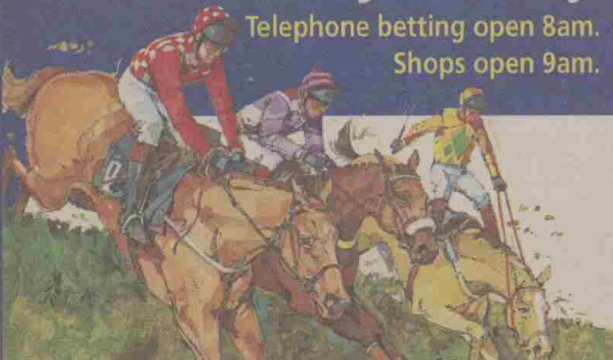


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MARTELL GRAND NATIONAL

4 miles 4 furlongs, Aintree 3.45pm, Live on BBC TV.

7/2 Double Thriller	50/1 Samlee
11/2 Call It A Day	50/1 Strong Chairman
9/1 Addington Boy	50/1 Tamarindo
9/1 Eudipe	66/1 Avro Anson
9/1 Fiddling The Facts	66/1 Bells Life
12/1 Suny Bay	66/1 Brave Highlander
14/1 Earth Summit	100/1 Camelot Knight
14/1 Nahthen Lad	100/1 Frazer Island
18/1 General Wolfe	100/1 Mudahim
20/1 Baronet	150/1 Choisty
20/1 Kendal Cavalier	150/1 Feels Like Gold
22/1 Bobbyjo	150/1 St Mellion Fairway
25/1 Coome Hill	200/1 Castle Coin
33/1 Blue Charm	200/1 Merry People
50/1 Cavalero	500/1 Back Bar
50/1 Cyborgo	500/1 Commercial Artist

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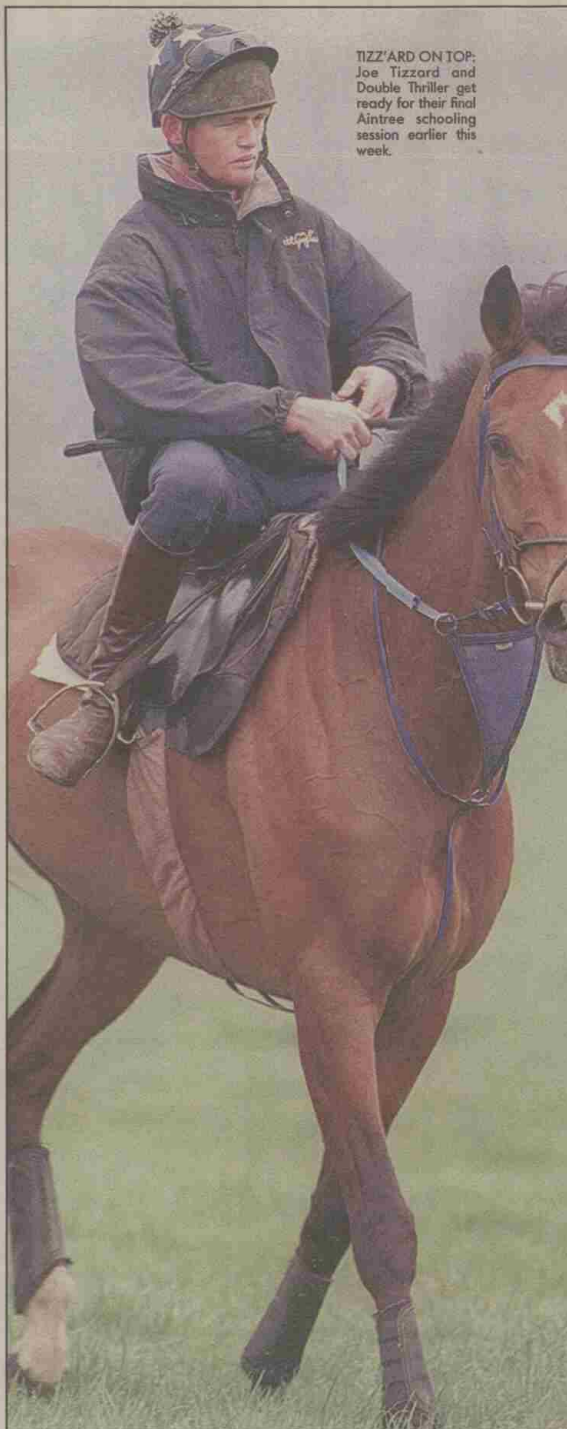
If your Grand National betting slip totals £10 or more (including deductions) and is a complete loser, you can get another bet - Free. Free bet is for £1 on 3 Numbers or 4's available Monday April 12th to Saturday April 24th. Just take your losing Grand National slip into any William Hill shop and present at the counter to claim your free 4's bet. If correct, your 4's Number bet could win you £512 (3 numbers from 3 selected, - based on £1 stake, deduction included). Free bet is not applicable to telephone bets.

