

Trifolium stars in Irish Arkle



Trifolium and Bryan Cooper race clear to win the Frank Ward Solicitors Arkle Novice Steeplechase at Leopardstown

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Trifolium proved jockey Bryan Cooper right with a brilliant display in the Frank Ward Solicitors Arkle Novice Chase at Leopardstown.

As Gigginstown House Stud's new number one jockey, Cooper could have ridden the better-fancied Mozoltov, but instead sided with the Charles Byrnes-trained 7-1 shot Trifolium.

The seven-year-old chased home reopposing 11-8 favourite Defy Logic in the Racing Post Novice Chase over the course and distance last month, but travelled noticeably well on this occasion.

Defy Logic adopted his customary front-running tactics under [Tony McCoy](#), but got in tight to the third fence from the finish and Trifolium quickly found himself in front.

He continued to pour it on from the home turn and stayed on all the way to the line to comfortably take the Grade One prize.

Felix Yonger (5-2) made a couple of jumping errors down the back straight, but finished well to grab the runner-up spot, with stable companion Mozoltov (7-2) back in third.

Defy Logic was bitterly disappointing back in fifth but was found after the race to have burst a blood vessel.

Byrnes said: "I knew he was in the form of his life coming here. I didn't really expect him to win, but I thought he'd be there or thereabouts.

"We put cheekpieces on him the last day and he was a bit free early on, so we took them off today and it helped him settle.

"His jumping was fantastic and if you look back at the formbook, he had pretty good form in heavy ground over hurdles.

"From day one over fences in Thurles, every day his jumping has been brilliant.

"He was able to settle in behind Defy Logic today and that was the secret.

"I felt he was back in the same form as he was going to Cheltenham two years ago (third in Supreme Novices' Hurdle).

"We had a terrible year with him last year and nothing went right, but all roads lead back to Cheltenham now."

Cooper said: "It was a hard decision (to elect to ride Trifolium), but the bottom line is that I went for experience.

"Mozoltov is a fair horse but he only had one other run over fences."

Of Trifolium, Cooper said: "He's beat them all out there, and is entitled to go for that (Arkle Trophy at the Cheltenham Festival) now."