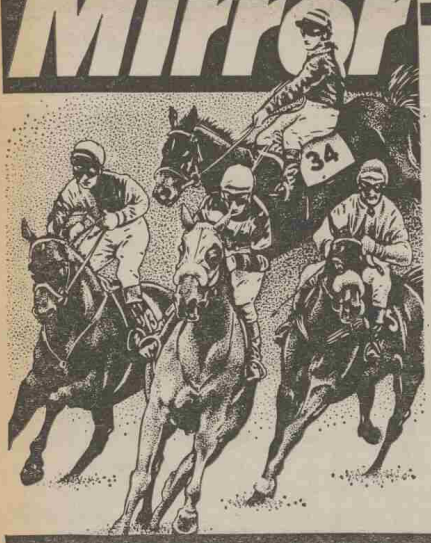
GRAND NATIONAL Mirror



The Grand National Field

SPOT FORM

302 2101-02 **GRITTAR** F Gilman 10-11-12 (CD,F)..... P Barton 68
(Mauve and white hoops, quartered cap)

303 1P2343 **VENTURE TO COGNAC** F Winter 10-11-12..... O Sherwood 63
(Green and orange halved, quartered cap)

304 203140 **TACROY** P O'Connor (IRE) 9-11-9 ..... F Berry 64
(White, red diamonds and sleeves, white cap)

305 1422/21 **SPARTAN MISSILE** N Henderson 11-11-7 (C).....H Davies 61
(Rifle green, silver striped sleeves, quartered cap)

306 300112 **CORBIERE** Mrs J Pitman 8-11-4..... B de Haan 67
(Light blue and orange chevrons, blue sleeves and cap)

307 404234 **KING SPRUCE** M J O'Brien (IRE) 9-11-4 ..... Joy Carrier 61
(Red, blue spots sleeves and cap)

308 101F-14 **ROYAL MAIL** (NZ) S Mellor 13-11-4 .....T Thomson Jones 62
(Light blue, purple spots, armlets and cap)

309 413321 **PEATY SANDY** Miss H B Hamilton 9-11-3..... T G Dun 69●
(Eton blue and black hoops, blue sleeves and cap)

310 243312 **POLITICAL POP** M W Dickinson 9-11-3 ..... G Bradley 65
(Purple and yellow stripes, black cap)

311 0-1100P **THE LADY'S MASTER** M Duggan (IRE) 12-11-2 .....W P Mullins 60
(Light green, black hoop on body and sleeve, black cap)

313 043221 **CARROW BOY** W Durkan (IRE) 11-10-12 (EW)
(Royal blue, white hoop sleeves, cap with blue

314 002111 **BONUM OMEN** F Walwyn 9-10-9 (SF).....
(Maroon, gold diamond, sleeves and cap)

315 012123 **MID DAY GUN** J Webber 9-10-8 (BF) .....
(Royal blue, white spots and sleeves, scarlet ca

316 U14202 **PILOT OFFICER** Mrs M Rimell 8-10-7 .....
(Royal blue, red Cross of Lorraine, yellow cap)

317 11-2P00 **BEACON TIME** D McCain 9-10-6 (C).....
(Black and white stripes, red sleeves, white ca

318 13F101 **GREASEPAINT** M Cunningham (IRE) 8-10-6 ..
(Purple, pink disc and cap)

319 F00002 **BEECH KING** P Woods (IRE) 9-10-3 .....
(Red, black star and sleeves, red cap, black st

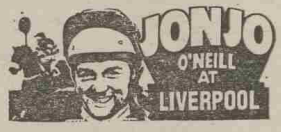
320 202432 **FORTINA'S EXPRESS** W A Stephenson 9-10-
(Yellow, blue stripe armlets and cap)

321 04-3442 **HOT TOMATO** W Clay 11-10-2 .....
(Yellow, emerald green star and sleeves, yellow

323 03F413 **THREE TO ONE** K Oliver 12-10-2.....
(White, royal blue diamond, armlets and diamo

Duke gives me big pre-race scare

I HAD the most frightening big-race scare of my life yesterday. And Ginger McCain nearly found himself looking for another jockey for Beacon Time in the National.



I missed by literally a nose being savaged by the biggest, fiercest-looking black alsatian guard dog I've ever seen.

I've always planned to play this National on Beacon Time very low key, hoping my luck would change.

At worst, get round for the first time in eight attempts and, at best, realise my lifelong ambition by galloping to glory up Aintree's long run-in.

But it so nearly became the National that never was for me as I walked round market gardener Brian Aughton's beautiful place near Ormskirk where Red Rum used to be turned out in Summer.

Brushed

I rode Meridian for Brian in the National one year, but I'm afraid I never want to see Duke, his alsatian, again.

Duke flew at me, baring his teeth and his nose actually brushed my right elbow. Mercifully, his long chain snapped tight in time to save me. Otherwise, I could have been guiding Beacon Time one-handed over today's 30 fearsome fences.

You can't help but look forward to trying to conquer the world famous Aintree country on a horse like Beacon Time. He's so sensible.

Concern

I can see him going really well. He won last year's Topham Trophy over the course and my biggest worry is whether he will last out the stamina-sapping four and a half miles.

If we get to the Canal Turn second time—that's the furthest I've ever been in the National—my concern will be nursing him to get the trip.

