

# PUNCHESTOWN

## PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

FRIDAY MAY 3<sup>RD</sup>



MICK FITZGERALD

RORY DELARGY

RUBY WALSH

TIMEFORM

PUNCHESTOWN 4.15PM

### NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE

- MF** I like **ARCTIC BRESIL** (each way). I actually walked in with Rachel Blackmore who was upset with the start. Nothing went right, and she felt that definitely compromised his chances at Cheltenham.
- RD** **PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS** would have shown massively improved form if he hadn't fallen at Leopardstown at the Dublin Racing Festival. He's been running on soft and heavy ground all season and he's liable to improve on better ground.
- RW** Tactical Move's form looks strong but the one that catches the eye a little bit off a mark of 137 is **PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS**. He was well fancied before falling in the Leopardstown Chase and he could take all the beating.
- TF** **PERCEVAL LEGALLOIS** was set to go close when crashing out at the last in a Grade 3 handicap at Leopardstown in February so tops the shortlist down in class racing off 2 lb higher.

PUNCHESTOWN 5.25PM

### CHAMPION HUNTERS' CHASE

- MF** **FAMOUS CLERMONT** won the Aintree Foxhunters' Chase last year and the UK-trained horses have a good record in this race. I'm taking this one to continue it.
- RD** I can see **LIFETIME AMBITION** running a massive race. He likes Punchestown and has run two very good races at this Festival. He could be thrown in here if finding his old form.
- RW** Its On The Line is the one that is most likely to win but it's a big field for a Hunters' Chase. However, I'm going to go each way on the old timer **BILLAWAY**.
- TF** **ITS ON THE LINE** has held his form superbly throughout a busy campaign and, having gained his reward at Aintree last time, he looks the one to beat. Lifetime Ambition has plenty of class and looks a big danger.

PUNCHESTOWN 6.35PM

### CHAMPION NOVICE HURDLE

- MF** It's another 'shorty' here with **BALLYBURN** but it's very hard to oppose him. He looks the best novice this season.
- RD** **BALLYBURN** looks the stand-out runner in this and there's no point in thinking otherwise. The Gallagher's Novice Hurdle winner is the most exciting hurdler we've seen outside of Constitution Hill for many years.
- RW** **BALLYBURN** was really good at Cheltenham and he was brilliant at the Dublin Racing Festival too. He's impossible to oppose.
- TF** **BALLYBURN** did little to alter the fact he's every inch a top-class prospect when an impressive winner of the Gallagher Novices' at the Festival last month and he's very difficult to oppose. Staffordshire Knot and Mirazur West can do battle for minor honours.

PUNCHESTOWN 7.40PM

### INH FLAT RACE

- MF** Martin Brassil has had a fantastic week and his **DONTSTOPTHEMUSIC** is unusual as he's already run in a Maiden Hurdle and was eye-catching that day. He's got owners who love having winners at Punchestown and that'll do for me.
- RW** **FISHERY LANE** came from well off the pace in the Champion Bumper at Cheltenham and his form suggests he should be good enough to win this, so hopefully he does!
- TF** **FISHERY LANE** sets the bar high on his fine effort in the Champion Bumper at Cheltenham and should prove hard to beat.

PUNCHESTOWN 4.50PM

### MARES CHASE

- MF** **ALLEGORIE DE VASSY** put up a good effort a really competitive race at Cheltenham. She wasn't beaten all that far and can get the better of Brides Hill now.
- RD** **BRIDES HILL** has improved this season and was very impressive when she won at Huntingdon. She'll be at least as happy on this ground and her jumping has been a lot better this season. Allegorie De Vassy has a lot of class but she's not the strongest of finishers.
- RW** **ALLEGORIE DE VASSY** had an excuse last year, she came back from Cheltenham and we probably pulled her out too quickly and ran her at Fairyhouse, which left its mark on her at Punchestown. This year she skipped Fairyhouse and has been given time to freshen up.
- TF** **BRIDES HILL** arrives here fresh after three unbeaten runs this season and is preferred to Allegorie de Vassy, who disappointed in this 12 months ago. The latter's stablemate Instit is best of the others.

PUNCHESTOWN 6.00PM

### CHAMPION HURDLE

- MF** **STATE MAN** should be winning this. It looks absolutely tailor made for him.
- RD** The reigning Champion Hurdler **STATE MAN** is unopposable with Irish Point just one of three other opponents. Basically, it's him on the distance specials – probably to win by under four lengths.
- RW** **STATE MAN** just does what he has to do and that's what he'll do once again on Friday. He doesn't win by far but he always gets the job done.
- TF** **STATE MAN** gained yet another Grade 1 when adding the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham in March to his impressive haul. Irish Point ran very well when chasing home the selection at Cheltenham and he comfortably rates the chief threat.

PUNCHESTOWN 7.05PM

### NOVICE HURDLE

- MF** **ANOTHERWAY** looks hard to beat. He looked set to play a huge part last time out at Fairyhouse before coming down two out in that Grade Two.
- RD** **LARK IN THE MORNIN** was well touted all season as being a bit special and even the heavy ground at Cheltenham didn't stop him in the Boodles Hurdle, despite connections minding him all winter where he dodged a few engagements because of the bad ground.
- RW** **ANOTHERWAY** was travelling really well before he fell at Fairyhouse last time out. Paul has opted to ride him and he's got the best form in the race. He should be hard to beat.
- TF** **LARK IN THE MORNIN** was pretty impressive in the Fred Winter at the Cheltenham Festival and, with the promise of better to come he is taken to follow up. The main danger is clearly Anotherway, who landed a course and distance maiden in good style here in January.

**PADDYPOWER.** NEWS

WINGING IT SINCE 1988.