



Irish Racers Triumph

Bluegrass Horse Feeds, a Kentucky Equine Research Team Member feed manufacturer based in Ireland, celebrated an impressive string of victories at the Punchestown Festival of Racing.

Bluegrass feeds fueled Oh Jackie to victory in the Avon RI Corporate and Leisure Steeplechase, collecting the prized La Touche Cup in the process. The steeplechase, usually referred to as the La Touche Cup, is the premier event at the Punchestown Festival of Racing, and is run over a course that is four and a quarter miles long and punctuated with imposing jumping obstacles. A test of both ability and sheer stamina, the La Touche Cup is the longest race run in Ireland.

Trained by Stuart Crawford and piloted by Ken Whelan, the ten-year-old mare bested the field by two lengths. Though not a betting favorite prior to the race, going off at a distant 25-1, Oh Jackie showed her prowess and athletic ability and earned the respect of racing enthusiasts.

Crawford was elated with the mare's performance. "I hoped she would run well, and it doesn't get any better than that." Similar sentiments were expressed by jockey Whelan. "That was absolutely super. She galloped all the way to the line and it was great. In all my years of riding, I've never missed this race, and to win it is fantastic."

In addition to her natural aptitude for the sport, Oh Jackie is fed a diet rich in the nutrients needed for top performance. She is offered a combination of Bluegrass products that includes 14% Hi-Performance Mix, a low-glycemic formulation made from the choicest cereal grains and fortified with a precisely calculated blend of high-quality proteins, vitamins, and minerals. As part of her ration, she also consumes Racehorse Cubes, a high-energy feed that provides calories in the form of super fibers. Natural vitamin E is included in the formulation of Racehorse Cubes. Because of its superior bioavailability, natural vitamin E is preferred over synthetic forms, thereby providing a maximal antioxidant defense.

PHOTOGRAPH | BRIAN LAWLESS


Oh Jackie and jockey Ken Whelan (orange and gold silks) negotiate one of the formidable obstacles en route to their La Touche Cup victory.

Horses trained by Colm Murphy packed a one-two punch during the racing meet. Bambootcha claimed triumph in the Gain Horse Feeds Handicap Hurdle. Murphy was ecstatic with the mare's performance.

"She sprouted wings! I was hoping she would improve off today's run as it was her first start back after a long layoff. It was a big ask being thrown in at the deep end and we will keep her going through the summer now and hopefully run in some of the better handicaps."

Murphy's second victory at the Punchestown Racing Festival was with Big Zeb, winner of the Cathal Ryan Memorial Swordlestown Cup Novice Chase.

Bambootcha and Big Zeb are maintained on RE•LEVE®, the first low-starch feed introduced into the global feed marketplace. By replacing dietary starch with fat and fiber, hard-working horses benefit from RE•LEVE in multiple ways. Although the feed is appropriate for all equine athletes subjected to intense exercise, it is particularly useful for horses prone to tying-up. In addition, the natural vitamin E in RE•LEVE provides antioxidant reinforcement for muscle recovery following strenuous works or racing. For additional information on RE•LEVE, visit www.kerx.com.

Proper nutrition remains an essential element of winning performances. The feeds manufactured by Bluegrass Horse Feeds are formulated by the professional equine nutritionists at Kentucky Equine Research. 

PHOTOGRAPH | HEALY RACING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Oh Jackie's connections collect the La Touche Cup for her impressive win at the Punchestown Festival of Racing.

"It doesn't get any better than that."

Stuart Crawford—



NATIONAL HUNT RACING

For horse racing aficionados in the United States, National Hunt racing may mean very little. For those who enjoy the sport of kings in all its forms, in every nook of the world, National Hunt racing spells excitement.

The sport is much like flat racing with two notable exceptions. First, races cover much more terrain. Instead of races that are approximately one mile long, which are customary in the United States, National Hunt races vary between two and four and a half miles. And second, the horses are required to jump obstacles of varying width and height. Depending on the type of race challenged, fence height can range from three and a half to four and a half feet.

National Hunt races originated in Ireland in the early 1700s. By the middle of that century, race conditions and results were being recorded for historical purposes. Now, almost three centuries later, National Hunt races remain celebrated events in Ireland, and in the interim, their popularity seeped to the United Kingdom.

The most well-known National Hunt race is the Grand National, which is contested at Aintree in England. Though the course is relatively flat—sometimes races are run over rolling terrain with appreciable hills—fence height and course layout account for its reputation as the most challenging race of its kind in the world. The fences of the Grand National are the largest ever built for a National Hunt race and some include significant drops on the landing side. The track includes a few tricky twists and turns that frequently catch horses off guard.

National Hunt races remain wildly popular in Ireland and the United Kingdom. Horses that compete in these races often have a long career, which allows spectators and fans to cheer on their favorites year after year. For some, nothing is more exciting than wagering a few dollars on an old favorite.