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TIZZARD ON TOP: Joe Tizzard and Double Thriller get ready for their final Aintree schooling session earlier this week.



Dave MITCHELL

FOR a man who started up with 10 grand and a handful of cast-off horses eight years ago, top jump trainer Paul Nicholls has not done too badly for himself.

At Aintree today, the 36-year-old son of a policeman sends out Double Thriller, likely to go off the shortest priced favourite for the Grand National since Golden Miller caused such a sensation when unseating Gerry Wilson at 2-1 in 1985.

Double Thriller has shortened dramatically in the National market on the back of his fourth place in the Cheltenham Gold Cup and a string of bets doubling him with Lincoln winner Right Wing.

But Nicholls is well aware he has more than an entry in racing's most famous hall of fame riding on today's race. Thanks to the Cheltenham wins of See More Business, in the Gold Cup, Flagship Uberalles, in the Arkle and Call Equiname, in the Queen Mother Champion Chase, Nicholls' army of top chasers has given him a healthy lead over Martin Pipe in the trainers table.

That advantage will become unassailable if Double Thriller makes Nicholls the first trainer since the late Fred Rimell in 1976 to send out the winners of the Gold Cup and Grand National in the same season.

"Winning a National never did anybody any harm," said Nicholls, with tongue firmly in cheek.

"But winning the title is the No.1 priority and winning the National will clinch that."

Improve

Double Thriller, at 17.2 hands high, is tall enough to dwarf any of Aintree's green walls, came to Nicholls by way of the hunting and point-to-point world.

But for Nicholls, who works his horses for a living at home, so they do not improve much for a run, first impressions of the horse were not of a top-class performer.

"Reg Wilkins, the owner, used to train the horse himself, but he is getting on a bit and had not been in the best of health, so he decided to send Double Thriller to me last autumn."

"The horse had beaten Teeton Mill at Cheltenham that April and there were plenty of people looking to buy him and I think Reg wanted to put a stop to all the calls," said Nicholls.

"To be honest, the horse was a bit lethargic in his early work, but soon cottoned on to what we required."

"Then Double Thriller picked up a bit of the bug which effected the yard over Christmas and missed his first intended outing at Newbury."

But he was soon in action and

PITMAN'S AINTREE RECORD

1981: Lord Gulliver (fell 13th).
1982: Artistic Prince (fell 1st), Monty Python (ref 22).
1983: CORBIERE (won), Monty Python (ref 15th), Artistic Prince (refused 20th).
1984: Corbiere (3rd).
1985: Corbiere (3rd).
1986: Corbiere (fell 4th).
1987: Smith's Man (11th), Corbiere (12th).
1988: Smith's Man (pu 3rd).
1989: Team Challenge (9th), Gainsay (fell 19th).
1990: Team Challenge (11th), Mick's Star (19th), Gainsay (fell 14th).
1991: Golden Freeze (17th), Garrison Savannah (2nd), Abba Lad (pu 17th), Team Challenge (ref 19th).
1992: Willsford (20th), Team Challenge (21st).
1993: Garrison Savannah (1st 17th).
1994: Lusty Light (fell 1st), Esha Ness (fell 12th), De Be Brief (fell 20th), Superior Finish (10th).
1995: Lusty Light (16th), Superior Finish (3rd).
1996: Lusty Light (16th), Smith's Band (fell 20th).
1997: Nahthen Lad (9th), Smith's Band (fell 20th).
1998: Nahthen Lad (fell 11th).
"In 1993 Mrs Pitman's charge Esha Ness was first of seven runners to complete the course in the void Grand National."

JENNY OUT

By CHARLES FAWCUS

THE FIRST lady of Aintree will strut the Grand National stage for the final time today, leaving behind a string of unforgettable memories.

But win lose or draw with Nahthen Lad, Jenny Pitman, who hands in her licence in June, will hold centre stage when a special presentation is made to her before the race commemorating another Aintree legend, Red Rum.

There will not be a dry eye in the house as Lord Daresbury, chairman of Aintree racecourse, presents her with life membership of the exclusive Grand National Club.

She will also receive a diamond-

set horse and fence brooch and a bottle of Classique de Martell in a 'Buccarat' decanter. Lord Daresbury will also make a short tribute to her achievements at Aintree.

Corbiere was the horse who first put Mrs P's name on the roll of honour for the world's greatest steeplechase back in 1983 and she has been part of the Grand National legend ever since.

All those interviews with the BBC's Des Lynam will reach a climax after the presentation when Nahthen Lad becomes her farewell runner.

But do not get the impression our