USA where hopefully he would stamp his mark on the International stage and take a fast mile record with which to launch his stud career.

The discerning and knowledgeable racegoers of Addington today paid homage to their own champion who is trained at Rolleston on the outskirts of Christchurch.

Auckland Reactor, the horse that has won the hearts of a harness racing mad nation, flew the southern flag with distinction against the north's best Changeover in a clash that took many back to Hands Down's defeat of Delightful Lady in the 1980 NZ Cup.

The Young Pretender certainly made his mark in his first time in the ring against the true heavyweights.

Cassius Clay and Mike Tyson couldn't have made a better fist of it.

Don WRIGHT