



Photo by Darren McNamara, courtesy Racing Victoria

Buffering (D Browne) wins his second Group 1 in the 2013 \$1million Gr 1 VRC Sprint Classic (1200m) at Flemington

He was then turned out, but got back into the winner's list at the earliest opportunity – claiming a 3YO Handicap at Eagle Farm on August 11, 2010 before embarking on his first interstate foray.

He was runner-up to Blackball in the Group 3 Up & Coming Stakes (1200m) at Warwick Farm before venturing further south to Melbourne where he was runner-up to Soul in the Group 2 Danehill Stakes (1200m).

Buffering then returned to Sydney, where he won the Group 2 Roman Consul Stakes (1200m) and was second in the Listed Bryan Crowley Stakes (1200m) before returning to Flemington for a fourth placing behind Star Witness in the Coolmore Stud Stakes (1200m).

His first start at the highest level, which came at his 11th start, was also the first time he missed a top-three placing.

Heathcote did not produce Buffering again until April 30 the following year, when he won the Group 2 Victory Stakes (1200m), which preceded the first of his Group 1 placings – a third to Black Caviar and Hay List in the BTC Cup (1200m).

But that was followed by the worst performance of the career, in the Doomben 10,000 (1350m) won by

Beaded, when he failed to beat a runner home. He improved to run fourth in the Group 1 Stradbroke Handicap (1400m) and occupied the same position in the Group 3 Healy Stakes (1200m).

Buffering campaigned exclusively in Melbourne in the spring of 2011, winning the Group 3 McEwen Stakes (1000m) at Moonee Valley first up before below-par efforts in the Group 1 Manikato Stakes (1200m) and Group 2 Caulfield Sprint (1100m).

He returned to form in the Group 1 VRC Sprint Classic (1200m), when he beat home all bar legendary mare Black Caviar.

It was back to Melbourne for his first campaign in 2012, where he resumed with another third behind Black Caviar and Hay List, this time in the Group 1 Lightning Stakes (1000m), before a half-head second to Hay List in the Group 1 Newmarket Handicap (1200m).

He made it four-straight Group 1 minor placings in Melbourne with a third placing behind Foxwedge and Hay List in the William Reid Stakes (1200m).

Buffering then headed back home to Queensland for his home-state carnival where a seven-length romp over 1200m at Eagle Farm had him seemingly poised to break his Group

1 duck in the BTC Cup.

But a minor hoof problem denied him his place in the race that was won by Sea Siren.

Despite the injury, Heathcote got Buffering to the starting stalls for the Doomben 10,000 and Stradbroke Handicap but he had to settle for runner-up in both, first behind Sea Siren and then Mid Summer Music.

It was then back to Melbourne for another Spring Racing Carnival, where a first-up win in the Group 2 Moir Stakes (1200m) – which, ironically, would just a few months later be upgraded to Group 1 level – was followed by another Group 2 win in the Schillaci Stakes (1000m).

Those wins earned him favouritism in the Manikato Stakes, but he could manage only sixth, which Heathcote later learned was due to side-effects from inoculations for a possible trip to Hong Kong.

Any thought of an overseas campaign was abandoned when he disappointed again, when eighth, behind Mental in the VRC Sprint Classic.

It was then back to Queensland for another easy Victory Stakes success but he was again beaten as favourite in a Group 1 when fourth to Your Song in the BTC Cup. That was followed by a third placing in the Doomben 10,000 won by Epaulette before a game second under 58kg in