

GRAND NATIONAL 1956

There was every prospect that it would be a Royal Grand National. The Queen Mother, here with her Majesty and the Princess, had two horses running, Devon Loch and M'as-Tu-Vu. What an unforgettable day it would be if one of them could land the most coveted prize in Steeplechasing. Obviously enjoying himself hugely was Mr. Malenkov, seeing at close quarters both Devon Loch and the the Royal second string, M'as-Tu-Vu. There were 27 other runners, the well-~~known~~^{backed} Pippykin, for example, whose ~~riders~~ riders were ambitious to win for themselves. Early Mist, 12-stone-2, and Royal Tan, 12-stone-1, carried top weights. They were the only two previous Grand National winners in the field. Heavy betting also supported Carey's Cottage, Must, Sundew and Devon Loch but like all Grand Nationals it looked an open race.

(TV) 29 runners were expected to come under starters orders. Royal hopes rested mainly on Devon Loch, for M'as-Tu-Vu is not an ideal Aintree ^{prospect} horse. Only the strongest can expect to make two circuits of this most formidable course. Mr. Marsh very skillfully got the big field away. The ~~runners~~ runners had 4-and-a-half-miles in front of them and ~~30~~ 30 jumps.

The very first fence was fatal to Must, // the grey, High Guard, Reverend Prince and Early Mist.

Over the second Armorial, Domata, Eagle Lodge and Devon Loch were well up.

X Jump No.-3 was ~~falling~~^{last 4} the Irish-trained ~~Man~~ No Response, C. Finnegan up - or rather down.

Armorial and Sundew led at the fourth, which was the last jump for Marriner's Log.

Armorial was ^{up} first over jump No.-5, the one before the famous and much dreaded Bechers Brook.

Surprisingly enough Bechers exacted no toll the first time round. Armorial, Domata, Eagle Lodge, Gentle Moya and Devon Loch all pounded on towards the seventh jump.

After no.-7 comes the Canal Turn, where the course takes an almost right-angle ^{left turn} quite a feat of balance for horse and rider. At Valentine's Brook Armorial, Sundew and Eagle Lodge were going splendidly.

~~No. 10~~ ^{Number 10} ~~Number 10~~ produced a casualty, ^{still} but Armorial, E.S.B., and Eagle Lodge ^{on to} fled the field ~~over~~ No. 11. Domata said goodbye to the race here.

No. 12; almost every jump was taking toll now, & Armorial was beginning to look every inch a winner. A seven-year-old he carried 10-stone-10 and to all appearances had all the stamina his backers could ^{wish} ~~have~~. He ran on, with his beautiful action, in what appeared to be a commanding lead over the 14th. He was still ahead of

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Sundew, Eagle Lodge, Ontray and Key Royal over the Chair, Only one jump remained in the first circuit of the course, the Water Jump, a ~~leap of 15 feet-0 and a 2-foot-6 fence.~~

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It was a very much thinned field that Armorial led on the second time round. Sundew, E.S. B., Eagle Lodge and Devon Loch were still in the running; all of them safely over jump 17.

~~Two jumps later it was still Armorial. Dunboy II and Witty fell here.~~

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Now it was Bechers for the second time. Sundew fell. Armorial, Devon Loch, Eagle Lodge, E.S.B. and Gentle Moya got over well.

~~Domata~~ Pippykin was now out of it.

Now the Canal Turn again.

Valentines: the pattern of the race unchanged.

One after Valentines Armorial fell. So did Much Obliged. ~~They~~ left Devon Loch in the lead, Eagle Lodge, E.S.B., Ontray and Gentle Moya hopefully following. All safely got over No. 28 and there was Devon Loch, running as though he knew he carried the colours of the Queen Mother.

Yes, it seemed as though nothing could stop Devon Loch. *This is the* ~~last~~ jump. Just that run in of 484 yards; long enough to ~~be upset~~ *upset* ~~calculated~~ often in the past. *B* Devon Loch was well ahead of E.S.B., *7* A great roar came up from all over Aintree; it was going to be a victory for the Queen Mother.

The incredible happened. The horse ~~skidded~~ almost at the post. Devon Loch had failed. The Grand National was a present for E.S.B.

The gallant mare Gentle Moya was second, 12-year-old Royal Tan third. What a cruel disappointment in the Royal Box, what tragedy for Richard Francis, the defeated rider.

Mrs. Leonard Carver led in E.S.B.

David Dick rode a wonderful race, but the Grand National of 1956 will always be remembered for the tragic lapse of the Queen Mother's unlucky horse, Devon Loch.

It is same, Bravo, G.S.B

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