

CHELTENHAM CHEAT SHEET

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

DAY 1, TUESDAY MARCH 14TH



RUBY WALSH

MICK FITZGERALD

JANE MANGAN

MATT CHAPMAN

FRANK HICKEY

1.30PM

SUPREME NOVICES' HURDLE, 2M½F (GRADE 1)

- RW** I'm with **FACILE VEGA** and despite his bad run at the Dublin Racing Festival, I can't turn my back on him after one bad run.
- MF** Willie Mullins has a strong hand in this contest and **IL ETAIT TEMPS** could be the answer. They are going to go fast in this race and that will help him relax. He could be the answer in a tricky opening contest.
- JM** We know **FACILE VEGA** is a monster and we know he went too fast early at the Dublin Racing Festival. Expect a change in tactics. If he relaxes. He wins. **INTHEPOCKET** looks solid each-way.
- MC** I've always been a Facile Vega fan and nothing has changed. That said, I'll have **TAHMURAS** each way. The Tolworth winner stays well and his Sandown form has a solid look to it.
- FH** I'm not forgiving Facile Vega for his Leopardstown run so I'm taking him on. I like **DOCTOR BRAVO**, who has solid form including impressive wins at Fairyhouse and Down Royal in December and January.

2.10PM

ARKLE CHASE, 2M (GRADE 1)

- RW** The three market leaders meet again after their Leopardstown smash-up and the tactics will be fascinating. I like **SAINT ROI** (each-way) to hit the places if they all cancel each other out.
- MF** I am not deserting **JONBON** and there is going to be a helter-skelter pace set with Dysart Dynamo and Effernock Fizz in the line-up. With that guaranteed pace, I expect Jonbon to sit just behind the leaders and pick them off late.
- JM** I'm siding with **JONBON** based on his accurate jumping and he's probably more suited by the track. I'm hopeful he can follow in his brother Douvan's footsteps by winning the Arkle.
- MC** I'm all over **JONBON** here for Nicky Henderson and Aidan Coleman. The Supreme Novices' runner-up and Aintree winner has been pretty faultless over fences
- FH** I'm with **DYSART DYNAMO** in an each-way bet. People may think this is a two-horse race between El Fabiolo and Jonbon but Dysart Dynamo could be hard to peg back if he gets a lead. This race could set up for him.

2.50PM

HANDICAP STEEPLE CHASE (3M1F)

- RW** A tricky looking competitive where I've no strong opinion but **FANION DESTRUVAL** can go well for trainer Venetia Williams as he drops in class from graded company.
- MF** **FANION DESTRUVAL** ran in the last two Ryanair Chases and ran a very good race in the Rowland Meyrick Chase at Wetherby. The step-up in trip will help and I can see him finishing late to hit the places at least at a nice each-way price.
- JM** **FASTORSLOW** has been campaigned in Grade 1 company this season and this handicap isn't nearly as hot. He steps up in trip and has a big chance.
- MC** **OSCAR ELITE** is only 11lb higher than when third in 2022. He was back to form in a small field at Ascot last time and has a fair racing weight with 10st 12lb. I'll chance him eachway.
- FH** If the ground is good, I like **TEA CLIPPER** for Tom Lacey. He's got solid form and he's coming in fresh having not run since November at Newbury.

3.30PM

CHAMPION HURDLE, 2M½F (GRADE 1)

- RW** **CONSTITUTION HILL** and State Man sets the standard and really with only seven runners there's no real each-way angle past them.
- MF** I am really looking forward to seeing **CONSTITUTION HILL** strut his stuff. He has blown people away and I'm hoping we get more of the same. State Man is the obvious danger and Vauban could chase them home in third.
- JM** Not since Bula in 1971 has a horse completed the Supreme Novices' Hurdle / Champion Hurdle double in consecutive years. There haven't been many that reached a rating of 173 after just five runs. My three home are **CONSTITUTION HILL**. Then State Man and I **LIKE TO MOVE IT**.
- MC** With no each-way angle into the race all I want to see is **CONSTITUTION HILL** blitz the field for Michael Buckley, Nico de Boinville and Nicky Henderson.
- FH** Constitution Hill is obviously the most likely winner but I'm keen on **I LIKE TO MOVE IT** in the Betting Without Constitution Hill and State Man market.

4.10PM

MARES' HURDLE, 2M4F (GRADE 1)

- RW** **BRANDY LOVE** is going to improve a hell of a lot from her first run of the season at Punchestown a few weeks ago and can go well and I also like **SHEWEARSITWELL** each-way at a big price.
- MF** **MARIES ROCK** won this race last year and is in great form at Nicky Henderson's yard in the build-up. She can beat the former Champion Hurdle winners Honeysuckle and Epatante with the latter chosen to chase her home.
- JM** Can I really abandon Honeysuckle in her final race? Unfortunately yes. A champion in her own right, I think **EPATANTE** can prevail in an ultra-strong Mares' Hurdle.
- MC** I'm sticking with **LOVE ENVOI** each way for Harry Fry and Jonathan Burke. The seven-year-old has only been beaten once in her life at the hands of Brandy Love but has recent form to her name unlike that old rival.
- FH** **MARIES ROCK**, who has won her last four, looks the one to beat as Honeysuckle is in decline, even though it would blow the roof off the place if Rachael Blackmore won on her. **ECHOES IN RAIN** could also be an each-way shout.

4.50PM

BOODLES JUVENILE H'CAP H'DLE(2M½F)

- RW** **TEKAO** has a great chance.
- MF** Gary Moore's runner has let himself down with his jumping but if he improves that in this contest, I can see **PERSEUS WAY** being involved at the finish. He is talented and would have won last time at Kempton if he jumped either of the last two hurdles well. Good value as an each-way pick.
- JM** Mark Walsh has abandoned Risk Belle in favour of **TEKAO** who was third to Gala Marceau and Lossiemouth in a Grade 1 at Leopardstown last time. A reproduction of that form will see him go very close to winning this. **SIR ALLEN** is an each-way play.
- MC** I like the look of **PERSEUS WAY** each way here for Gary and Jamie Moore. The Huntingdon winner went to Kempton last time and made a mistake but I like the way he kept on.
- FH** I like **MORNING SOLDIER** as long as it's decent ground. He's got solid form and he could be buried in the field to strike late. **ZANNDABAD** also stands out for Tony Martin who could be really well in with a rating of 119.

5.30PM

NATIONAL HUNT CHASE, 3M6F (GRADE 2)

- RW** **GAILLARD DU MESNIL** should give Willie and Patrick Mullins their third National Hunt Chase victory in the finale on day one.
- MF** **GAILLARD DU MESNIL** has been placed at the Festival last year behind L'Homme Press and Ahoy Senior and was previously second in the Ballymore Hurdle two years ago. His form is strong and he's just better than the opposition.
- JM** I fancy **GAILLARD DU MESNIL** and Patrick Mullins to put in a similar display to Stattler's comfortable win last year. Barring accident, he's the banker of the day.
- MC** It's hard to get away from the old slow boat **GAILLARD DU MESNIL** who has been tackling Grade 1 company and takes a drop in class.
- FH** I don't like tipping favourites but it's hard to get away from **GAILLARD DU MESNIL** for Willie Mullins with Patrick on board. The trip won't be an issue for him and he's won at Grade 1 level this season.