

CHELTENHAM CHEAT SHEET

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

DAY 3, THURSDAY MARCH 13TH



RUBY WALSH

MICK FITZGERALD

HARRY COBDEN

PATRICK MULLINS

MATT CHAPMAN

1.20PM

RYANAIR MARES' NOVICES' HURDLE

- RW** Paul Townend has gone for Aurora Vega over Maughreen, probably because she has more racing experience. I like **AIR OF ENTITLEMENT** each-way for Henry de Bromhead.
- MF** Gavin Cromwell's **SIXANDAHALF** looks the most solid option and the one to beat.
- HC** I'll be riding **JUBILEE ALPHA** and she's my best ride of the week. She jumped brilliantly in schooling and going left handed is perfect for her.
- PM** **MAUGHREEN** has a huge engine and a lot of talent but it will be difficult to step into a 24-runner race on the back of just one hurdle run. I think she'll run very well.
- MC** **SIXANDAHALF** should take some beating and while she lacks a load of hurdling runs she could just be far too good for this field.

2.40PM

PERTEMPS NETWORK FINAL

- RW** I like one at a good price. **KARL DE TOURELLES** is only a five-year-old but that age group are pretty well handicapped.
- MF** Putting the cheekpieces on **JERIKO DU REPONET** is a very good idea and his handicap mark of 135 is workable. Hopefully the headgear sharpens him up.
- HC** **HENRI THE SECOND** (each-way) is not well handicapped against some of these but is consistent and could sneak a place.
- PM** **FEET OF A DANCER** has had a similar prep to Mrs Milner who won this for Paul Nolan in 2021.
- MC** **ONE BIG BANG** might well be too high in the handicap now having gone up 7lb for a victory at Haydock. However, he stays strongly and will enjoy running at a furious pace. He's got an each-way chance.

4.00PM

PADDY POWER STAYERS' HURDLE

- RW** I'm not **TEAHUPOO'S** biggest fan, but I've looked this race up and down for six weeks and I can't find a horse to oppose him.
- MF** It could be a funny race pace-wise and for that reason I'll go for **THE WALLPARK** (each-way) as you know he'll be coming home hard over this 3m trip.
- HC** My intended mount Monmiral was a late non runner which is a shame. **TEAHUPOO** will be hard to beat.
- PM** **TEAHUPOO** is the reigning champ and his form at the top table should stand to him as he looks head and shoulders above the rest and should be winning this.
- MC** In a light career, **LUCKY PLACE** (each-way) has never gone 3m before but if he gets the trip he could easily improve by bundles.

5.20PM

KIM MUIR HANDICAP CHASE

- RW** Sa Majeste was a lucky winner last time out. **WALKING ON AIR** looked unlucky to me at Doncaster as he fell at the last when he was going to win.
- MF** **MIDNIGHT OUR FRED** was second in the Paddy Power Chase at Christmas when last seen and that's a nice bit of form to bring into this contest. He's only 4lb higher now and is definitely a player.
- HC** Gelino Bello is high-class but may be better on a right-handed track. It's an amateur riders' race so I'll be watching on to see how **JOHNNYWHO** gets on as he's my nap of the meeting.
- PM** I ride Sa Majeste but the one that catches my eye is **MIDNIGHT OUR FRED** who has a nice, light weight and ran a great race when second in the Paddy Power Chase over Christmas.
- MC** **MIDNIGHT OUR FRED** (each-way) stays well and is improving at the age of eight. A mark of 132 is tough but he's got credentials on his form to date.

2.00PM

JACK RICHARDS NOVICES' CHASE

- RW** The class horse, if the penalty doesn't stop him, is **ANSWER TO KAYF** and I like **SAN SALVADOR** each-way at a price.
- MF** **ASIAN MASTER** has some smart form in graded races and doesn't look too badly handicapped on those runs.
- HC** **CALDWELL POTTER** has a very workable handicap mark of 146. He could be our dark horse for the Festival but the softer the ground the better his chance.
- PM** **ANSWER TO KAYF** has been brought along lovely over fences this season. He won a handicap chase at Naas in January when last seen and John Shinnick rides again.
- MC** **CALDWELL POTTER** has been mocked by many this season having cost €740,000. He's got a tasty handicap mark of 146 for a Grade 1-winning hurdler and he had no problem with yielding ground in his bumper days.

3.20PM

RYANAIR CHASE

- RW** Fact To File will be the hardest to beat but his price is plenty short now. I've thought for a long time **JUNGLE BOOGIE** is the each-way nap.
- MF** Protektorat would be a big player, but drying ground won't help his cause. There's no getting away from **FACT TO FILE** who will be hard to beat.
- HC** **IL EST FRANCAIS** can get the better of Fact To File if he turns up and is fit and well. He'll love the ground and I don't think the track will bother his running style.
- PM** **FACT TO FILE** wants good ground and a strong pace to aim at to produce his best and with Il Est Francais in the line-up, he gets exactly that.
- MC** **PROTEKTORAT** did this column a great favour last year and I'll be on him again each-way for trainer Dan and jockey Harry Skelton.

4.40PM

TRUSTATRADER PLATE HANDICAP

- RW** **GINNY'S DESTINY** races close to the pace and that will suit the make-up of this race. He's come down enough in the weights and he was bordering on a Graded horse last year.
- MF** **MASACCIO** looks a solid each-way play based on his third to the re-opposing Jagwar over course and distance in January.
- HC** **GINNY'S DESTINY** seems to have a little bit of his 'zip' back. He's won over course and distance which is a big positive.
- PM** **THECOMPANYSERGEANT** sticks out like a sore thumb to me in the 2m 4f Plate Handicap Chase as his trainer has a fantastic record with horses of this profile.
- MC** **JAGWAR** is edging up the weights but has obvious claims here as an improver. He scored in a big field at Bangor back in November so should be able to cope with the hustle and bustle of this race.

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