

CHELTENHAM CHEAT SHEET

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

DAY 4, FRIDAY MARCH 17TH



RUBY WALSH

MICK FITZGERALD

JANE MANGAN

MATT CHAPMAN

FRANK HICKEY

1.30PM

TRIUMPH HURDLE, 2M1F (GRADE 1)

- RW** The softer it gets the bigger chance that gives **BLOOD DESTINY**. It'll definitely suit if the going is heavy.
- MF** I was really taken with **BLOOD DESTINY** when he won at Cork. Paul Townend has opted to ride Lossiemouth after an unlucky run at Leopardstown but it must have been a tough choice.
- JM** I have been a fan of **LOSSIEMOUTH** ever since her Irish debut at Fairyhouse. It's hard to know what Blood Destiny has beaten. I'll stick with the beautiful grey mare.
- MC** I've long been all over **LOSSIEMOUTH** for this and I'm not changing my mind now. She was unlucky to be beaten by Gala Marceau at Leopardstown last time and I expect the filly to turn that form around.
- FH** The market suggests **GALA MARCEAU** was really fortunate to beat Lossiemouth at the DRF but I'm far less sure. I think she represents great value with the first time hood hopefully helping her settle.

2.50PM

ALBERT BARTLETT NOVICES' HURDLE, 3M

- RW** I've been with **CORBETTS CROSS** since Christmas and I'm going to stay with him.
- MF** **CORBETTS CROSS** has won over 2m and stays 3m and not many of this field can say that. He looks a cut above and is my nap of the day.
- JM** Every time I watched **THREE CARD BRAG** this season, I always thought he'd be a proper horse over three miles. Now is the time for him to prove his worth!
- MC** **FAVORI DE CHAMPDOU** looks a very strong stayer and might not be a crazy each-way chance here at big odds for Gordon Elliott and Jordan Gainford.
- FH** This race regularly throws up a big price winner but it will take a decent effort to turn over both Three Card Brag and Corbett Cross. I just favour **THREE CARD BRAG** who is bred to excel at this trip.

4.10PM

HUNTERS' CHASE, 3M2F

- RW** I am a **VAUCELET** man. He is a big, big runner. **CHRIS'S DREAM** is the value.
- MF** Henry de Bromhead's runner **CHRIS'S DREAM** has won a couple of point-to-points and that will set him up nicely for this Hunters' Chase.
- JM** Patrick Mullins and Billaway picked Barry O'Neill's pocket on Winged Leader last year and stablemate **VAUCELET** may get his revenge for connections now.
- MC** The fact that **VAUCELET** is the chosen one for trainer David Christie and jockey Barry O'Neill is a big pointer to his chances. Recent successes at Stratford and Down Royal suggest he will take all the beating.
- FH** **ROCKY'S HOWYA** has been turned inside out since joining Declan Queally winning his 5 point-to-points by wide margins, last time beating the highly rated Chatham Street Lad by 45 lengths.

5.30PM

M PIPE HANDICAP HURDLE, 2M2F

- RW** It's a really competitive race and one of the novices will win it. I hope it's Spanish Harlem as it would round out a big week for Michael O'Sullivan but, at a price, **SPIRIT OF LEGEND** could run a big race.
- MF** **COOL SURVIVOR** is unexposed and has to be a huge player with brilliant young pilot, Sam Ewing, on board.
- JM** The Festival Finale and while **IMAGINE** has been campaigned over 2m this season the step up to 2m 4f and trainer Gordon Elliott likes to target this race.
- MC** I'm very keen on **COOL SURVIVOR** here for Gordon Elliott and Sam Ewing. There was nothing wrong with his fourth from off the pace to Good Land at Leopardstown in Grade 1 company and a mark of 140 looks workable.
- FH** **IROKO** is 2-2 in handicaps, winning last time by 14 lengths at Wetherby. The 10lb rise for that win may underestimate him. He could be better than a handicapper.

2.10PM

COUNTRY HURDLE, 2M1F

- RW** I'd be with **BALLYADAM**. He ran really well behind Gaelic Warrior at the Dublin Racing Festival and he's probably overpriced.
- MF** **FILEY BAY** was unlucky to finish second in the Betfair Hurdle at Newbury last month. He is a little higher in the handicap now which is not ideal, but he could still be improving.
- JM** Just the 26 runners but I fancy Dan Skelton to continue his brilliant record in this race courtesy of **PEMBROKE**. He could be well handicapped.
- MC** **PEMBROKE** looks a promising type for the Skelton team and this is his first try in handicap company. A slight drop in trip after his last run is no issue and he's a player each-way.
- FH** **MAGNOR GLORY** has a really good record fresh and was a good winner at Listowel when last seen in a race that has worked out well. Put away after that win, he has man of the hour Michael O' Sullivan taking off 3lbs and drying ground is no negative for him.

3.30PM

CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP, 3M2½F (GRADE 1)

- RW** **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** all day, every day and I would love to be riding him. Noble Yeats could end up being his biggest danger.
- MF** I'm willing to trust trainer Henry De Bromhead will have **A PLUS TARD** ready after a disappointing season. Last year's winner could be the forgotten horse.
- JM** I'm hoping **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** can show how good he really is by powering up the hill ahead of this quality field. This is his time to shine.
- MC** I've no doubt **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** is the most talented horse in the field. I'll also have a few quid each-way on former winner **MINELLA INDO** who looks too big a price.
- FH** **SOUNDS RUSSIAN** has improved with every start this season and he has each-way claims at a huge price.

4.50PM

MRS PADDY POWER MARES' CHASE, 2M4½F

- RW** **ALLEGORIE DE VASSY** is the class horse in the race. If you want to oppose her you'd have to go big and that's maybe Riviere D'etel.
- MF** Allegorie De Vassy jumps very badly right which will not suit at this track. **IMPERVIOUS** is the one I like as she is a rock-solid jumper and has put up some good performances this season. She'll handle the ground too.
- JM** Despite having just two runs over fences to date, **ALLEGORIE DE VASSY** has the potential to be top class. She was good enough to beat Brandy Love over hurdles and I hope she shows us her ability now.
- MC** Hard to get away from **ALLEGORIE DE VASSY**. Stamina is no issue and her yard knows the time of day. I expect her to be too good.
- FH** **ALLEGORIE DE VASSY** may jump a little right but I'm convinced she has a huge engine and I think she will take plenty of beating here.