

Making Miracles lands Chester Cup

WITH the stable seemingly able to boast an embarrassment of riches in the staying division this year, a strong team of four was sent to Chester to contest the Chester Cup on May 10 – Austrian School, Making Miracles, Lucky Deal and Watersmeet all lined up in gruelling conditions on the Roodee.

The Cup was inaugurated in 1824, when it was named the Tradesmen's Cup; 50 years later, it became the Chester Trades' Cup, and it settled on its current name in 1884. It is run over two miles, two furlongs and 140 yards, and is often won by an older horse.

The weather at this year's Chester May Festival was hugely unkind, with the official ground description of soft being changed to heavy after the Cup was run. A low draw is considered essential at Chester, even over a marathon trip, so being drawn one from the outside of his field looked like a

major obstacle in the path of Making Miracles. Against that, he had the Chester guile and know-how of the 'King of Chester', Franny Norton in the saddle.

From the outset, Franny brought his horse over to the rail and to take the lead before passing the winning post for the first time.

Privilege

He was accompanied by Ryan Moore on Low Sun, who had the dubious privilege of having been drawn widest of all. This pair dictated the race, with Making Miracles setting only a moderate gallop. The other Kingsley Park runners raced towards the rear of the pack.

With the exception of Low Sun and Making Miracles, the jockeys' silks were coated in mud as the field negotiated the final circuit. As Moore

and Norton got to work inside the three-furlong marker, Low Sun looked set to make a race of it, but Making Miracles kept on strongly for Franny's pressure to go clear approaching the final furlong.

In the straight, Making Miracles pulled at least 10 lengths clear before being eased in the closing stages. Who Dares Wins and Whiskey Sour battled for second, with the former just getting the better of the struggle. At the post, Making Miracles had prevailed by six lengths, with a neck separating second and third. Austrian School and Lucky Deal finished well back in the desperate conditions, while Watersmeet was pulled up when his chance was gone.

Making Miracles provided Mark with his first victory in the Chester Cup, and netted an impressive £92,385 for his owners, Acorn, Brown, Parker & Scott in the process. The four-year-old Pivotal gelding now has four career wins under

his belt.

Mark was full of praise for winning jockey Franny Norton.

"We'd been talking about draws all week," he told the Klarion, "and it seemed that you'd struggle to win with a double-figure draw in the Chester Cup. But Making Miracles has won from 16. Franny got him across without too much effort and then he was able to relax in front, never really going that strong a pace.

"Clearly, anybody that was in behind in that melee was in trouble, so it worked to our advantage."

Despite his fantastic record at Chester, Franny Norton had never previously won the Chester Cup. The evergreen jockey, now 48 years young, was thrilled with his success and declared that "to finally win the biggest race here is fantastic." In turn, he paid tribute to the winning horse.

"Making Miracles was just lobbing

along, and when Ryan Moore came to me on Low Sun three and a half furlongs from home I knew I had a lot of horse under me. Every time I got on a bit of fresh ground, he was a different horse altogether. He won easily and had

plenty of energy at the finish." Making Miracles remains on the upgrade, which is impressive as, in little more than 18 months, his rating has risen from 76 to 101, the mark from which he ran at Chester. ■



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Franny Norton wins the Chester Cup aboard Making Miracle in challenging weather and ground conditions



Groom Charlotte Cotgrave leads Franny and Making Miracles to the winner's enclosure



Franny and owners of Making Miracles celebrate their win