



German bred Notebook, winning the Irish Arkle. Foto: offiziell



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## Successful week for German breeding in N.H. races

The last couple of years have been mainly disappointing from the point of view of the German racing industry, but one field in which German-breds continue to do surprisingly well is that of N.H. racing, and last week saw several notable successes over jumps in Ireland, the U.K. and France for horses either with German pedigrees or with a strong German element. It is only four years since the German-bred **Don Cossack** (Sholokhov) won the Cheltenham Gold Cup, generally regarded as the supreme race over fences, while the same year the Champion Hurdle – the equivalent championship race over sticks – went to **Annie Power** (Shirocco), who was indeed Irish-bred, but by a German sire, winner of the German Derby in 2004, and out of a mare from the Anna Paola family. It is now less than five weeks before the start of the 2020 Cheltenham Festival but it seems quite likely that German breeding will once again be strongly represented.

The big Dublin Racing Festival last weekend, two days of top class jumping at Leopardstown, certainly provided plenty of evidence for this. The Irish Champion Hurdle went to the unbeaten Honeysuckle (Sulamani), winning her seventh race on the trot, while the Paddy Power Irish Gold

Cup was won by Delta Work (Network). The latter race was arguably the best steeplechase of the current season, and Delta Work strengthened his Cheltenham prospects by accounting for strong opposition to win narrowly but convincingly. Unfortunately his jockey Jack Kennedy had a bad fall in the very next race and broke his leg (for the fourth time!) and will miss Cheltenham as a result, but owner Gigginstown House Stud and trainer Gordon Elliott will certainly be able to find an adequate deputy, with this writer hoping that it will be Davy Russell, who has won so many top races for these connections.

Delta Work's sire **Network** (Monsun) was bred by Wittekindshof and won the Union-Rennen for trainer Andreas Schütz in 2000. He stood his entire stud career in France until his death last year; he will go down in history as sire of champion Sprinter Sacre, the highest-rated chaser since Arkle, but has had many more high class jumpers to represent him, including Rubi Ball, Saint Are and Le Richebourg. Honeysuckle is out of the Lando mare First Royal, who was quite a useful hurdler in Germany when trained by Stefan Wegner. Honeysuckle, ridden as always by the

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excellent Rachael Blackmore for trainer Henry de Bromhead, is now one of the favourites for the Cheltenham version, but is apparently more likely to run there in the Mares' Hurdle over a longer distance. Fifth in the Leopardstown race was Röttgen-bred Aramon, from Monsun's final crop, while another Champion Hurdle hope is Saldier (by Soldier Hollow out of a Monsun mare).

Another top Gr. I race at Leopardstown was the Irish Arkle, won by **Notebook** (Samum) who is now clear favourite for the equivalent race at Cheltenham. He was bred by Stephen Eversfield's Gestüt Am Schlossgarten and is also now owned by Michael O'Leary's Gigginstown. **Samum** (Monsun), who died in 2018, was a very easy winner of the German Derby in 2000 and his best performer on the flat was Kamsin, the 2008 German Derby winner, himself now a successful N.H. stallion standing in France and sire of last year's Grand Steeplechase de Paris winner On The Go. Samum is also the broodmare sire of Thyme White (Anodin), winner of the Scottish Triumph Hurdle on Sunday, with Römerhof-bred Group Stage (Maxios) runner-up. In England, Newtide (Getaway) won the Gr. 2 novice hurdle at Wetherby, but was very lucky as the clear leader fell at the last jump.

In France, Easyland (Gentlewave) won the Grand Cross de Pau over 6300 metres with Net Lady (Network) third. Easyland had also won at Cheltenham before Christmas and was afterwards sold to big Irish owner J.P. McManus, for an undisclosed but undoubtedly large sum. Easyland, who stays with his French trainer David Cottin, is expected to run next in the cross-country race at Cheltenham, when he could come up against dual Grand National winner Tiger Roll (Authorized); the Cheltenham Festival has many highlights, but that race should certainly hit the headlines. **Gentlewave**, who won the Italian Derby, is yet another son of Monsun to make it as a sire of jumpers. He has now moved from France to Yorton Farm Stud, close to the England-Wales border. Although the majority of leading N.H.

sires stand in Ireland, Yorton Farm has established itself as a significant player in this field. The Futter family, who own and run it, obviously like German breeding, as of the six stallions they stand, three have German connections – Gentlewave and another son of Monsun in Masterstroke as well as Scalo (Lando), sire of last year's German Derby winner Laccario. Monsun and Lando were exact contemporaries and great rivals on the track, and it seems that this rivalry is continuing to this day. One hears positive reports regarding Scalo so he could strike another blow for Lando, but that one has a long way to go before he can match Monsun's success as a sire of N.H. sires.

In some quarters one hears criticism of Monsun's record as a sire of sires, but that seems unjustified, at least to this observer. None of his sons has yet emulated his own outstanding record, but that can hardly be expected. Several of them have already sired Group One winners on the flat – Shirocco, Manduro, Maxios to name just three – and there are probably plenty more to come, and of course he now has a huge reputation as a sire of N.H. stallions. Two more, not yet mentioned here, are Getaway, who won the Grosser Preis von Baden in the Ullmann colours, and Arcadio, who scored for Schlenderhan in the Bavarian Classic; both have both been covering huge books in Ireland and the winners are now flowing fast and furious. Getaway in particular is already regarded as a major success and his progeny are fetching big prices at the sales.

Cheltenham is regarded as the climax of the N.H. season, although the Auteuil Easter meeting, the Grand National meeting at Aintree at the beginning of April and the Punchestown Festival at the end of that month also have strong cards with many Grade One races and other valuable and competitive events. The likelihood of more winners at these meetings being sired by German-bred and-raced stallions seems to be extremely strong.

David Conolly-Smith



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