

FANTASTIC

A TALL TALE THAT COULD COME TRUE

HAVE you heard the one about the two Irishmen, two Yorkshiresmen and the shepherd? It's not funny, but it could become fact at Cheltenham today.

They are trying to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup for Michael Dickinson—and could fill the first five places. Dermot Browne on Ashley House and yours truly on Wayward Lad are the Irishmen.

Robert Earnshaw (Silver Buck) and Graham Bradley (Bregawn) are Yorkshire lads, while my mate Dave Goulding takes a break from lambing sheep in Cumbria to ride Captain John.

I'm told it's about 150-1 against Michael's "fantastic five" completing the grand slam.



Jonjo O'Neill at Cheltenham

From yesterday's Racing Mirror

MICHAEL DICKINSON, Britain's champion trainer, hit the bookies for a fortune in yesterday's big race, the £70,000 Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup, when his horses filled the first FIVE places.

Punters snapped up odds of 150-1 about magnificent Michael achieving this fantastic feat. And it cost the bookies a cool £250,000—on top of the caning they took from the victory of Bregawn, the 100-30 favourite.

Bregawn was followed home by Captain John (2), Wayward Lad (3), Silver Buck (4), and Ashley House (5).

Bookies William Hill reported a payout of more than £100,000. Esal bookmakers had to hand over £50,000—and other firms were last night still counting the cost of Dickinson's unique clean-up.

Dickinson, 33, broke

Trainer Mike hits bookies with a Gold Cup bonanza



by TIM RICHARDS

another world record by saddling 12 winners in an afternoon on Boxing Day.

And the next one firmly in his sights is Arthur Stephenson's record of 114 winners in a season.

Bregawn was Dickinson's 109th winner of the season.

The £45,260 Gold Cup first prize made him the first National Hunt trainer to win more than

£300,000 in a season. His haul now stands at £340,740.

Dickinson is supported at his Harewood stables in Yorkshire by a dynamic pair in his dad Tony and mum Monica.

They make up the most famous racing family in Britain. Tony said after his son's five-timer: "That'll put a smile on his face."

Dickinson said: "I'm

so proud of my horses and all my lads.

"I've been worried stiff since the bookmakers started betting on my having the first five home. I've had a few problems, and have been under great pressure.

"It all got worse and worse nearer the race—it's been hell.

"If only people realised the achievement is to get a horse here fit to run—let alone win."

Jonjo O'Neill, who rode Wayward Lad, said: "It must rate as the training performance of all time."



PROUD: Dickinson

CHARLIE TO CHUCK IT IN

CHARLIE GEORGE, one of the game's most gifted players of recent years, has quit troubled Chelsea.

George is disillusioned with the club and claims he will not be going back.

His decision is further evidence of the growing discontent among Chelsea's players and supporters, who never had the chance of seeing the former England international displaying his talents.

George said last night: "I'm fit and just dying to play. But I'd rather not talk about my spell at Chelsea."

I understand Charlie has never been happy with the set-up at Stamford Bridge.

He went to the club on trial for expenses only but a thigh injury two weeks ago speeded his decision to quit.

George, 32—still idolised at Arsenal and Derby—has been training alone around his Hampshire home and at another former club, Southampton.

Many feel he could still delight First Division crowds, but he may now look overseas.

Adds George: "I've nothing to prove, but to

By KEVIN MOSELEY

be honest I'd play reserve football just to have a game and enjoy myself."

Ipswich yesterday announced the return of George Burley to the first team, and striker Eric Gates is no longer up for transfer.

Fullback Burley has been out for three months with a trapped nerve in a knee, but he is ready to face Nottingham Forest tomorrow.

Gates comes off the list after six months.



GEORGE: unhappy at Chelsea.

Sandy heads back across the border

By JACK STEGGLES

WEST HAM have sold striker Sandy Clark to Glasgow Rangers for £160,000.

Clark made a surprise return to Scotland only ten months after joining the Hammers for £200,000 from Airdrie.

He played as a part-timer before his move to Upton Park, and clearly found it hard to adjust, scoring only ten goals this season.

Clark was given a hard time by the West Ham fans during the club's recent lean spell. Now Hammers boss John Lyall is set for a beat-the-deadline swoop for a striker to partner Paul Goddard—and he could find one right on his doorstep.

Tottenham are in the mood to listen to offers for Garth Crooks or Steve Archibald—both currently out of first-team favour.

One is surplus following the arrival of Alan Brazil from Ipswich and cash-conscious Spurs are in no position to turn down a reasonable offer.

But don't rule out another raid on Scotland. Lyall has had success there in the past and has always been an admirer of Dundee United's Paul Sturrock.

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