

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

THE ONES TO WATCH OUT FOR AT THE GRAND NATIONAL - 14TH APRIL 2018



RUBY WALSH



PADDY POWER



EMMANUEL PETIT



BRENDAN DUKE



FRANK HICKEY



MICK FITZGERALD



DARREN TILL

2018 RANDOX HEALTH GRAND NATIONAL - AINTREE 17:15

Ruby Walsh: **Anibale Fly** and **Total Recall** are fairly obviously the two to beat in the Grand National. **Anibale Fly** was third in the Gold Cup and won the Paddy Power Steeple Chase at Leopardstown last Christmas, while **Total Recall** won the big handicap chase at Newbury in December. I'd be surprised if one or both are not involved in the finish.

I reckon **Carlingford Lough** is as dark a horse as you get in this one. Mark Walsh rides him and he's a class horse. While he hasn't been troubling the form book in recent times, he has some really good runs on his previous pages. He has a real chance of doing something at a big price.

Paddy Power: **Tiger Roll** heads the Gordon Elliott challengers as they make the short hop across the Irish Sea to Liverpool and after scoring his third Cheltenham Festival success recently, I believe he's one to get your claws into.

There's nothing I love more than a high-priced each way outsider (other than my Bikram Yoga class of course) and I've also got **Vieux Lion Rouge** in my betslip for the National. He was sixth in this race last year and he's taken the scalp of the impressive Blaklion in the past.

Emmanuel Petit: Sacré bleu, picking a winner for the Grand National is more difficult than listening to an Arsene Wenger team talk! However, my selection is **Baie Des Iles**.

With a sultry French name like that, how can it lose!

Brendan Duke: **Seeyouatmidnight** looks to tick plenty of the boxes needed for a Grand National winner. His delayed reappearance may not be ideal, but I suspect he'll go very close to winning the big one on Saturday.

Elsewhere, **Maggio** is a hardy veteran who relishes the challenge of the Aintree course. He's probably a bit long in the tooth to win, but he should get around and could easily run into a place at a huge price.

Frank Hickey: I'll be looking for a horse carrying a low weight, probably under 11 stone,

and something that's run well in a National (Scottish or Irish) somewhere previously.

With the taxing fences ahead, you'll also want a really good jumper and that's why I'm going with **Anibale Fly**. Based on his Cheltenham Gold Cup run, he's probably the one to beat especially after his win in a big handicap at Leopardstown last December.

With slow ground very likely for the Grand National, I want a horse carrying a low weight.

Captain Redbeard only carries 10st 6lbs,

which is a lovely racing weight. He seemed to improve for the step up to three miles on his last two chase starts and had a lovely prep over hurdles at Ayr. Soft ground holds no fears for him and I can see him going well at a decent price.

Mick Fitzgerald: There is no substitute for class. **Anibale Fly** has the best form on show here with his third place in the Cheltenham Gold Cup sticking out by a mile. This horse has big-field handicap experience also, having won the Paddy Power Steeplechase at Leopardstown over Christmas. He's 'well in' at the weights too according to the handicapper.

Elsewhere, **Alpha des Obeaux** is trained by Mouse Morris, who also trained Rule The World to win the National two years ago. This one has a touch of class, having been placed in a Munster National behind Total Recall and he was second in the Stayers Hurdle at Cheltenham behind Thistlecrack in 2016. He is a lively each-way contender with Rachael Blackmore on board.

Darren Till: Only the thought of watching Stephen 'Wonderboy' Thompson's head bounce off the canvas gets me more amped up than the Grand National in my home city of Liverpool.

I do love the challenge of wrestling for a winner every year and **Total Recall** has more than a puncher's chance for me. Speaking of recall, Wonderboy might have some difficulty remembering his stupid nickname when I'm done with him.