

Blood in the Weigh Room



Aidan Coleman returned to ride at Chepstow on Wednesday last

Jockeys are by their very nature a tough crew. They simply have to be. There's no other sport I can think of where two on course ambulances are mandatory before a race meeting can begin.

There isn't a national hunt jockey riding today who hasn't suffered his or her fair share of bumps and bruises while many have endured broken bones and in some cases serious injury.

Jockeys are sometimes subjected to verbal abuse from irate punters similar to that dished out to Ruby Walsh in the aftermath of Annie Power's last hurdle fall at Cheltenham last march.

Very few jockeys however are subjected to physical assault as experienced by Aidan Coleman at Southwell last Tuesday.

The Cork jockey was left with chipped teeth and a bloody nose after being assaulted in the weighing room after the last race. It is believed that Coleman was not know to his attacker or singled out for any reason other than being on the spot. The incident however has highlighted a security weak spot.

The weighing room is required to be a secure area during racing but that requirement ends after the final race has been run.

Paul Moloney, who was one of five jockeys along with Coleman riding in the last race, explained to the media what he witnessed.

"When I came into the weighing room after the last, there were these two blokes there. They looked pretty drunk to me and I don't think these guys knew anything much about racing."

The two who allegedly had broken down a door to get access to the jockey's changing room were arrested along with two women.

Coleman, although shaken by the incident, didn't want to make a fuss but did wonder why the two men were still on the racecourse despite being refused drinks by racecourse management.

The Cork jockey is enjoying his most successful season to date and with over 50 winners lies second in the British jump jockeys championships behind Richard Johnson. He returned to ride at Chepstow at Wednesday and was determined not to let the incident at Southwell keep him off the course.

"Us jockeys are a tough bunch and a slap from a drunk wouldn't be enough to stop us going back to work the next day."

Thankfully violent disturbances on the racecourse are few and far between but they do happen.

In July trouble erupted after racing at Newbury's Party In The Paddock resulting in emergency medical treatment for some race goers.

A racegoer heaped abuse at Tony McCoy in an ugly incident at Worcester on September 19th last year where a beer can was also thrown at the champion jockey. This was after McCoy had ridden a four-timer before being beaten on 7/4 favourite Saint Helena.

In February 2013, Derby winning jockey Martin Dwyer had a narrow escape when he was rescued by security guards of the Royal Western India Turf having been chased by an angry crowd after he lost on a 6/4 favourite at Mahalaxmi Racecourse in India.