

# GRAND NATIONAL CHEAT SHEET

## PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

DAY 1, THURSDAY APRIL 7TH



RUBY WALSH

MICK FITZGERALD

GINA BRYCE

MATT CHAPMAN

FRANK HICKEY

1.45PM

### NOVICES' STEEPLE CHASE GRADE 1 (2M 4F)

- RW** The step up in trip is going to suit **WAR LORD**. He was in the box seat but didn't have the gears when they quickened into the third last in the Arkle at Cheltenham but this trip may suit him better.
- MF** **MILLERS BANK** was only a length behind Pic D'Orhy at Kempton and if he jumps slicker could be a value play against the likely favourite.
- GB** **GIN ON LIME** has been rested through the winter with this race in mind and providing the rain stays away, she'll prove hard to catch under optimum conditions.
- MC** A Grade 1 Novice Chase to start the three-day fiesta and I'm siding with **PIC D'Orhy** to get trainer Paul Nicholls off to a flying start as he chases down another UK Trainers' Championship.
- FH** **ERNE RIVER** goes up in grade but he has won his last four races and this is not the deepest Grade 1 ever run.

2.55PM

### STEEPLE CHASE GRADE 1 (3M 1F)

- RW** Neither Clan Des Obeaux nor Kemboy are getting any younger and any rain will help Royal Pagaille massively. Protektorat ran really well in the Gold Cup but had a hard race so I'll side with **CONFLATED** who would have beaten Eldorado Allen except he fell.
- MF** **PROTEKTORAT** was a decent - but distant - third to A Plus Tard in the Cheltenham Gold Cup but was a ready winner at this venue before. Conflated rates the danger based on his Paddy Power Irish Gold Cup win before tipping up at the Festival.
- GB** **ROYAL PAGAILLE** ran well in the Cheltenham Gold Cup on ground faster than ideal and the return to his preferred left-handed flat track with rain softened conditions can see him score.
- MC** It's hard to think **PROTEKTORAT** didn't prove his stamina when third in the Gold Cup behind A Plus Tard and we have already got evidence this tight track is absolutely what he enjoys.
- FH** **ELDORADO ALLEN** was the only one to try and go with Allaho in the Ryanair Chase at Cheltenham and that cost him second. A return to 3m on a flat track will suit and he's my each-way play

4.05PM

### STEEPLE CHASE (2M 5F)

- RW** Dropping back in trip will suit **JETT** who ran a great race in last year's Grand National. He was beaten last time over 3m 2f but this 2m 5f trip should be more to his liking.
- MF** **LATENIGHTPASS** was an unlucky second last year as the winner Cousin Pascal got a dream run up the inside rail. Gina Andrews' mount has had a wind up and won his prep race in a point-to-point at Charm Park. He can go close again.
- GB** Sam Waley-Cohen's record over the 'spruce' fences has been a recipe for profit in recent years and his mount **JETT** looks very solid to provide him with a fourth victory in the race.
- MC** **PORLOCK BAY** has not quite been in the form that took him to Cheltenham glory in 2021 but he really should have each-way claims here for trainer-jockey William Biddick
- FH** **JETT** ran a cracker in last year's Grand National, relishing these fences and could take a bit of catching now.

5.15PM

### STANDARD OPEN NH FLAT GRADE 2 (2M)

- RW** Patrick Mullins is going to make the weight of 11 stone to ride **ASHROE DIAMOND** and that's a good sign to me.
- MF** **NAUGHTINESSE** won very nicely at Fairyhouse and is related to horses that were placed at Aintree before. The Skeltons' **KATEIRA** was impressive when winning at Huntingdon.
- GB** **KATEIRA** was relatively unfancied on debut at Huntingdon before powering home impressively. She appears to have been saved for this race by the shrewd Skelton team and can provide an emotional success for the Chugg family.
- MC** **ROSY REDRUM** has the right name for this track after the three-time Grand National winner and flew home on her last start when second to Top Dog at Newbury. A reproduction of that form will see her go close again.
- FH** **ROSY REDRUM** was poorly positioned last time at Newbury against the geldings and she could prove tough to beat now against her own sex and getting the four-year-old allowance.

2.20PM

### JUVENILE HURDLE GRADE 1 (2M 1F)

- RW** I just favour **BRAZIL** over Pied Piper. He gave Gaelic Warrior 8lb at Cheltenham and did exceptionally well to win the Juvenile Hurdle. He's improving.
- MF** **PIED PIPER** bumped into the very smart Vauban in the Triumph Hurdle and ticks all the boxes. The biggest danger could be the Boodles Juvenile Hurdle winner, Brazil.
- GB** Pied Piper had a hard race at Cheltenham so Jonjo O'Neill's **PETIT TONNERRE** appeals at a decent price. He did well to win on his UK debut and is talented enough to make his presence felt here.
- MC** Another Grade 1, this time for juvenile hurdlers over 2m 1f. **PIED PIPER** will be very hard to beat for Gordon Elliott and Davy Russell. The Triumph Hurdle third was probably just outstayed by two top class youngsters at the Festival but this sharp track should be right up his street.
- FH** This is very tricky. **PETIT TONNERRE** is an unknown quantity so I'm going to play him in the 'without Pied Piper and Brazil' market.

3.30PM

### AINTREE HURDLE GRADE 1 (2M 4F)

- RW** **EPATANTE** would have been a good bit further in front of Zanahiyr in the Champion Hurdle except for a bad mistake. She needs to prove she stays 2m 4f but she may just be too good for them.
- MF** **EPATANTE** roared back to form when second to Honeysuckle in the Champion Hurdle and can return to the winner's enclosure now.
- GB** **BREWING UPASTORM** has long looked destined for top honours and a jockey change with Sean Bowen replacing Aidan Coleman and the added cheekpieces may just give him the edge in a wide-open contest.
- MC** I want to take on Zanahiyr. I'll go with the stamina of **BREWING UPASTORM** for Olly Murphy and Sean Bowen. The former Ballymore fourth has turned into a useful performer over the trip and was far from disgraced in the National Spirit at Fontwell last time. I'll take him to cause a small upset.
- FH** **ZANAHIYR** has been crying out for a step up in trip to 2m 4f and if he improves for it like I think he will, then he should prove tough to beat.

4.40PM

### HANDICAP STEEPLE CHASE GRADE 3 (2M)

- RW** Henry de Bromhead's **DANCING ON MY OWN** was disappointing behind Global Citizen in the Grand Annual but could be interesting at a big price in a race the trainer has had success in before.
- MF** Evan Williams' **THE LAST DAY** (each-way) has a big chance. He's lightly-raced, travels strongly and has a good racing weight.
- GB** I'll take another chance on last year's Grand Annual winner **SKY PIRATE** who disappointed in this year's renewal at Cheltenham on soft ground. He can bounce back at a decent price in this very open contest.
- MC** **FRERO BANBOU** was never going the pace at Cheltenham behind Global Citizen and did really well in the end to finish third in the Grand Annual. Has solid each-way claims for Venetia Williams and Charlie Deutsch.
- FH** Donald McCain's **GAELEK COAST** shaped really well at Cheltenham in January when last seen and that race has worked out well. He will do me each-way at a price.

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