



**NATHAN EXELBY**  
RACING EDITOR

AS A life-size statue was unveiled in his honour yesterday, it emerged sprint idol Buffering has become quite stubborn in retirement.

The Brisbane Racing Club commissioned the statue, which stands at the front of the new infield entrance to Eagle Farm, to commemorate the deeds of the \$7 million earning seven-time Group 1 winner.

Trainer Rob Heathcote and jockey Damian Browne attended yesterday's ceremony with the gelding's owners.

Buffering was also meant to be among the guests, but part-owner Bruce Harry said the now 10-year-old refused to get on to the float when it arrived.

"They even sent his favourite float from Rob's but he wasn't having a bar of it," Harry said.

The unveiling was timed to coincide with the fourth anniversary of Buffering's Group 1 breakthrough in the Manikato Stakes.

It was his 18th attempt to win a Group 1 race, but in his next 16 starts he won another six at the highest level, including his memorable win in Dubai.

"It took me six years to learn how to train him, but he got his just rewards in the end," Heathcote said.

"Up to that stage we were wondering if he would ever win one."

Heathcote said he believed Buffering's never-say-die attitude was the reason the public took him to heart.

"Australians love an underdog and he had all the qualities of a great fighter. He would get knocked down but he would get back up again," he said. "And he did it in an era of sprinting greats."

Browne said it was difficult to pinpoint his favourite moment with Buffering, because each win had its own special story.

# Buffering statue a work of heart



**STILL CHERISHED:** Trainer Rob Heathcote and jockey Damian Browne stand next to the statue of Buffering at Eagle Farm yesterday; and (top) Buffering winning in Dubai. Main picture: AAP/Claudia Baxter

"He may not have been the best horse I've ever ridden, but his tenacity and will to win was unbelievable," Browne said.

"I remember his first Winterbottom. Moment Of Change (second) had him cold and 99 per cent of horses would have been beaten that day, but he got off the canvas.

"You knew you were on a real bulldog."

BRC chairman Neville Bell said in the 152 years of Eagle Farm it was the first time a full-size statue was unveiled.

"From day one of this club

it was always the plan to have a significant statue at Eagle Farm and we couldn't think of a better opportunity than with Buffering," he said.

"He was a great ambassador for racing in Queensland

and for the Brisbane Racing Club."

Buffering retired after last year's Manikato Stakes, and a few of his owners yesterday lamented the \$10 million Everest concept hadn't been hatched a few years earlier.

"He would have given a massive sight in that race for sure," Harry said.

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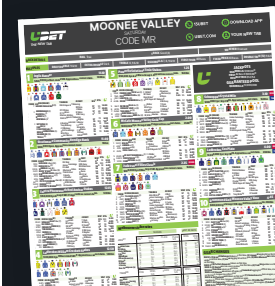
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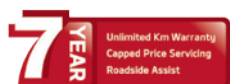
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