

# NEWSLETTER

## Sapphire Racing Syndicate

No. 5 June/July 2016

**R**andall Stevens has turned into a racehorse. His last two runs at Roscommon and Gowran show that the penny has dropped, the greenness has disappeared, and the ability he shows on the gallops has translated to the track. I couldn't be happier with him, and as a Sapphire shareholder myself I'm as excited as I sense you all are.

I think that the Sapphire members who are new to syndicate ownership will have learnt a lot during the five-week period between Randall's first run at Leopardstown and his most recent run at Gowran. In beating just three home at Leopardstown, I know many people were deflated, but you really just have to pick the little positives out of a run like that, knowing how much 2yos can come on. It was interesting that the Racing Post journalist, Justin O' Hanlon picked him out as a 'dark horse' and he proved to be spot on in his assessment.

I didn't overly fancy Randall at Roscommon. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, his continuing green-ness concerned me so much that I was considering gelding him if he didn't get it together that evening. The draw concerned me, too, knowing that he can be a little bit slowly away and that Roscommon can be tight if you're not handy.

Unfortunately I couldn't be there, as I was at Ascot, but I was delighted with the run. In finishing second to a highly-touted colt in Branch Line, he fully translated the best of his home-work to the racecourse and really put the experience of his first run to good use.

Winning a maiden has always been the goal with Randall, and he took another step in that direction at Gowran Park. It might have been a miserable day, but there was nothing miserable about his performance in finishing a close-up third to Intricately, on ground

that was softer than ideal, in what was undoubtedly another decent maiden – they always are at Gowran Park.

Beforehand, everybody thought it was a two-horse race, and that's the way it rode, because Randall and the favourite effectively ended up racing against each other and it probably didn't do either of them any favours. In the end they both got caught by Joseph O' Brien's closer, who the trainer sees as being a potential Listed or Group horse.

It was great to see so many Sapphire members, spouses and friends turn up at Gowran. We had a nice bit of crack in the bar afterwards, partly because

John Grehan's wife, Jackie, had backed the 33/1 winner and to make up for her disloyalty to Randall she stood us all a drink!

As I say, I'm delighted with Randall Stevens and the plan is head back to Roscommon on Monday for the Irish Stallion Farms EBF Maiden over 7 Furlongs.

See you all there.



Michael O'Callaghan



# NEWSLETTER

## Sapphire Racing Syndicate



### The Sapphire update

While **Randall Stevens** has another crack at winning his Maiden at Roscommon on Monday, his next-door neighbour in the yard, **Moral Fibre** has also been making great progress. He's a different animal since we gelded him. Recently he did his best piece of work to date when he worked on grass with an unraced colt. They travelled single-file, and once Fada gave him a slap down the shoulder, to help him concentrate, **Moral Fibre** began to close with every stride.

Fada was beaming afterwards. He said that 'Bubbles (as Fada calls him) gave him a great feel and he thinks the horse has really turned a corner.

Even though his first run is still some time away, if **Moral Fibre** keeps progressing there's nothing to say he won't be every bit as good as his brother, **Moral High Ground**.

**Mary Cockerill** has been back on the walker for almost two weeks now. She handled the confinement phase very well and mentally it didn't take anything out of her. On veterinary advice, we extended her initial recuperation period from six weeks to ten, which has allowed her even more time to grow and strengthen. Her interim x-rays were perfect, she is walking soundly, and more x-rays will be taken before we put a saddle on her back.



*Moral Fibre returns from the gallops after his best piece of work to date.*



*Mary Cockeril, 29th June 2016*



MD  
OC



### PROFILE: David Simmonson, jockey.

David Simmonson joined the Crotanstown team last year, having spent three years in England where he rode 13 winners from 380 rides. Hailing from a big Kildare racing family, David's cousin, Christopher Geoghegan rides for Kevin Prendergast, while fellow Crotanstown staff member and rider, Fada is David's uncle. 'My grandfather and all my uncles were jockeys, too,' he says, 'so it's in the blood.'

David's own riding career began with Curragh trainer James Burns. He first rode work for James at age twelve and had his first racecourse ride when he was just sixteen. After a stint with Charlie Swan, David headed to England, riding mainly for his boss, Mick Easterby before returning to Ireland in 2014. 'The first time I met Mike was when I rode Bogini to finish third at Ayr in 2012,' says David. 'I've also prepared breezers for him over the years, and I was glad to get the

opportunity to join the yard last year. Mirdif was my first winner for Mike (at Leopardstown in June) and I'm looking forward to riding many more.'

David is currently out of action with torn ligaments after a recent spill from our very own Randall Stevens 'He's a bit of a cheeky boy. He dropped me once in the middle of the yard, but this injury happened when he ducked left on the gallop and I went right! He's dropped Niamh and Fada, too, but his racing attitude is brilliant and he's come on so much since his first run.'

As well as being Randall Stevens' regular work rider, David also rode the Sapphire horse to finish third at Gowran Park on his last run.

"He jumped and travelled well that day and had two smart horses in front of him at the finish. It was a great run, as the ground was probably a bit too soft for him. It shouldn't be long until he wins his maiden."

Exciting times. We have a racehorse. We're up and running. We're in the game, competing against blue bloods trained by world-class trainers, and those we didn't finish in front of, we haven't been far behind. For me, this is what syndicate ownership is all about. Randall may not have won yet, but I think we all appreciate that few horses costing €21,000 show the talent, guts and racing attitude that our fella has shown. And who isn't counting down to another trip to beautiful Roscommon on Monday? As the ad says, 'nothing feels like this'. But this ain't no ad, and I really hope we're all enjoying it, because it really doesn't get much better than this. That said, a win would be deadly, wouldn't it?

Carlow-born, New York-based, Sapphire owner, John Lowry was back in the old sod this week. Despite the fact that his shameless canvassing of Michael to run Randall in Bellewstown, came to nothing, he did have one hell of a great afternoon, as did I, at the Curragh on Sunday, courtesy of Michael and the generous Amethyst Syndicate.

During the week, John popped into Crotanstown where he got some shots for the boys back in Pearl River. Unfortunately, he'll be mid-flight during Randall's race on Monday, but his Sapphire friends, Rory, Tommy and Rowan will be glued to *At The Races* at 12.55pm New York time.

It may not be *New York, New York* but I'm so excited about Roscommon I'm thinking of 'leaving today' because whatever happens, 'I want to be a part of it'

See yis there!

David Donohue



David Simmonson and his daughter, Fia.



Randall Stevens looking every bit a "cheeky boy".

