

Our Sports Summary

FOOTBALL IN CHRISTCHURCH.

Following were the scores of the Marists' teams in the matches played on last Saturday week (writes our own correspondent):—Marist seniors v. Sydenham-Lyttelton, 24-3; juniors v. Riccarton, 3-0; 3rd grade v. Linwood, 6-3; 4th grade, a bye; 5th grade v. Linwood, 28-5; and 6th grade v. Y.M.C.A., 54-0.

Liverpool Grand National

REMINISCENCES OF THE BIG CHASE.

The Liverpool Grand National (says a Home paper) is the world's greatest steeplechase. It represents a long, tiring journey of four miles and a half (to be accurate, it is only 24 yards short of the distance). The obstacles to be surmounted are exceptionally formidable, and they are numerous; the competition is always very keen, the best performers being engaged, the pace is very hot throughout, and it is no use taking a bad jumper to Aintree. Thirty times has the Grand National horse to jump in the course of his long journey. Fourteen of these obstacles, however, are taken twice. The two jumps cleared once only are the famous "Open Ditch" and the equally famous "Water Jump," both opposite, or nearly opposite, the grand stand and both frequent sources of discomfort to the field as they complete the first circuit. The celebrated "Beecher's Brook" and "Canal Turn," and "Valentine's Brook," are household words in the world of steeplechasing, and all have taken toll year by year of many much fancied candidates. A "National" winner must possess at least three notable qualifications—viz., a good turn of speed, fine jumping ability, and staying power. He cannot afford nowadays to lay off and wait. He must go on with the others.

The First National.

The first Grand National was run in 1839 and was won by Lottery, who looked like scoring again the following year, when he came down at the stone wall, an obstacle that brought three others to grief also. Lottery ran again in 1841 and 1842, but failed to join that select band of dual winners which includes Peter Simple, Abd-el-Kader, The Lamb, The Colonel, and Manifesto.

In 1848, when Chandler won, the field included a chestnut gelding named Eagle ridden by Johnnie Broome, the prize fighter, who performed quite well until Beecher's Brook was reached, when Eagle refused and Broome took such a toss that he was knocked out, thus losing a wager that he would be in the fourth field from home when the winner passed the post.

First Dual Winner.

The first dual winner was Mr. Joseph Osborne's Abd-el-Kader, who scored in 1850 with 9st 12lbs and with 10st 4lbs the following year, making a record in the former year by completing the course in 9min 57½secs. His performance was excellent, seeing that he only stood 15.2. He was by Ishmael out of a coach mare, purchased for 50 guineas and hunted by Mr. Osborne in Ireland.

A Matter of Opinion.

It will be quite legitimate to disagree as to what were the best horses that have won the famous 'chase. Names such as Emblem, The Lamb, The Colonel, Disturbance, and Cloister will come trippingly to the tongue, Come Away and Frigate in more modern days, Jerry M., and Troystown. When Wild Man from Borneo won it with Mr. Joseph Widger in the saddle, Waterford went jubilantly mad. It may be mentioned here that Salamander, who beat a field of 30 in 1866, was found in a hovel in Ireland and bought for a very small sum.

Cloister's Record.

Cloister put up a wonderful record in the race. Second to Come Away in 1890, he was second again, carrying 12st 3lbs, to Father O'Flynn in 1892, and then with the impost of 12st 7lbs, and with W. Dollery up, he made almost all the running and won in a canter by 40 lengths in 1893.

The Great Manifesto.

For consistency the palm must be given to Manifesto. He made his first appearance in 1895 (Wild Man from

Borneo's year), and two years later beat a big field, ridden by Terry Kavanagh; while again in 1899, with George Williamson in the saddle, Manifesto carried 12st 7lb to victory. Manifesto was third in 1900, 1902, and 1903, and in all his seven appearances in the race only fell once, when in 1900, Algic Anthony won on Ambush II., and Manifesto carried 12st 13lbs into third place. His last appearance in the contest was in 1903, when, after conceding 25lbs to Kirkland, he again finished third.

The Beasleys.

The record of that famous family of horsemen, the Beasleys, must not be forgotten in connection with the event. Of the brothers, we have still Mr. Harry Beasley hale and hearty with us, able to appreciate the prowess in the pigskin of his sons, Willie and Harry. Tommy Beasley won three Nationals on Empress, Woodbrook, and Frigate, and among other historic events, the Paris Steeplechase on Whisper Low. Harry scored on Come Away in 1891, and Willie was second on Frigate in 1888.



SHAUN SPADHA IN THE 1923 GRAND NATIONAL.

The Aintree Fences.

Distance from the start to first fence, 546 yards. The run in, 494 yards.

1 and 17—Thorn fence (gorse), 4ft 6in high, 2ft 9in wide; 2 and 18—Thorn fence (gorse), 4ft 6in high, 3ft wide; 3 and 19—Thorn fence (fir), 5ft high, 3ft wide, with ditch on take off side 6ft wide, 2ft deep, banked up to guard rail 1ft 6in high in front of ditch; 4 and 20—Thorn fence (gorse), 5ft high, 3ft wide; 5 and 21—Thorn fence (gorse), 5ft high, 3ft wide; 6 and 22—"Beecher's Brook," a thorn fence (fir), 5ft high, 3ft 3in wide, with a natural brook on far side 5ft 6in wide, drop 6ft; 7 and 23—Thorn fence (gorse), 4ft 10in high, 3ft wide; 8 and 24—"Canal Turn," a thorn fence (gorse), 5ft high, 3ft wide, ditch on take off side 6ft wide, 2ft deep, banked up to guard rail 1ft 6in high in front of ditch; 9 and 25—"Valentine's Brook," a thorn fence (fir), 4ft 11in high, 3ft wide, a natural brook on far side 5ft 6in wide, drop 6ft; 10 and 26—Thorn fence (gorse), 5ft high, 3ft wide; 11 and 27—Thorn fence (gorse), 5ft high, 3ft wide, ditch on take off side 6ft wide, 2ft deep, banked to guard rail 1ft 6in high in front of ditch, drop 6ft; 12 and 28—Thorn fence (gorse), 4ft 11in high, 3ft wide, ditch on far side 5ft 6in wide, 4ft deep; 13 and 29—Thorn fence (spruce), 4ft 7in high, 3ft wide; 14 and 30—Thorn fence (spruce), 4ft 7in high, 3ft wide; 15—The "Open Ditch," a thorn fence (spruce), 5ft 2in high, 3ft 9in wide, ditch on take off side 6ft wide, 2ft deep, and banked to guard rail 1ft 6in high in front of ditch; 16—The "Water Jump," 15ft wide over all, with thorn fence (gorse), 2ft 6in high, 2ft 6in wide, 12ft 6in of water, 3ft deep. Distance 4 miles and 856 yards.

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