

Dog chat: Crisis fails to prevent Champ's progression

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Colorful Champ survived a crisis in the quarter-final of the Red Mills Produce Stakes at Clonmel on Sunday but finally managed to grab a spot in next weekend's semis and retains favouritism for the classic.

A trap six draw nearly proved his undoing after encountering considerable trouble on the opening bends but the track record-holder will be much more comfortable with box four in the first heat on Sunday.

He will have three quarter-final winners in opposition -- Thornbrae Brett, Master Blaster and Castleyons Ralf -- in what will be a hotly-contested affair. The other quarter-final winner, Faypoint Dave, goes in the second heat, where his main rivals could be Olympic Surprise and the big-finishing Cooladerry Fizz.

With the Easter Cup now completed for another year, we are straight into the Hegarty 600 at Shelbourne this weekend and the entries were rolling in yesterday.

It looks like being a 36-dog affair, with reigning champion Accordello, the Cork Oaks winner Rossa Baby, Tyrur Brennan, Tyrur Giovanni and Tyrur Chris all among the entries.

Close

Entries close this morning and the likelihood is that there will be six heats with four qualifying for the second stage.

By the way, Thursday's card at Shelbourne will feature the opening round of the ECC Timber Open 550 and the second round of the Olympic Bee Puppy Oaks. Among the 550 entries are brilliant young trackers Fatboyz Tyson, Droopys Dazzler and Makeshift.

Meanwhile, Pat Buckley's English Derby team has been weakened by the almost certain withdrawal of one-time ante-post favourite Newlawn Class, which was beaten in a race at Shawfield on Saturday night and appears to have sprained a hock.

The dog was to be given an X-ray last night but his prospects of running in the classic, which commences next week, are not good.

The Broadway Pet Foods McCalmont Cup has been drawing fine crowds to Kilkenny Track and the semi-finals on Friday night are very competitive affairs. Just a couple of lengths separated the six second-round winners and it is anybody's contest.

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