

# CHELTENHAM CHEAT SHEET

## PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

### CHAMPIONSHIP RACES



#### DAY 1 CHAMPION DAY

##### 3.05PM CHAMPION HURDLE

- MF** The big race on Tuesday has a really open look to it. **HONEYSUCKLE** is the one I am most interested in. She showed the pace I didn't think she had to win the Irish Champion Hurdle over 2m and is also a very strong stayer having won plenty of times over 2m 4f.
- RW** **HONEYSUCKLE** was better at Leopardstown in the Irish Champion Hurdle than at any stage in her career. When you watch her absolutely trouncing Abacadabras, Saint Roi, Sharjah, Saldier and Petit Mouchoir you can't but be impressed.
- GB** Honeysuckle comes here on the crest of a wave and is unbeaten so far. Last year's winner Epatante has questions to answer after her defeat at Kempton. However, **GOSHEN** was going to be a runaway winner in the Triumph Hurdle last season before falling at the last and he could be capable of something extraordinary.
- FH** Honeysuckle looked awesome when winning the Irish Champion Hurdle and were she to replicate that level of form, would prove extremely difficult to beat. From a pure value point of view, it may be worth having an each-way bet on her stablemate **ASPIRE TOWER** at likely double-digit odds.
- MC** I'd love **GOSHEN** to win for Jamie and Gary Moore after last year's heartbreak of a final hurdle fall with the Triumph Hurdle at his mercy. I see no reason why he won't take this prize after a facile success at Wincanton last time.

#### DAY 3 ST PATRICK'S THURSDAY

##### 3.05PM PADDY POWER STAYERS' HURDLE

- MF** It's disappointing we don't get to see another battle between Thyme Hill and **PAISLEY PARK** but I fancied Paisley Park anyway and I think he'll come out on top in Thursday's big race.
- RW** With Thyme Hill out it's going to make Paisley Park a short favourite, but I'm going to go with **SIRE DU BERLAIS**. His Pertemps performance last year was outstanding and he's my pick.
- GB** We were all looking forward to the Thyme Hill and Paisley Park showdown but sadly it's not to be. **PAISLEY PARK** showed his characteristic brilliance last time at Ascot and can regain his Stayers' Hurdle crown after last year's disappointment.
- FH** **VINNDICATION** would be very interesting if pitching up here rather than the Gold Cup. He could be a springer in the market if declared for Thursday's feature instead of Friday's Blue Riband. I'll be going with him if so.
- MC** Although he ran deplorably in this race last year, **PAISLEY PARK** is still the best stayer in the business. He reminds me of Big Buck's. Even though he hits his flat spots now and again, he's very hard to beat on his day.

#### DAY 2 LADIES DAY

##### 3.05PM CHAMPION CHASE

- MF** Chacun Pour Soi sets the standard this year but the former dual winner of this race **ALTIOR** is overpriced. Connections are going to fit him with cheekpieces and he has worked well in them in his homework. He's an each-way proposition.
- RW** It has been a stop-start career for the supremely talented **CHACUN POUR SOI**. He's a very, very good horse but he just has to go and deliver on the biggest stage at Cheltenham now to be considered great. He sets the standard.
- GB** Chacun Pour Soi has been dominant in Ireland but now needs to prove it at a stiff, undulating track like Cheltenham. **ALTIOR** has no questions to answer on that score. Is he the horse he once was as an 11-year-old? I'm prepared to take a chance he is. Put The Kettle On could be overpriced.
- FH** Chacun Pour Soi will take a lot of beating but he will start a short-priced favourite. **PUT THE KETTLE ON** won last year's Arkle Trophy and is three wins from three runs at Cheltenham. She was behind Chacun Pour Soi last time but loves Cheltenham and is the each-way play.
- MC** **CHACUN POUR SOI** can make up for lost time here this year. In terms of pure class, he is the best horse in the race. He won't mind the conditions on the day, whatever they throw up, and should be very difficult to beat.

#### DAY 4 GOLD CUP DAY

##### 3.05PM CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

- MF** The race has come to life after A Plus Tard's win at Christmas and Champ's great run at Newbury recently. However, the two-time winner and reigning champ **AL BOUM PHOTO** can make history with a third win in Friday's feature.
- RW** It will not be straightforward, but **AL BOUM PHOTO** is the most likely winner. If trainer Willie Mullins gets on a roll at the Festival – and he's got a lot of really well-fancied horses – the public may latch onto him. My each-way fancy is Native River.
- GB** Al Boum Photo is chasing a history-making third win but compatriot **A PLUS TARD** really shone at Christmas when winning the Savill's Chase from Kemboy and Melon. That perfect blend of stamina and speed makes him the young pretender to Al Boum Photo's crown.
- FH** Dual Gold Cup winner **AL BOUM PHOTO** is hugely under-rated but that won't be the case if he wins his third Gold Cup on Friday. One of his main strengths is his versatility. His main rivals A Plus Tard and Champ will need to improve 6lbs to beat him and deny his hat-trick of Gold Cup wins.
- MC** **SANTINI** was second in the Gold Cup last year but has disappointed this season. He will want a strong gallop in a big field on decent ground which he hasn't had since this race last year. He can run very well again.

**PADDYPOWER.** NEWS

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