Ginger 'Red Rum' McCain bought Beacon Time for my friend from Jersey, Stan Markland, for one job—to win the National.

Ginger has trained him all season with Liverpool in his sights. Now it's up to me to lay my Grand National bogey.

When I rode Champion Hurdle runner-up Boreen Prince—my mount in today's Templegate Hurdle—on the course yesterday morning the very soft ground made me think of one National horse, Peaty Sandy.

I reckon the soggy turf will be made for Scotland's Splendid Stayer and his jockey, Geordie Dun, in the National.

Peaty Sandy will love it and his stamina should be powering him forward when the going gets tough.

He's running into form at the right time. I can still picture him trying to make a race of it at Kelso last month with Cheltenham Gold Cup runner-up Captain John until a second-last fence blunder checked his progress.

That mild March afternoon at Kelso threw up Cheltenham Festival winner Sabin du Loir, as well as Cheltenham seconds Captain John, Brunton Park and Earls Brig.

Now Peaty Sandy could put the little border country course on the map as THE place for big-race trials.

Only an idiot would ignore the magnificent pair Grittar, the hero last year, and Spartan Missile, second to Aldaniti in 1981.

But they have not enjoyed trouble-free preparations and if they're not 101 per cent Aintree will find them out.

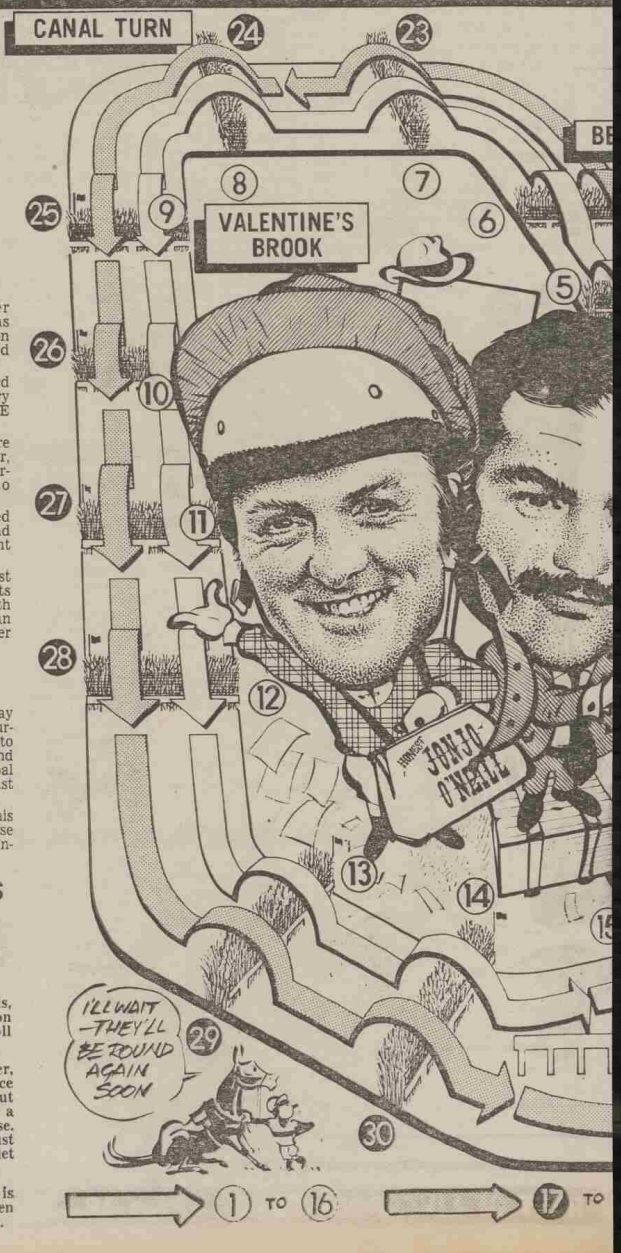
King Spruce, winner of last year's Irish National presents American Joy Carrier with the best chance any woman has had of riding the winner so far.

Agonising

I haven't got carried away with Beacon Time on purpose. First I want him to carry me over the second Canal Turn, then my goal will be to arrive at the last fence ...

With enough gas in his tank to get us up those agonising 494 yards of run-in—in front!

JONJO O'NEILL talking to TIM RICHARDS



It's Missile this time



HYWEL DAVIES

SPARTAN MISSILE, once four lengths away from a place on Aintree's roll of honour, can put that right this afternoon. Hywel Davies rides.



By CHARLES FAWCUS

Two years ago Spartan was second to Aldaniti and Bob Champion in the most emotional Grand National ever. Just two weeks afterwards Spartan broke down and last year his owner-rider, John Thorne, was killed in a riding fall.

Spartan Missile, now owned by John's widow, Wendy, and trained by their son-in-law Nick Henderson, has battled back to fitness just like Aldaniti and treated the Newbury fences like twigs when winning his second comeback race.

He didn't really start to gallop until the last 200 yards, so today's four-mile marathon could be like a country stroll to this giant horse!

Grittar, last year's winner, may have lost his first choice jockey John Francome, but substitute Paul Barton has a great record round the course. Grittar is hitting form at just the right time and won't let his title go lightly.

My third-placed choice is Canford Ginger, who has been practising over giant fences.

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