

PUNCESTOWN

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

WEDNESDAY MAY 1ST



MICK FITZGERALD

RORY DELARGY

RUBY WALSH

TIMEFORM

PUNCESTOWN 2.30PM

ADARE MANOR HANDICAP HURDLE

- MF** I'm going for an outsider here with **SMOOTH SCOTCH** who's trained by the Crawfords and is ridden by Liam Quinlan. I think on handicap debut this horse might be underestimated.
- RD** I like **NAPPER TANDY** for Matthew Smith, who was eye-catching at Ballinrobe last time out. He has a big chance as he will have come on a lot for that run.
- RW** Willie Mullins has Maroto but he was a little disappointing in a novice hurdle at Clonmel last time out. I like **NAPPER TANDY** for Matthew Smith.
- TF** This looks a hot handicap for the grade with **WALK AWAY HARRY** of particular interest at the foot of the weights given he's well treated on his bumper form for an ultra-shrewd yard.

PUNCESTOWN 3.05PM

CONNOLLY'S RED MILLS AUCTION HURDLE

- MF** The conditions of this race stipulate that none of the entrants can have been placed in the first three in a Grade One or Two. **BLIZZARD OF OZ** finished fourth in a graded race and I think that sets a high standard in here.
- RD** I'm with **ANSWER TO KAYF**, who has very solid form. He should run his race once again and he's the most likely winner. John Shinnick claims 7lbs too which is always a bonus.
- RW** **ANSWER TO KAYF** looks the most likely winner. His form is rock solid and he quickened well to win at Naas in February. His run at Cheltenham when fourth in the Martin Pipe was brilliant.
- TF** **AEROS LUCK** remains with potential and shaped well on his return from a break at Naas last month. He gets the nod.

PUNCESTOWN 3.40PM

LOUIS FITZGERALD HOTEL HURDLE

- MF** **EAST INDIA EXPRESS** has an each-way chance in this. Nicky Henderson may not have been able to bring superstar Shishkin but this horse loves good ground.
- RD** **MISTERGIF** might just have a class edge on the rest of these. He ran well at Cheltenham and Aintree but it seems there's more to come from him.
- RW** **MISTERGIF** is taking a drop in grade and that could be the difference. He ran really well in the Supreme at Cheltenham and he can build on that.
- TF** Willie Mullins and Paul Townend combined to take this last year with subsequent Grade 1 winning chaser Grangeclare West and they can repeat the feat with **MISTERGIF**, who has been highly tried on both starts since winning his maiden.

PUNCESTOWN 4.15PM

CHANNOR NOVICE HURDLE

- MF** **DANCING CITY** is my pick in this one. Paul Townend is keen to hang on to his Champion Jockey title and this mount will help.
- RD** I'm a huge fan of **LECKY WATSON** and I'm not going to desert him. He's each-way value after finishing fifth to Stellar Story in the Albert Bartlett at Cheltenham.
- RW** I'm siding with **BETTER DAYS AHEAD** for Gordon Elliott and I fancy him to build on his Martin Pipe win at Cheltenham.
- TF** **DANCING CITY** was most impressive at Aintree and, although behind Stellar Story in the Albert Bartlett on his penultimate outing, he's capable of reversing the form with that rival under more suitable conditions.

PUNCESTOWN 4.50PM

CHAMPION I.N.H. FLAT RACE

- RD** The price of **THE YELLOW CLAY** is wrong in my eyes. He's overpriced after his sixth behind Jasmin De Vaux in the Champion Bumper at Cheltenham. He ran a lot better than his finishing place that day. He'll do better than that and he's a great each-way price.
- RW** **JASMIN DE VAUX** tops the betting and he'll be hard to beat. He won at Naas in January and backed that up when winning the Champion Bumper at Cheltenham. He's the best horse in this race.
- TF** **JASMIN DE VAUX** and Romeo Coolio filled the first two positions in the Champion Bumper and the obvious assumption is that they could fight this out too, with the former fancied to uphold the positions.

PUNCESTOWN 5.25PM

PUNCESTOWN GOLD CUP

- MF** I think Galopin Des Champs' effort in the Cheltenham Gold Cup might have left a mark. Even though **FASTORSLOW** has been racing at a lesser standard than Galopin Des Champs he could be the fresher horse and he loves Puncestown.
- RD** Galopin Des Champs probably wins but I don't like his price. I'm siding with **CORACH RAMBLER**, who has obvious claims. If he repeats what he did at Cheltenham, he can hit the frame.
- RW** **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** is a year older and he's a stronger horse than when he lost here last year. He's become more relaxed. He's in really good form at home and he looks well. He'll get the job done.
- TF** **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** has had an extra week to recover from his Cheltenham heroics this time around, so he's fancied to reverse the placings with his old rival.

PUNCESTOWN 6.00PM

HSS HIRE HANDICAP CHASE

- MF** I like **LETS GO CHAMP** for Rachael Blackmore and Henry de Bromhead. He had a good run in a Limerick handicap last time and is proven on decent ground. With only 10st 5lb on his back, he has to be respected.
- RD** I'm siding with Gordon Elliott's **THE GOFFER** ahead of James Du Berlais for Willie Mullins. He's dropping back in trip which will suit and he ran better than his fifth-placed finish at Cheltenham in the Ultima.
- RW** I like **THE GOFFER** for Gordon Elliott. I don't think he stays so dropping him to the 2m4f makes sense.
- TF** **LETS GO CHAMP** was unsuited by the slow pace when third at Limerick and this unexposed sort is potentially ahead of his mark in a race which promises to suit.

PUNCESTOWN 6.35PM

IRISH EBF MARES FLAT RACE

- MF** I'm on **AIR OF ENTITLEMENT** in the lucky last. John Gleeson is no stranger to the winners' enclosure at Puncestown having won on A Dream To Share last year. She's smart so it's Air Of Entitlement for me.
- RW** Aurora Vega was a little disappointing at the Dublin Racing Festival but I don't know how she turns the form around with **FLEUR AU FUSIL**. The latter won at Leopardstown in February, with Aurora Vega in fourth. I'm expecting the same result!
- TF** **AURORA VEGA** was probably keener than ideal back from 4 months off when fourth behind stablemate Fleur au Fusil at Leopardstown in February. However, she remains one to be positive about and a better showing can be expected here.

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