

Westmead Hawk in good shape

Westmead Hawk, the dual Derby winner who broke a hock at Hall Green last June, is back with trainer Nick Savva, and building up towards a possible comeback later this spring, writes Richard Birch.

Originally retired from competitive action after sustaining what were believed to be career-ending injuries last summer, the May 2003 son of Sonic Flight has made such a good recovery that connections remain "more than hopeful" that Westmead Hawk will be able to bid for an unprecedented third premier Classic title this year.

Westmead Hawk spent the winter in Ireland with Sean and Michael Dunphy - serving bitches, and being given regular gallops - before returning to Savva's Dunstable kennels at the beginning of this month. Savva, who has often referred to Westmead Hawk as a "miracle dog", remains cautiously optimistic about the chances of the 'Peoples' Champion' returning to Wimbledon in June.

He said: "Hawk came back from his time in Ireland in lovely condition, and in very good spirits. The Dunphys have been pleased with him all along, and now it's a case of being patient.

"He seems fine physically and has been round my track, but it's still too soon to give him the proper test which will come when we let him go flat out around the bends.

"The dog is in training as such, and we're looking towards the end of this month to test him out fully. I don't want to make any firm predictions, but there is definitely hope. We have to play a waiting game. We must be patient."

Both Savva and Westmead Hawk's owner Bob Morton have been committed for several months now to get the dog back for a third Derby bid.

However, they have stressed on many occasions that if Westmead Hawk - who is not yet four-years-old- shows any sign of not fully retaining that awesome ability that made him a champion, they will not bring him back.

**See full story in Tuesday's Racing Post