

Dedigout delivers Boyne Hurdle



Champagne Fever and Paul Townend win the Grade 2 Red Mills Chase at Gowran. Photo: Patrick McCann

The main event of interest at Navan on Sunday was the Grade 2 Ladbrokes Ireland Boyne Hurdle and Tony Martin's Dedigout, who started his career in point-to-points with Dungarvan-based handler John Queally, took up the running with owners Gigginstown House Stud's retained jockey Bryan Cooper after the third last.

Admittedly, Dedigout then had his task lessened when the challenging Briar Hill fell at the final flight and the successful nine-year-old then came home with two and a half lengths to spare over Zaidpour.

Rank outsider Rwnaq outbattled odds-on favourite Gilgamboa to win the Grade 2 Flying Bolt Novice Chase. Trained at Kilmessan, County Meath by Matthew Smith, the 25/1 shot rallied gamely from the last under Andrew Lynch to record his fifth and most important win to date. Very Wood bounced back to form to win the Grade 2 Ten Up Novice Chase for local handler Noel Meade and Bryan Cooper. The six-year-old ran out an impressive winner from Noble Emperor and will now head to the Cheltenham Festival where he will have a number of options.

Davy Russell continued his stellar campaign by landing the Dunsany Handicap Hurdle aboard Forever Gold. The Edward Cawley-trained Forever Gold, on whom Russell carried one lb overweight, eased to the front after the third last and he was always travelling best thereafter with 11 lengths ultimately separating him from runner-up I Shot The Sheriff.

At Thurles on Thursday, Dungarvan-based handler David McGrath saddled his first track winner since 1999 when Goulane Chosen landed the Cashel Maiden Hurdle over an extended two miles six furlongs. Homebred by Ring-based owner Mrs Mary O'Donnell, the six-year-old Goulane Chosen made his way to the front at the third last.

Whilst joined briefly by runner-up Bitsandpieces before the final flight, Goulane Chosen still asserted to oblige by three and a half lengths.

Goulane Chosen's rider Brian Hayes then went on to record a double for the three lb claimer earlier landed the Irish Stallion Farms EBF Mares' Novice Chase aboard Our Katie. Trained by Bartlemy-based Garrett Ahern for Mrs Eileen Barry, Our Katie made her way to the front before the third last and she easily fought off main market-rival Down Ace from before the last to score by four and a half lengths. Our Katie, already a black type hurdler, will now be prepared for a tilt at the Grade 3 Dawn Run Mares' Novice Chase at Limerick next month.

Glengoura-based handler Liam Burke was on the mark with Sumos Novios in the Ballycahill Beginners Chase. Sumos Novios made most of the running with Andrew McNamara, the former point-to-point winner readily bounding clear from two out to dismiss Bold Conquest by four and a half lengths. Sumos Novios, a strapping sort at 17hh, will now contest a novice handicap chase at Navan.

The Grade 2 Red Mills Trial Hurdle occupied centre stage at Gowran Park on Saturday and Edward O'Grady's Kitten Rock underlined the fact that he still holds realistic Champion Hurdle credentials by landing this Grade 2 event in the hands of Mark Walsh.

Kitten Rock was still travelling ominously well in the familiar JP McManus silks when the pursuing Abyssial crashed out at the penultimate flight. Kitten Rock could now well take his chance in the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham next month.

The odds-on shot Champagne Fever, Willie Mullins' teak-tough grey, booked his ticket for either the Queen Mother Champion Chase or RyanAir Chase at Cheltenham, by destroying the opposition to the tune of four and a half lengths with Paul Townend in the Grade 2 Red Mills Chase over two and a half miles.

Neil O'Donnell