

GRAND NATIONAL 1954

15 Fully a quarter-million people crowded Aintree. The famous  
course was the mecca of all racegoers fortunate enough to  
be there for the running of the Grand National. To call  
it ~~the~~ merely the world's biggest steeplechase is misleading,  
25 ~~and~~ the race is unique. No other jumps are comparable.  
This year a comparatively small field of 29 guarded  
against those mass falls at the first fence which have  
40 partly spoiled some Grand Nationals in the past. All  
29 came <sup>up 2 t gate.</sup> ~~under starter's orders~~. The great throng of  
50 spectators were on their toes with excitement. The field  
got into line, and that experienced starter Mr. Marsh had  
the gate up .... They were off for two circuits of Aintree,  
four-and-a-half miles, <sup>7</sup> thirty formidable, almost terrifying  
jumps.

Though there was no big-scale failure at the first fence  
it was the end of four hopes; Alberoni, Gentle Moya, Swinton  
Hero and Whispering Steel were all out of the Grand  
National when it had hardly started .... and at the second  
fence Baire, Minimax and Dominick's Bar all failed. ~~Legal~~  
~~Jay, Uncle Barney, Coneyburrow and Sanperion were well-~~  
~~placed at the fence~~

25 ~~at~~ The fence before Bechers put paid to the hopes of Gay  
Monarch II. On went the rest, <sup>Legal Jay 7 Uncle Barney</sup> ~~the same four~~ leading the  
field, only seconds now separating them from the ~~finish~~ <sup>Scrivell</sup>  
~~at~~ Bechers, with its fourfoot-ten fence, its brook of six  
feet and great drop to the other side. In slow-motion we  
see how well they took it, not one falling ~~at~~ this place  
where so many have come to grief in the past.

~~(after remote)~~

(after remote) Coneyburrow, that model jumper, was up with Triple Torch, Sanperion, Punchestown Star and Legal Joy as the remaining field all safely got over the seventh fence, between Bechers and the Canal Turn.

170 (next)

The Canal has a five-foot fence, and once over it the runners ~~all~~ have to make a sharp left-hand turn, yet all but ~~one~~ <sup>State</sup> were safely over and round. ~~State~~ fell.

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At Valentine's Brook Coneyburrow was in front, going perfectly and looking every inch a born Grand National horse. Irish Lizard had replaced him as favourite, but Coneyburrow's backers were already feeling very happy. Border Luck fell three jumps after Valentine's.

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Rounding the long bend after Fence 12, the magnificent Coneyburrow, beautifully ridden by P. Taaffe, <sup>led</sup> from Punchestown Star, a 66-1 outsider carrying bottom weight of ten stone.

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At the 13th Miss Dorothy Paget's Legal Joy came to grief.

1 (2 out)

At the Water Jump backers of the impeccable Coneyburrow nearly had heart failure. He slipped, but somehow righted himself and Taaffe was still in the saddle. They were coming now into the second circuit of the course, and there on the rails was Lord Leverhulme's Royal Stuart, another outsider quoted 66-1, Punchestown star, Sanperion, Ordnance, Tudor Line and Churchtown were all well in the race. Not far behind were Royal Tan, Irish Lizard and Coneyburrow, recovering now from his mistake at the Water.

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(1 out)

*One by*

~~Going on to~~ Bechers for the second time Churchtown, another Irish hope, led by a fraction from Sanperion. Again there were no casualties at Bechers itself, ~~but at the next fence Prince of Arragon failed. So did Ordance.~~

At the Canal Churchtown was in front, with Sanperion, Tudor Line, Royal Tan and Coneyburrow pretty well up with him. Experts were predicting that one of these five would win. No horse fell at Valentine's, all jumping with an apparent ease perfectly <sup>seen</sup> ~~as~~ in slow-motion.

Two jumps later the gallant outsider Royal Stuart came to grief, Punchestown Star refused, and to the dismay of the large Irish contingent at Aintree Coneyburrow fell too.

Churchtown, Royal Tan and Tudor Line were fighting it out between them.

Churchtown lost ground with a bad landing at the last-jump-but-one, and at the final fence Tudor Line jumped badly and Royal Tan looked all over a winner. Royal Tan, the laziest thing on four legs, they've called him, twice a failure when he seemed to have the National in his pocket, and now the big prize seemed to be his. Tudor Line's final effort was just too late; Royal Tan won by a neck.

The horse was so disturbed by his reception he could hardly be got to the unsaddling enclosure. Very calm, in the saddle, was Bryan Marshall, who rode Early Mist to victory last year. And Early Mist, like Royal Tan, was owned by Mr. J. H. Griffin, Dublin chocolate manufacturer. Owner, jockey, and trainer the same two years running.

Bryan Marshall is the only jockey for 69 years to win two Grand Nationals in succession. They're used to Irish victories at Aintree, but there was never one like this.

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(a/women)

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