

Hawk in fine fettle after comeback

Beaten but not vanquished Westmead Hawk remains on course for Wimbledon and his attempt to land an unprecedented third Derby crown.

Trainer Nick Savva reported the people's champion: "as well as could be expected" after his narrow defeat in his comeback race at Monmore on Thursday.

Savva added: "He has been off the track almost a year and after such a long lay off tends to get very excited when taken back to the track. But he was like that before his injury and it wouldn't concern me, he'll settle down after he has had a race or two."

"I thought he was a little unlucky in running but being beaten a short head or winning a half a length, made little difference.

"He is back racing competitively and there has been no reaction from his injury and for that alone we have to be grateful. But he has to be given time to get fully race-fit before we can consider whether he is as good as before but I remain very hopeful." Savva was also delighted by the progress shown by Westmead Joe who recorded a swift 28.12sec at the trial session before racing. Racing from trap four last year's Blue Riband winner ran the course quite superbly impressing not only onlookers but also Monmore's experienced racing manager Jim Woods who said: "The track was probably a little slower for the trials and that was as good a run as I've seen here all year."

A contented Savva said: "Joe has had a problem with cramp and putting him over four-bends for the first time was always going to be the acid test. He was slightly tight at the pick up but nothing compared to the cramps he had been suffering last year and I'm hopeful that we have solved the problem.

"The Derby is his objective and we won't be in any rush to race him before Wimbledon. I haven't decided where he will go next but I'll probably give him another trial or two over four-bends then straight to Wimbledon."