

# PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

## GOLD CUP FRIDAY AT CHELTENHAM



MICK FITZGERALD



MATT CHAPMAN



LIZZIE KELLY



RUBY WALSH



KEVIN BLAKE

### TRIUMPH HURDLE

1:30PM

- MF:** I am confident **Sir Erec** will win. He is the best flat horse to go jumping for some time.
- MC:** **Sir Erec** was a class Flat horse and unbeaten over jumps. Looks a banker.
- LK:** It's got to be **Sir Erec** hasn't it? I just can't see him being beat.
- RW:** **Sir Erec** has been touted as the Irish banker and he was very impressive winner at the Dublin Racing Festival. **Tiger Tap Tap** was only beaten a neck by him in a maiden hurdle at Christmas but was well behind him the last time. We've done a lot more work with **TigerTap Tap** so hopefully he can get a lot closer this time.
- KB:** **Sir Erec** was very impressive last time and has the potential to improve again, banker.

### COUNTY HURDLE

2:10PM

- MC:** **Whiskey Sour** will love the strong gallop in this.
- LK:** If **Monsieur Lecoq** gets in he's a great chance of hitting the places at least.
- RW:** **Whiskey Sour** finished third here last year and is only 1lb higher in the weights. He could be interesting for us.

### ALBERT BARTLETT NOVICES' HURDLE

2:50PM

- MC:** **Commander of Fleet** has wanted this trip and will do better now stepped up again in distance.
- LK:** Rebecca Curtis's horse **Lisnagar Oscar** looks decent and is experienced for this slog.
- RW:** The one big stat that stands out in this race is that horses need at least three runs over hurdles to triumph. Our **Allah** just meets that criteria and looks to be improving after his win at Clonmel but you might want something more battle-hardened.
- KB:** If the ground is soft **Derrinross** has a big chance.

### CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

3:30PM

- MF:** I'd be way more confident that **Presenting Percy** could win a Gold Cup if he had run over fences this season. He was really impressive in the RSA Chase last year but hasn't jumped a fence yet and his preparation this year doesn't warrant his price. Willie Mullins seems pretty keen on his challengers in **Bellshill**, **Kemboy** and **Al Boum Photo** and I like **Bellshill** as the each-way alternative.
- LK:** **Clan Des Obeaux** deserves to be among the favs as he's beaten everything in England so far.
- MC:** **Native River** landed this top event last year and if the rain comes can double up for Colin Tizzard.
- RW:** We've four runners in **Bellshill**, **Kemboy**, **Al Boum Photo** and **Invitation Only**. It's easy to make a case for each one but it's also easy to pick holes in their form also. I hope I pick the right one. It's very open and the fact that **Presenting Percy** has only had one run over hurdles this season – and no runs over fences outside of novice company – is not a textbook preparation for a Gold Cup. That could make him vulnerable. Paul Nicholls' **Clan Des Obeaux** has been the massive improver all season since winning the King George and then following up at Ascot. The more rain the better for last year's winner up **Native River**.
- KB:** **Clan Des Obeaux** has been better than ever this season and has had a great preparation.

### FOXHUNTERS CHASE

4:10PM

- MC:** **Hazel Hill** is highly touted and after two recent wins can get the hat-trick up.
- KB:** **Ucello Conti** only did the bare minimum on winning his last two starts and is capable of better in this stronger company.
- RW:** **Ucello Conti** looks the one they must beat in what's known as the amateur's Gold Cup.

### GRAND ANNUAL

4:50PM

- MC:** **Le Prezien** has been disappointing this season but could bounce back off a strong gallop.
- KB:** **Magic Saint** looks to have very strong credentials and goes there as a very strong fancy.

### MARTIN PIPE CONDITIONAL HANDICAP HURDLE

5:30PM

- MC:** **Big Time Dancer** was really impressive at Kempton in the Lanzarote Hurdle and can go close to winning the final race of the Festival.
- RW:** **Dallas Des Pictons** has improved all season but if Uradel doesn't make it into the Coral Cup he could be a leading player here to close out this year's Festival.



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