

## Melbourne Cup 2014: Araldo dies after breaking leg

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The sadness that shrouded this year's running of the Melbourne Cup after the tragic death of [favourite Admire Rakti](#) deepened on Tuesday night with the news that vets had been forced to put down seventh-placegetter Araldo.

The Michael Moroney-trained stayer had been taken to the University of Melbourne Veterinary Hospital at Werribee after he broke a pastern in his right hind leg when he kicked a fence returning to his stall.

The grim news followed the post-race collapse and fatality of Admire Rakti. Vets will perform an autopsy on the Japanese Caulfield Cup winner on Wednesday.

Admire Rakti died in the hosing bay after the race on Tuesday. His body was placed under a green tarpaulin as an anxious crowd gathered at the stalls, rumours already swirling around the course that all was not well.

Araldo's trainer, Michael Moroney, said his horse had been spooked when someone waved a flag as he returned to the yard following the race.

Describing the incident as a "tragic accident", Moroney said: "They've run 150 Melbourne Cups and nothing like that has happened before. It's shattering for my owners, my staff and myself. We have just lost a great young stayer who was lightly raced and had just run seventh in the Cup. My staff are shattered. Everyone here is sticking together. We don't blame anyone."

Racing Victoria head vet Brian Stewart said that in the end, nothing could be done to save Araldo.

"The horse received immediate veterinary care and was transported to the University of Melbourne Veterinary Hospital, however, sadly the fracture in its pastern was not repairable," Stewart said in a statement.

"The owners made the decision to humanely euthanise Araldo in the best interests of the horse.

"Our sympathies are extended at this time to trainer Mike Moroney, his staff and the owners who are extremely saddened by the loss of their horse in such tragic circumstances."

Admire Rakti's death would be categorised as sudden death syndrome, which accounts for 0.0075 per cent of fatalities of runners in Victoria.

"We'll probably have an indication [on Wednesday]," Stewart said. "The full post-mortem report will take longer. It's usually one of two things, either heart rhythm or ruptured blood vessels, that they bleed out internally. We won't know which until the post-mortem is done."

Japanese owner Riichi Kondo and trainer Tomoyuki Umeda were devastated by the loss of the Caulfield Cup winner and left the course without making comment. The autopsy will show if there was any physical condition that might have led to the horse's death. It will also include a test for drugs.

It is the second year in succession that a horse has died in the Melbourne Cup. Last year Verema broke a leg in the back straight and had to be put down.

A visibly shaken Zac Purton, who rode the Japanese champion, said he felt something was wrong during the run as he eased Admire Rakti to finish more than 25 lengths from the second-last finisher.

"I have ridden a horse that has had a heart attack before and he didn't feel like that," Purton said. "I thought I was going to win the race at halfway but he was gone before the turn. He didn't feel right, so I pulled him up. If I had kept riding him, it could have happen on the track."

Soon after, Purton was told of the Japanese stayer's death.

"I'm shattered for the horse," he said. "He gave me such a great thrill at Caulfield."

Purton talked with the owners soon after hearing the news.

"They don't deserve this," he said. "For this to happen, it's not just fair. I didn't think they would beat me. I thought he'd win today."

The celebrations for the winner, Protectionist, were tempered by the news of the deaths of Admire Rakti and Araldo.

"When you have a dream and achieve it, it is great, but this is awful," a part owner in Protectionist, Jamie Lovett, said. "I really feel for the owner of the Japanese horse and I hear about Araldo as well. You don't want that to happen to anyone on any day, especially this day."

Stewart said it was likely Admire Rakti died of a heart attack or an internal bleed-out.

"Irregular heartbeat, which progresses to a condition, called ventricular fibrillation, which means the heart beats in a bad rhythm and is similar to a heart attack in simple terms," Stewart said. "It happens very, very rarely. Ventricular fibrillation of the heart in racehorses can be stress related. Adrenalin plays a roll.

"The size of a horse's heart, it's such a large mass of muscle and at a very rapid heart rate, 240 beats per minute, you've got electrical current — it has to get through that mass of muscle and then reco-ordinate, and occasionally that rhythm gets out of order. It can be a large blood vessel like the aorta or a major abdominal vessel that ruptures and bleeds out internally. We can't find that out until we do the post-mortem."

Leigh Jordan, who was the official international recruiting scout for Racing Victoria, said that it was "tragic" what had happened to both horses after the cup.

"Mr Riichi Kondo, who owns the horse, is understandably shattered by what has happened to Admire Rakti," he said.

"They are in disbelief: one minute they are going in to the Melbourne Cup with a favourite, and the next minute the horse has died."

*This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/sport/horseracing/melbourne-cup-2014-araldo-dies-after-breaking-leg-20141104-11gx2z.html>*

## Questions:

1. After reading this article, how does it make you feel about horse racing?
2. Has your opinion changed at all from what you thought before the race?
3. Do you think horse racing (whipping them, etc.) is animal cruelty, or just part of the sport? Why/why not?
4. What do you think can be done to make horse racing safer in the future?
5. Do you think everyone should get a day off work or school for a race that lasts only 3 minutes? Why/why not?