

DOMINICK'S BAR WINS IRISH GRAND NATIONAL

To Fairyhouse flock racegoers in their thousands for Ireland's steeplechase of the year - the Grand National. No grand day, it is still a national occasion. COTTAGE RAKE - here seen in the paddock - is, as expected, favourite though it carries top weight. The knowledgeable ones, however, plumb for DOMINICK'S BAR, No. 3. With ten other thoroughbreds to pick from, racing fans are in a quandary, for like any Grand National, the result is anybody's guess.

A £2,000 prize lies ahead, as the racing dozen gets off to a fast start. Three and a half miles to go - more than a dozen fences to cross. Over the first jump the field is tightly packed, with DOMINICK'S BAR, STOCKMAN, COUPE and DERRINSTOWN leading the way to No. 2.

First time round and into the straight before the grandstand. Half the gruelling race is over and it's FALSE SCENT (nearest the camera) and COTTAGE RAKE fighting it out for the lead. Neck and neck, they race along for the turn and the second circuit.

Out in the country, STORMHEAD jumps up among the leaders and now it's a private battle between big COTTAGE RAKE and sprightly STORMHEAD, with the rest of the field tightly bunched behind.

Crossing the last jump and pounding up the last few furlongs, it's STORMHEAD still a shade in front - with DOMINICK'S BAR hard on its tail. COTTAGE RAKE is out of it - top weight was too much for him. Slowly - inch by inch - champion jockey Martin Melony edges DOMINICK'S BAR into the lead. He's gaining - a neck - a quarter length - a half - what a finish! It's the most exciting finish seen on Fairy course for years! Two lengths separate them at the post, with DOMINICK'S BAR a brilliant winner. Superbly ridden by Martin Melony, trained to peak condition by Tim Hyde, DOMINICK'S BAR's 8 to 1 triumph puts a hole in the bookies pocket and gives the thrill of a lifetime to its owner's daughter, Miss Kiely.