

GRAND NATIONAL CHEAT SHEET

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

DAY 2, FRIDAY APRIL 8TH



RUBY WALSH

MICK FITZGERALD

GINA BRYCE

MATT CHAPMAN

FRANK HICKEY

1.45PM

HANDICAP HURDLE GRADE 3 (2M 4F)

- RW** POLITESSE made a solid start to her career over fences when beating Premium Package last May but is reverting to hurdles again and runs off a mark of 132. Big claims each-way off that mark.
- MF** LANGER DAN got brought down at the second hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival for which he had been laid out for the year. He can get compensation now.
- GB** LANGER DAN is still well handicapped and has freshness on his side. He can make amends for his misfortune at Cheltenham when a well-backed favourite who was brought down at the second hurdle.
- MC** HIGHWAY ONE O TWO had been in pretty desperate shape until he bounced back to form with a win at Taunton two runs ago and he kept up the good work with a second in the Lanzarote Hurdle at Kempton. Each-way claims.
- FH** FILS D'OUDAIRES and SPEECH BUBBLE are two each-way against the field for me.

2.55PM

NOVICES' STEEPLE CHASE GRADE 1 (3M 1F)

- RW** I'm in the L'HOMME PRESSE camp. His jumping is impeccable and he's been rock solid all year. L'Homme Presse is a future Gold Cup horse in my eyes.
- MF** Aintree puts a real premium on good, fluent, jumping and L'HOMME PRESSE does that so well. He can prove too strong for his market rivals.
- GB** AHOY SENOR did plenty wrong at Cheltenham but the experience may have furnished his latent raw talent even further. Could be value against the other two market rivals.
- MC** A small but select field. L'HOMME PRESSE scampered clear of Ahoy Senor in the Brown Advisory at Cheltenham and can see off Bravemansgame. I loved the way he picked up once asked to go clear and he's clearly very good indeed.
- FH** A cracking race despite just four runners declared and Paul Nicholls can be rewarded for pulling BRAVEMANSGAME out at Cheltenham when the ground turned heavy.

4.05PM

STEEPLE CHASE GRADE 3 (2M 5F)

- RW** I'll side with a couple in NOTEBOOK and ANNAMIX. They're both good jumpers and solid travellers. I wouldn't be surprised if either of them were involved at the finish.
- MF** SPIRITOFTHEGAMES was placed in a handicap chase here last season and ran a blinder at Cheltenham last month when third to Coole Cody. Can hit the places at the very least.
- GB** FOXY JACKS ran an excellent race behind Birchdale at the Dublin Racing Festival and looks overpriced. His trainer Mouse Morris has an excellent record with horses running over the National fences.
- MC** SENIOR CITIZEN has been creeping up the handicap ratings but must have each-way chances for Adrian Heskin and Alan King. The Grand Sefton runner-up has since finished a fine third behind Paint the Dream at Newbury.
- FH** Peter Bowen has a decent record in this race and he might enhance it with MAC TOTTIE who runs here off the same mark as when winning the Grand Sefton here

5.15PM

HANDICAP HURDLE (2M 1F)

- RW** I've no strong opinion but my mate Frank Hickey is all over HOMME PUBLIC so I might have a little go each-way on him.
- MF** RICHMOND LAKE'S run behind Jonbon at Haydock merits respect and looked booked for the places when falling at the last at Keslo in a decent contest. He makes his handicap debut off a mark of 132 and might be underestimated by the assessor.
- GB** Irish challenger MANDARIN MONARCH looks to have more improvement in him over hurdles despite his relative age. He comes here fresh with just the sole winning run to his name this year.
- MC** SEVERANCE has had a wind operation since a fine third at Kelso and that might well allow him to get into the mix under Kevin Brogan who takes off 3lb for trainer Ben Pauling.
- FH** Toby Wynne is great value for his claim and HOMME PUBLIC looks to have a solid each-way chance for the in-form Oliver Greenall stable.

2.20PM

NOVICES' HURDLE GRADE 1 (2M ½F)

- RW** Jonbon is clearly the one to beat but Paul Townend feels EL FABILO is his best chance of a winner at Aintree. Paul has tipped El Fabiolo, so I'm going to do the same!
- MF** FIRST STREET looks an absolute steal to me each-way. He was second in the County Hurdle and if there are any chinks in Jonbon's armour he will expose them.
- GB** AUCUNRISQUE could spring a surprise at a big price if Jonbon feels the effects of his Cheltenham exertions.
- MC** I'll be very surprised if JONBON doesn't hack up here for Aidan Coleman and Nicky Henderson. The expensive relation to Douvan was unbeaten until being smashed by Constitution Hill in the Supreme. Should be too good.
- FH** It is difficult to oppose JONBON on what he has done so far this season and his Supreme Hurdle third is a standout piece of form.

3.30PM

THE MARSH STEEPLE CHASE GRADE 1 (2M 4F)

- RW** Funambule Sivola ran a cracker in the Champion Chase but I'm not sure he stays 2m 4f. I'm siding with FAKIR D'OUDAIRIES. The rest of them are below his standard.
- MF** FAKIR D'OUDAIRIES won this contest last year and dodged Cheltenham to defend it. Hitman could surprise at a nice price.
- GB** FUNAMBULE SIVOLA bumped into Shishkin when finishing an excellent second in the Grade 1 Maghull Novices Chase at the meeting last year and the forecast rain is in his favour.
- MC** SAINT CALVADOS was hopeless at Ascot last time but I'll give him one more chance with a few quid on each-way for Paul Nicholls and Harry Cobden.
- FH** Fakir will be tough to beat but I think SAINT CALVADOS is a fair each-way price and I'd be disappointed if he didn't hit the frame at least.

4.40PM

NOVICES' HURDLE GRADE 1 (3M ½F)

- RW** I'm going to give STAG HORN another go. I don't know what happened to him at Cheltenham. He got into a battle with Classic Getaway and they both ran each other into the ground.
- MF** A tricky race where Martin Pipe Conditional Hurdle winner BANDBRIDGE looks a solid option in a race that lacks any superstars.
- GB** Classy flat horse DUKE OF BRONTE can take centre stage here having been given plenty of time to adjust to his new discipline. He won his Novices Hurdle very easily at Doncaster last month and can take another significant step forward.
- MC** This is far from a vintage renewal on paper. CRYSTAL GLORY was no match for Hillcrest at Haydock last time and was defeated at Newcastle the time before that. However, he looks a strong stayer for Nicky Richards and that means he has fine each-way claims.
- FH** This race looks wide open and I think BOWTOGREATNESS can outrun his odds stepping up to three miles for the first time.

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