

CHELTENHAM CHEAT SHEET

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

DAY 3, THURSDAY MARCH 16TH



RUBY WALSH

MICK FITZGERALD

JANE MANGAN

MATT CHAPMAN

FRANK HICKEY

1.30PM

TURNERS NOVICES' CHASE, 2M4F (GRADE 1)

- RW** **MIGHTY POTTER** is probably the best horse but I won't be surprised if Appreciate It (each-way) turns up and gives him a big fright. I'll even go for the forecast of Mighty Potter to beat Appreciate It.
- MF** Joseph O'Brien's **BANBRIDGE** is two from two at Cheltenham. He won the Martin Pipe Conditionals' Handicap Hurdle last year and that form is very solid.
- JM** I believe this year's crop of novice chasers to be strong, with Gordon Elliott's **MIGHTY POTTER** to be the top of that group. I cannot look past him to get us off to a flyer.
- MC** **MIGHTY POTTER** bombed out badly in the Supreme last year but he's proved himself a pretty useful chaser this term. He stays well and ultimately was a ready winner of a Grade 1 at Leopardstown last time.
- FH** It's difficult to get away from **MIGHTY POTTER** with the only negative being his run at the Festival last year.

2.50PM

RYANAIR CHASE, 2M 4F (GRADE 1)

- RW** It looks like it's **SHISHKIN'S** race to lose.
- MF** I'm a huge **SHISHKIN** fan. There's a concern about the 'bounce' factor but I think he can underperform and still win the Ryanair Chase.
- JM** **SHISHKIN** let us down last year in the Champion Chase but he had valid excuses. He looked back to near his best at Ascot last time and the step up in distance will suit.
- MC** I'm the biggest fan of Shishkin and expect him to take all the beating. As a wager I'll be having a bit each-way on **FURY ROAD** for Gordon Elliott. The nine-year-old is owned by the sponsors.
- FH** **SHISHKIN** bounced back to his best last time at Ascot and should win if repeating that run. **FRENCH DYNAMITE** could hit the frame at rewarding odds.

4.10PM

MAGNERS PLATE H'CAP CHASE (2M4F)

- RW** The step up in trip is going to suit Irish raider So Scottish but should also suit **FRERO BANBOU** (each-way) who will appreciate the softer ground.
- MF** This looks the perfect opportunity for **FRERO BANBOU** (each-way) to do just as well as last year when placed in the Grand Annual. Stepping up to 2m 4f shouldn't be an issue. **SO SCOTTISH** is the big danger.
- JM** **SO SCOTTISH** was just denied by Boothill at Ascot on his latest run but remains open to further progression for the team that produced The Shunter to win this in 2021.
- MC** **IL RODOTO** has at least an each-way chance for the UK champion trainer Paul Nicholls and jockey Harry Cobden. A mark of 146 is high enough but he won well at Cheltenham last time and the cheekpieces help.
- FH** **FUGITIF** has improved with every start this season. Despite a 6lb rise for his second place to Il Rodoto on Trials day, he's a decent each-way price.

5.30PM

KIM MUIR CHALLENGE CUP (3M2F)

- RW** **STUMPTOWN** was really good when winning at Sandown and he'll be hard to beat again.
- MF** Patrick Mullins rides the top weight **MR INCREDIBLE** who has some really good back-form. This 3m 2f trip looks tailor-made for him.
- JM** With the benefit of Barry O'Neill and a workable mark of 135 **STUMPTOWN** has been my fancy for this race ever since he destroyed a good field at Sandown last month.
- MC** **BEAUPORT** has a huge run in a handicap hurdle at Aintree to his name and has been tackling tough novice company over fences. He will relish this trip and has a fine each-way chance.
- FH** **BEAUPORT** looks very well handicapped here off a mark of 143 and has decent each-way claims.

2.10PM

PERTEMPS FINAL H'CAP CHASE (3M)

- RW** I have no opinion here and I'm not going to give you a horse for the sake of giving you a horse. Let's move on.
- MF** The faster they go the better he looks and **CAPT MORGS** has winning form at the track. He looks a good each-way play.
- JM** My idea of the winner is **MAXXUM** who has progressed into a proper stayer this season. He might have 11st 12lbs to carry but the fact that connections have decided not to claim off him suggests they have confidence in his ability.
- MC** It would be great to see the Pipe family back in the big time at Cheltenham and **THANKSFORTHEHELP** has every chance of doing that. Might be chucked in off 128 after bolting up at Chepstow last time.
- FH** **SALVADOR ZIGGY** may have top weight but he has a decent 7lb claimer easing the burden. He is completely unexposed at three miles and looks to have solid each-way claims.

3.30PM

PADDY POWER STAYERS' HURDLE, 3M (GRADE 1)

- RW** A huge day for Davy Russell and the softer the ground the better his chance on **TEAHUPOO**. I can't see the ground drying up enough for Home By The Lee.
- MF** **HOME BY THE LEE** certainly looks the safest option in the Paddy Power Stayers' Hurdle in what is a trappy race. He's improved in leaps and bounds this season.
- JM** My vote goes to **TEAHUPOO**. His Hatton's Grace performance was top drawer and he proved that the 3 miles trip wasn't an issue at Gowran Park last time. A perfect partner for Davy Russell.
- MC** I'll stick with hat-trick-seeking defending champion **FLOORING PORTER**. Although beaten twice this season he comes alive at this track.
- FH** If **BLAZING KHAL** is 100 per cent fit I fully expect him to take all the beating.

4.50PM

MARES' NOVICES' HURDLE, 2M1F (GRADE 2)

- RW** **LOT OF JOY** is the win option at the prices but don't discount **HALKA DU TARBERT** each-way.
- MF** Nico de Boinville was very keen on **LUCCIA** running in the Supreme Novices Hurdle and that tells you how good they think she is. The New Course puts less pressure on her jumping which is a slight weakness.
- JM** Nicky Henderson and **LUCCIA** might stop Mullins on this occasion. This mare was considered for the Supreme Novices Hurdle against the geldings but reverts to her own sex.
- MC** I'll be very surprised if **LUCCIA** doesn't take all the beating for Nicky Henderson. She hasn't lost yet and jumped very well at Exeter and Newbury.
- FH** **LOT OF JOY** bumped into two good horses on her first two starts over hurdles. Back against mares again, she could take plenty of stopping.