

CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE MEDIA RELEASE

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SIZING AUSTRALIA OUT TO MAINTAIN IRISH DOMINATION IN GLENFARCLAS CROSS COUNTRY STEEPLE CHASE

Meeting: *The Boylesports International*

Dates: *Friday & Saturday - December 11 & 12*

Gates Open: *10.00am both days*

First Race: *12.05pm Friday, 12.10pm Saturday*

Admission prices from £9. Go to www.cheltenham.co.uk for further information

With four victories in the past five years, Irish trainers boast a fantastic record in the £22,500 Glenfarclas Cross Country Handicap Steeple Chase (1.15pm) and trainer Henry de Bromhead is hopeful that **Sizing Australia** can continue the trend on the first day of the Boylesports International at Cheltenham on Friday, December 11.

The seven-year-old made a pleasing first appearance over the unique three mile, seven furlong, course at The Open on November 13, staying on well to be a close third behind the Enda Bolger-trained pair of Garde Champetre and Heads Onthe Ground

Co Waterford-based de Bromhead revealed this morning: "We are hoping to bring Sizing Australia back over to Cheltenham. I thought that he did brilliantly on his first try over the course at The Open and we were delighted with him.

"We will have to wait and see what the handicapper does but I am hopeful that we might be a bit better off at the weights with Enda's runners. We have two lengths to find on Garde Champetre but he is the kind of horse that could always win by two lengths - he travels so easily over the course and always seems to just do enough in front.

"Sizing Australia had a leg injury last season and so we decided to give him some time off to recover. He has yet to win over conventional fences but he has been running against some good horses

"He was fourth in a decent novice chase at Clonmel last September before he got injured, when he just tired in the closing stages and he ran on heavy ground on his three subsequent starts, which didn't really suit him in the really competitive races. I don't think that softer ground would be such a massive disadvantage in a cross country race, but he is definitely a better ground horse.

“He is only a seven-year-old and I think that his future is in these kinds of contests. Alan and Ann Potts (the owners) really enjoy watching horses run over cross country courses and it’s great that the top festivals such as Cheltenham and Punchestown put the races on.”

Since its introduction in 2001, the Glenfarclas Cross Country Handicap Steeple Chase has become one of the highlights of the Boylesports International. Course specialist and Cheltenham favourite Spot The difference landed the spoils for legendary cross country trainer Enda Bolger in 2004 and won the contest for a second time in 2006, when his rivals included subsequent Grand National winner Silver Birch.

Co Meath-based Tony Martin sent over Wonderkid to triumph in 2007, while Bolger completed a hat-trick of Irish successes last season as Garde Champetre defeated stable-companion L’Ami by a length and a quarter.

Friday’s seven-race programme also features the £50,000 Listed Neptune Investment Management Handicap Chase (1.50pm) over an extended three miles, one furlong, which was won in 2008 by subsequent John Smith’s Grand National hero Mon Mome.

The fantastic seven-race card on Saturday, December 12, includes one of the season’s top Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle Trials in the shape of the two mile, one furlong £150,000 Grade Two Boylesports.com International (3.05pm), which the reigning Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdler **Punjabi** is on target for, as well as the prestigious £150,000 Grade Three Boylesports.com Gold Cup (2.25pm) over two miles, five furlongs.

For further information please contact Andy Clifton, Communications Manager at Cheltenham Racecourse, on 07876 330090, or visit the website at www.cheltenham.co.uk