

Denis O'Regan is unseated by Cedrus Libani at Aintree in 2008.

# And they're off... who to be on tomorrow?



Today's tip is of National importance, so **Robert O'Shea** gives you the lowdown on how to ensure you're still screaming at the TV screen come the final straight

**A**ND THEY'RE OFF! And you're off the sofa and inching towards the TV trying to catch sight of the flashing violet of the jockey in charge of your tenner. And they're all over the first.

But what is that horse doing veering all the way over there. He's carrying your colours. But his name is Silver something so you've still got a chance. A few fall at the next. Two more tumble at the third. The commentator must have mentioned every horse in the race but he hasn't uttered yours yet. And now he's handing over to the next commentator. Just mention him for God's sake... just say his bloody name! And you're looking for the newspaper to make sure you didn't get his colours wrong. Nope. Is that him holding up the rear? Or is that mauve? He's just not going to mention him. If that's him — and he seems to be gaining a bit of ground — these commentators must have hatched a plan not to acknowledge his participation. I bet they do that every year: choose one horse not to name during the whole race once he's not in serious contention. And you pick that horse every year... He's mentioned him finally. We seem to have lost him. Well his jockey appeared to leap for freedom after the last fence, but he's still running. The horse, not the jockey. He's actually running faster now. That bloody jockey must be useless, look how good he is without him. He's jumping like a stag. Christ, he's hit the front... Ever wonder why the most difficult race in the year to predict



is also the one with the most money staked on it? The Grand National is a lottery (the name of the first winner of the race in 1839) yet it is quite easy to feel personally slighted when your horse appears to give you less than a run for your money. I have had the winner in Aintree three times. The first two times Richard Dunwoody was on board.

West Tip in 1986 (I picked the horse, my dad pocketed the money) and Minnehoma in 1994 (32 old pounds won on a two quid win at 16/1). The circumstances behind why I didn't get anything down on Bobbyjo in 1999 despite telling everyone else he was my tip, will haunt me until my grave. I am serious when I say I still get upset every year with the memory of not

getting his name down on a docket that year. I have had the distinct pleasure of putting down bets for other people on Papillon, Hedgehunter, Numbersixvalverde and Neptune Collonges. This always compounded the pain. So what of this year, I hear you impatiently cry? Well, it's worth noting that of recent winners, no fewer than 11

## Johnny waiting on the Station

**JOHNNY CROWLEY**, a Paddy Power customer in Mitchelstown, won a sweepstakes competition organised by Paddy Power at Leopardstown at Christmas and now stands to win €90,000 should Colbert Station romp home to victory on Saturday.

Johnny drew Colbert Station in the Paddy Power Chase on December 27 and pocketed €10,000 when the horse, trained by Ted Walsh, crossed the finish line in front.

However Paddy Power have a bonus in place and Johnny



**Johnny Crowley will be shouting for Tony McCoy's mount Colbert Station tomorrow.**

stands to scoop another €90,000 if Colbert Station wins the Aintree Grand National on Saturday.

The horse is currently 10/1 and Johnny is the talk of Mitchelstown.

**LEFT: Our Grand National selection has proven hardy in the past. In 2010 at the Dromahane point-to-point near Doneraile, Richard Harding remounted Teaforthree and still finished third.**

of 13 had raced previously in one or more of the English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh or Kerry Nationals and nine of them had either won or been placed in the first three. While only three of the last 13 winners ran at Cheltenham the month before. Teaforthree fits into this category after coming home second to Moonbeg Dude in the Welsh National at Chepstow in January. While a young Irishwoman is on the favourite Seabass (although touching 11/1 in some firms), a young Welshwoman in Rebecca Curtis is the trainer of our selection for the big race. It would be only the second ever Welsh-trained National winner and there will not be many people who remember the last one, the 1905 winner Kirkland. At the very least, I guarantee he is still standing on the run-in. **Recommendation:** Teaforthree to win the Grand National at 16/1 with Ladbrokes.