

Sprinter to join Denman in paddock for racecourse experience

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By Rodney Masters

SPRINTER SACRE is likely to have a public workout two weeks today at Kempton in another important stage of his recovery programme as he builds to a return to active combat.

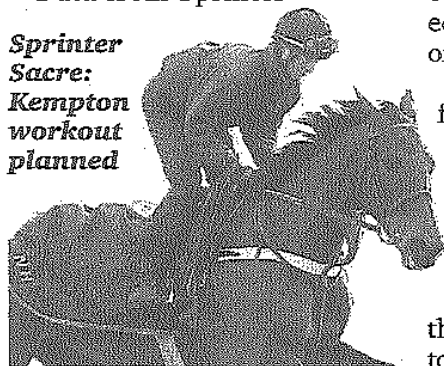
Today at Newbury before racing the Champion Chase hero will have a leisurely stroll in the paddock, equipped with his heart monitor. Also in the paddock will be former fellow heart patient Denman, who has a race named after him today.

Encouragingly, Sprinter Sacre returned a normal heart rhythm when working yesterday on Lambourn's Mandown all-weather gallop, known locally as the back of the hill. Trainer Nicky Henderson said: "I was delighted with him. Sprinter will do two pieces of work next week and the following weekend I'd like to take him to work at Kempton. Whether that's on the grass or all-weather will depend on the ground."

Henderson added: "The thinking behind taking Sprinter to Newbury is to give him a nice experience back on a racecourse after what happened at Kempton over Christmas, and this is the perfect opportunity."

Data from Sprinter

Sprinter Sacre: Kempton workout planned



Sacre's heart monitor chip was downloaded to the Newmarket office of Celia Marr, a specialist in equine internal medicine, and she reported that the electrocardiogram reading was normal.

"Everything looks absolutely fine," she said. "We'll keep monitoring him through every stage but there's no reason why he'll not return to perform as good as before. Denman is the perfect example of that, as was One Cool Cat."

Marr added: "Sprinter Sacre and Denman had lone atrial fibrillation, and 'lone' is the key word. It means there's no disease of the heart, it's simply an electrical disturbance. Horses with larger hearts are prone to that; with a pea of a heart, as in a dog, it wouldn't happen."

"Denman's problem was slightly more complicated in that it didn't self-correct and needed a little drug treatment to return to normal. Sprinter had a minor version of the same problem but his body was able to correct it without the assistance of a drug."

Punters watching Sprinter Sacre and Denman parade today can take credit for the part they have played in their recovery. Since 2000, the Levy Board has contributed £25 million for equine research to a wide range of projects, including cardiology.

Marr said: "The Levy Board has funded a long strand of research into better understanding of how the heart works, both in health and disease. Britain has always been very strong on equine cardiology research and we now know more about the heart of a horse. That's down to Levy Board investment."