

Eight Irish Winners at Royal Ascot



Leading Light (Joseph O'Brien) wins a thrilling renewal of the Ascot Gold Cup from Estimate and Missunited.

Irish-Trained horses finished Royal Ascot with a real flourish on Saturday, securing two memorable winners that equalled the previous record of eight Irish-trained winners at the meeting.

Trainer Eddie Lynam capped a remarkable week when saddling Slade Power to win the Group 1 Diamond Jubilee Stakes under Wayne Lordan. This was Lynam's third winner of the week from just four runners following Sole Power's win in the King's Stand Stakes and Anthem Alexander's victory in the Queen Mary.

The second Irish success came courtesy of the Willie Mullins-trained Pique Sous in the Queen Alexandra Stakes under Ryan Moore.

Aidan and Joseph O'Brien had endured frustrating blanks on the first two days but they burst into form on Thursday by combining for an exceptional double including a race for the ages with Leading Light in the featured Group 1 Gold Cup.

The 10/11 favourite looked in trouble early in the straight as an Irish fairytale looked to be playing out with the Mick Winters-trained Missunited making a bold bid from the front, but Leading Light battled on gamely to lead close home and prevail by a neck from Estimate who was bidding to gain her second consecutive win in the race for the Queen, with the gallant Missunited a short-head back in third.

That completed the O'Brien doubles, as they had already teamed up with Bracelet to win the Group 2 Ribblesdale Stakes.

Pat Smullen got an excellent day for Irish-trained horses off to a flying start on Tuesday with opening race double.

He got off the mark in the Group 3 Jersey Stakes, riding the Dermot Weld-trained Mustajeb to an authoritative length victory. Smullen landed his second winner of the day in the Group 2 Queen Mary Stakes, giving Eddie Lynam his second winner of the week by riding Anthem Alexander to a gritty neck success.

Charles Byrnes made his first-ever runner at the Royal meeting a winning one as he saddled Domination to win the Ascot

Stakes under Fran Berry on Tuesday.

At home there was major controversy at Wexford on Wednesday as the stewards had to intervene to change the result of the Wellingtonbridge Novice Hurdle after the first past the post Shield weighed in very light.

Trained by Aidan O'Brien and ridden by Robbie Power, the trainer's representative forgot to put the weight cloth under Shield's saddle and thus he weighed in light, making his disqualification inevitable.

The benefactor was the odds-on favourite, the Philip Fenton-trained Brian O'Connell-ridden Bentelimar, who had finished a well-held second.

The Noel Meade-trained Fisher Bridge is an old favourite of many and he gained his first win over jumps since October 2010 by bolting up in the feature race on Friday evening's card at Down Royal, the Live The Dream With Tote Galway Plate Trial Handicap Chase. Ridden by Paul Carberry, the 11-year-old travelled powerfully prior to hitting the front two out and recording an easy six lengths victory. The best of the rest came in the concluding Quilter Cheviot INH Flat Race with the Willie Mullinstrained Morning Run defending her unbeaten record by recording an authoritative 2¾ lengths victory under Patrick Mullins.

Champion Trainer Aidan O'Brien was the man to follow on Friday evening's card at Limerick, completing a double in the two most valuable races on offer.

He opened his account in the Irish Stallion Farms European Breeders Fund Maiden with his Toscanelli recording an easy 2¾ lengths success under Seamie Heffernan. His double was secured in the concluding Derek Ryan 24th July Race with his daughter Sarah O'Brien-trained Marchese Marconi to an authoritative three lengths victory.

Mark Walsh took centre stage at Gowran Park on Saturday, completing a double that included the featured Ladbrokes Jack Duggan Memorial Handicap Hurdle on the Martin Brassil-trained Celestial Prospect. Walsh gave the six-year-old a patient ride and delivered him to lead on the run-in, just holding on by a head.

Walsh had already opened his account in the Goresbridge Maiden Hurdle, riding the Gordon Elliott-trained Riverside City to a hardfought ½-length victory.

The Magners Ulster Derby is the highlight of the fl at season at Down Royal and last Saturday's renewal produced a thrilling finish with the Jim Bolger-trained Wexford Town coming from an impossible possible to prevail.

Ridden by Kevin Manning, the son of Teofilo arrived late and fast to score by a head. The other valuable handicap on the card was the European Breeders Fund Coolmore Stud Ulster Oaks and it saw the Dermot Weld-trained Vintage Nouveau run out the comfortable two lengths victor under Pat Smullen.

Ger Lyons has his team in excellent form and he took centre stage at Gowran Park on Sunday by teaming up with his in-form stable jockey Colin Keane to complete a double. He opened his account in the Family Fun Day Fillies Maiden by saddling Adroit to run out the authoritative 1¾ lengths victor. The Lyons/Keane brace was secured in the Best Of Luck Kilkenny Hurlers Handicap with Toccata Blue grinding out a ½-length success in what was a hotly-contested handicap.