

CHELTENHAM CHEAT SHEET

PUNDITS' FESTIVAL PICKS



RUBY WALSH



MICK FITZGERALD



MATT CHAPMAN



FRANK HICKEY



PADDY POWER

DAY ONE CHAMPION DAY

3.30PM CHAMPION HURDLE

- RW** This is a wide-open race. **Epatante's** form is rock-solid. Her jumping got her beaten last year at Cheltenham but was much better at Kempton and that will see her home.
- MF** It's a wide open race this year and I am sticking with last year's Triumph Hurdle winner **Pentland Hills**.
- MC** I never ever thought I would tip the old boy **Supasundae** for a Champion Hurdle. But he can sit close or on the lead and will be hard to keep out the frame.
- FH** I'm not too keen on Epatante. If this becomes a strongly-run stamina test she'll be found out. **Cilaos Emery's** jumping needs to sharpen up a bit. If it does he can be involved at the finish.
- PP** **Supasundae** appeals as an each-way play. I never thought I'd be saying that about this old campaigner but it's a weak Champion Hurdle so there could be a bit of value in the longer prices.

DAY TWO LADIES DAY

3.30PM CHAMPION CHASE

- RW** **Altior** reminds me of Hurricane Fly. He's got older and lazier, but like Hurricane Fly he's still very hard to beat. Cheltenham is like a home game for him. He'll be very hard to beat again.
- MF** **Altior** for me. He has won for the past four years at the Festival and the drier the ground the better his chance.
- MC** The defending champion **Altior** is an absolute good thing for me. Back to winning form last time and too strong at the finish here for the others.
- FH** This is going to be the race of the week, isn't it? **Altior** is the one I don't like of the top three. I'd probably just go for **Defi Du Seuil**, but there's not much between them.
- PP** The Champion Chase is a race for the ages. Altior stays best, Defi De Seuil probably has the best turn of foot. **Chacun Pour Soi** is the young pretender to the throne and can out-gun both of his main rivals in the market.

DAY THREE ST PATRICK'S THURSDAY

3.30PM STAYERS' HURDLE

- RW** **Paisley Park** will win. I'd put him in the same bracket as **Big Bucks**. No one knew how good he was. I'd say Paisley Park is the same. **Penhill** could run well. Willie Mullins has gotten four runs into him this season. He could chase **Paisley Park** home.
- MF** Barring a catastrophe the reigning champion **Paisley Park** will win again.
- MC** **Paisley Park** for me. He looks unstoppable on all recent form. He just runs faster than the others and has the ideal style of racing for this event.
- FH** Emitom was impressive at Haydock but I think he needs very soft ground to trouble the favourite. He could hit the places but it's **Paisley Park** to win.
- PP** **Paisley Park** is the banker of the week in the race that's named after me! It'll be interesting to see how the others try to beat him, but whatever they do it'll be in vain. He's the reigning champion and is unbeaten now in his last seven races. I expect it to be eight.

DAY FOUR GOLD CUP DAY

3.30PM CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

- RW** As soon as **Al Boum Photo** won the Gold Cup last year, it was the biggest certainty that Willie Mullins would give him the same preparation. Best Mate was the last horse to retain the Gold Cup in 2003 as part of his hat-trick of wins but Al Boum Photo can defy history this year.
- MF** If **Santini** wears cheekpieces I'd be very keen on his chances as it'll make things easier for his jockey.
- MC** **Delta Work** is a grinder who just keeps finding and will be running on up the hill. **Clan des Obeaux** is the opposite and has a high cruising speed. I'm backing both!!!
- FH** **Al Boum Photo** was an impressive winner last year and is a fair price to repeat his win. Clan Des Obeaux, Delta Work and Lostintranslation all have credentials.
- PP** This is a better Gold Cup than last year and Al Boum Photo will have to up his game. He and Santini look vulnerable. Presenting Percy & Delta Work could offer a bit of value but I'm leaning towards **Lostintranslation**.

ALL RACES
Cheltenham Day 1

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