

ROYAL ASCOT

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

DAY 2, WEDNESDAY JUNE 19TH



MICK FITZGERALD

PADDY POWER

JASON WEAVER

RUBY WALSH

MATT CHAMPMAN

2.30PM

QUEEN MARY STAKES 5F

- MF** **ENCHANTING EMPRESS** (each-way) comes in here with an unbeaten three-race record and showed a lot of speed when beating some colts in the line-up that day and that takes a fair effort.
- PP** Two runners who have created the deepest impression are Irish challengers **MAKE HASTE** and Truly Enchanting.
- JW** It was only a small field when **SPHERICAL** (each-way) managed to win at Yarmouth, but it was her dominance late in that contest that identified her as a big improver.
- RW** I'm with **LEOVANNI**, who ran a really solid race at Nottingham.
- MC** Anything can happen here! **MISS RASCAL** is owner-bred and made an eye-catching debut at Newmarket before winning an Ascot maiden.

3.45PM

DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE STAKES 1M

- MF** It's not ideal that **OCEAN JEWEL** has to concede weight all round. However she looks a bit of value and she's a fair enough price to take a punt on.
- PP** Low-mileage mare **LAUREL** has been absent since finishing down the field in the Lockinge 13 months ago but she'd looked one to keep firmly on side in landing three of her four previous starts.
- JW** The perceived wisdom is that **ORCHID BLOOM** (each-way) won't appreciate this quicker ground. However, she's completely untried under these conditions. Her handler William Haggas lets her take her chance. We should see that as a positive.
- RW** I'm looking for one that's drawn in the the outside boxes and **OCEAN JEWEL** fits the bill.
- MC** I really like the defending champion **ROGUE MILLENNIUM** who was tackling Group 1 company at the end of last season for Tom Clover.

5.05PM

ROYAL HUNT CUP 1M

- MF** **REAL GAIN** has been targeted at this contest by trainer Richard Hughes and William Buick has been booked.
- PP** **BESHTANI** showed that he's still improving when an excellent second at Epsom on return and, with that form having been boosted by the winner since, he gets the vote to go one better.
- JW** There is no doubting **FANTASTIC FOX** (each-way) is still very dangerously well treated. The hustle and bustle of this one-mile test seems to suit him very well.
- RW** **COEUR D'OR** is my nap of the day. He was really eye-catching over 6f at the Curragh on Guineas weekend and won at Galway last year over a mile.
- MC** The lightly-raced **BESHTANI** (each-way) has quite a high handicap mark but was a fine second at Epsom during the Derby meeting.

6.15PM

WINDSOR CASTLE STAKES 5F

- MF** **SHADOW ARMY** was a well-backed winner at York and can make a splash again for Wathnan Racing.
- PP** **TREASURE ISLE** recorded a useful performance at Naas last month and is taken to provide the Aidan O'Brien/Ryan Moore combination with a fourth win in this since 2015.
- JW** The fact that the Richard Hannon team back up **HAWAIIAN** (each-way) quickly here indicates we haven't seen the best of him.
- RW** I never really knew what a cliff horse was until I stopped riding and was allowed to have a bet! However, **HAWAIIAN** might be one of those in the making.
- MC** **PONT NEUF** (each-way) is unbeaten in two starts. Has been a bit quirky, but if getting to the start calmly I suspect this Kempton and Salisbury winner is very useful.

3.05PM

QUEEN'S VASE 1M

- MF** Jessica Harrington has had plenty of success at the Royal meeting and doesn't tilt at windmills with her runners. **BIRDMAN** has won twice and should be respected.
- PP** **HIGHBURY** looks the most persuasive option having bolted up in a Leopardstown maiden (strong form) last month as Aidan O'Brien looks for his eighth win in this contest.
- JW** **BIRDMAN** showed a really good attitude and change of gear late on when winning at Navan and will appreciate both going up in distance to 1m 6f and the quicker ground.
- RW** **THE EQUATOR** could outrun his odds after finishing fourth at the Curragh last time out and the 1m 6f will really suit him.
- MC** **BIRDMAN** (each-way) looks a very strong young stayer and is bred to go on this fast ground.

4.25PM

PRINCE OF WALES'S STAKES 1M 2F

- MF** On his best from the dual Derby winner and last season's Breeders' Cup winner **AUGUSTE RODIN** should be winning this. One for the value seekers is **HORIZON DORE**.
- PP** **INSPIRAL** is sure to be all the better for her reappearance and the style of her win at Santa Anita back in November strongly suggests she still has unfinished business at this trip.
- JW** We know that **ALFLAILA** (each-way) has a very good record fresh. He was still improving when we last saw him in an unlucky-in-running effort at Leopardstown at the highest level.
- RW** The biggest threat to **AUGUSTE RODIN** is Inspiral but I'm not convinced the step up to 1m 2f will suit her.
- MC** A belter of a clash between Derby hero Auguste Rodin and wonder mare **INSPIRAL**. A five-time Group 1 winner over a mile, the wonder filly may have been crying out for this 1m 2f trip all her life.

5.40PM

KENSINGTON PALACE STAKES 1M 6F

- MF** **VILLANOVA QUEEN** (each-way) won this contest last season and looks to have a decent chance of hitting the frame again.
- PP** Having looked a handicapper going places last spring, **ELIM** had a year off the track but with her reappearance chock-full of promise, she's fancied to build on that for her up-and-coming stable.
- JW** The Irish challenger **KARSAVINA** (each-way) put up an improved display on only her first try for the stable with an eye-catching effort at the Curragh last time.
- RW** **VILLANOVA QUEEN** (each-way) is a big price considering she won here last year.
- MC** This is tough. **TWIRLING** is interesting. A winner on the artificial last season, my hope beat the re-opposing Roarin' Success at Doncaster last time but she's never gone on ground as fast as this. Fingers crossed!

PADDYPOWER. NEWS

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