

Wade in 4th Quilty victory

Rider breaks 5-year drought

By SHANE WHITE

CHAMPION endurance rider Meg Wade says she is still coming to terms with her latest Tom Quilty Gold Cup win.

"It's an incredible feeling," she said.

"It's still sinking in a little bit I think."

The world's No.5-ranked endurance rider, from Burrowye, won the race that serves as the national championships for the sport.

It was her fourth time Wade has won the famous event, after walking away with the cup in 2000, 2001 and 2003.

"I remember clearly winning it the first time, and that was amazing," Wade said.

"No one's ever won it four times.

"I've got to say, it almost makes this one feel even more special."

The event holds a special place in the champion riders' heart and she said the five-year drought between victories was a little hard to handle.

"I wondered if I was ever going to get it," she said.

This year's race was held at Manango, near Kingaroy in Queensland.

Of the 205 competitors in the 160km, six-stage race, only 99 finished the tough course.

Wade said her partner in the competition, 13-year-old horse China Doll, was fantastic and she enjoyed the racing as much as her.

"She knows she's a winner," she said.

As well as combining with Wade to win the race, China Doll was also awarded the prize for the best conditioned horse in the competition.

"Following the race, the judges look at all the top placed horses that finished," Wade said.

"And they look for the one that pulled up the best. She won that."

Wade has been named Australian rider of the year nine years running and has been ranked in the top five riders in the world for three years.

She is now looking forward to the world championship in Malaysia later this year, saying the win only added to her excitement.

"I'm very excited, especially after a race like that," she said.

The championship race is on November 7, with the horses to leave for Malaysia on October 5.

"It's going to be really tough with the humidity, you have to take fit horses over there," she said.

"But ... the way China Doll pulled up, (the preparation) is perfect."



● Burrowye rider Meg Wade on her way to victory in the Tom Quilty cup. Picture: NARELLE WOODS

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By MARK MULCAHY

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will play off tomorrow afternoon.

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