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DAVY RUSSELL
& HARRY SKELTON'S

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL GUIDE

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CHELTENHAM 2024



The four best days in the racing calendar are here...

For racing fans, nothing beats the Cheltenham Festival – that famous roar when the tapes go up and the buzz of the betting ring.

We've put together this handy pocket guide which includes all the stats and trends you might need to find a winner or two.

This year we are also delighted to have added Harry Skelton as a brand ambassador so, along with Davy Russell, they provide expert opinion from both sides of the Irish Sea. We're not sure who would win a dance off, though!

At Star Sports, we believe in bookmaking. That's why we continue to open betting shops when others are closing them. We continue to stand firm in the ring and now stand at even more racecourses. We believe in laying the biggest bets but will also cater for bets of all sizes. We also believe in proper old-fashioned customer service where you get to speak to a human rather than a robot.

Throughout the week we will have a range of offers so check out starsports.bet each day of the meeting.

Also, don't forget to ready Harry and Davy's daily blogs at starsportsbet.co.uk where you can also watch our preview videos, play our Yes/No competition and read Simon Nott's daily betting ring report.

So, if you've not yet given us a try, there is no time like Cheltenham. Download the app, give us a ring, visit one of our shops or visit one of our pitches.



THE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY 12TH MARCH

TIME	RACE	DISTANCE
1:30	Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle	2m ½f
2:10	My Pension Expert Arkle Challenge Trophy	2m
2:50	Ultima Handicap Chase	3m 1f
3:30	Unibet Champion Hurdle	2m ½f
4:10	Close Brothers Mares' Hurdle	2m 4f
4:50	Boodles Juvenile Handicap Hurdle	2m ½f
5:30	National Hunt Challenge Cup	3m 6f

THURSDAY 14TH MARCH

TIME	RACE	DISTANCE
1:30	Turners Novices' Chase	2m 4f
2:10	Pertemps Network Final	3m
2:50	Ryanair Chase	2m 5f
3:30	Paddy Power Stayers' Hurdle	3m
4:10	TrustATrader Plate Handicap Chase	2m 5f
4:50	Ryanair Mares' Novices' Hurdle	2m 1f
5:30	Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Challenge Cup	3m 2f

WEDNESDAY 13TH MARCH

TIME	RACE	DISTANCE
1:30	Baring Bingham Novices' Hurdle	2m 5f
2:10	Brown Advisory Novices' Chase	3m ½f
2:50	Coral Cup Handicap Hurdle	2m 5f
3:30	Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase	2m
4:10	Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase	3m 6f
4:50	Johnny Henderson Grand Annual Handicap Chase	2m
5:30	Weatherbys Champion Bumper	2m ½f

FRIDAY 15TH MARCH

TIME	RACE	DISTANCE
1:30	JCB Triumph Hurdle	2m 1f
2:10	County Handicap Hurdle	2m 1f
2:50	Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle	3m
3:30	Boodles Cheltenham Gold Cup	3m 2½f
4:10	St. James's Place Festival Challenge Cup Open Hunters' Chase	3m 2½f
4:50	Mrs Paddy Power Mares' Chase	2m 4½f
5:30	Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle	2m 4½f

SKY BET SUPREME NOVICES' HURDLE

TUE 12 MAR - 1:30PM DISTANCE: 2M 1/2F



Michael O'Sullivan celebrates victory in last year's Supreme aboard Marine Nationale

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	5	5	6	6	6	5	6	7	5	6
Winner's SP	7/2F	2/1F	4/1	25/1	9/1	6/1	6/1	8/11F	9/4F	9/2
Fate of Fav.	1ST	1ST	2ND	2ND	11TH	4TH & 10TH	4TH	1ST	1ST	2ND
Winning Dist.	6	4 1/2	7	2 1/4	NECK	4 1/2	HEAD	24	22	3 1/4
Previous Run	1ST	1ST	1ST	6TH	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST

KEY TRENDS

- ★ 11 of the last 12 winners were aged 5 or 6
- ★ 24 of the last 27 winners had won their last start
- ★ Only four of the last 12 favourites have won

DAVY'S VERDICT



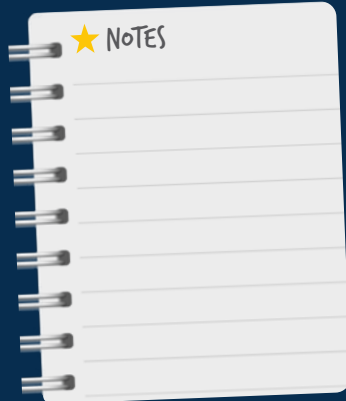
Willie Mullins seems to hold all the aces with the likes of **BALLYBURN**, **TULLYHILL** and **MYSTICAL POWER** and whichever combination of that trio run, they have to be respected. Ballyburn was so good at the Dublin Racing Festival, while Tullyhill bounced back to form from the front the last day. That said, Gordon's **FIREFOX** is a horse I have always really liked, and he wasn't himself in Naas. The drop in trip back down to two miles will help him too and I'd say he could be the value against the big guns.

HARRY'S VERDICT



This looks like being a Willie Mullins benefit. If **BALLYBURN** turns up here, then he'd be the one they all have to beat. He has a really high cruising speed and stays really well. The only thing is if the ground dries out, would that suit him at this trip? **MYSTICAL POWER** has got an exceptional pedigree and was impressive the last day. **TULLYHILL** was also good at Punchestown. **FAVOUR AND FORTUNE** could be one at a big price for the English if he comes here.

★ NOTES



MY PENSION EXPERT ARKLE CHALLENGE TROPHY

TUE 12 MAR - 2:10PM DISTANCE: 2M



El Fabiolo and Paul Townend were victorious in last year's Arkle

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	6	7	6	7	6	6	6	7	8	6
Winner's SP	33/1	4/6F	1/4F	1/4F	5/6F	5/1	16/1	4/9F	5/2F	11/10F
Fate of Fav.	2ND	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	7TH	6TH	1ST	1ST	1ST
Winning Dist.	HEAD	6	7	6	14	13	11/2	12	4 1/4	5 1/2
Previous Run	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST

KEY TRENDS

- ★ Seven of the last 10 winners were favourites
- ★ Nine of the last 12 winners were trained by Willie Mullins or Nicky Henderson
- ★ The last 14 winners had won their last start

DAVY'S VERDICT



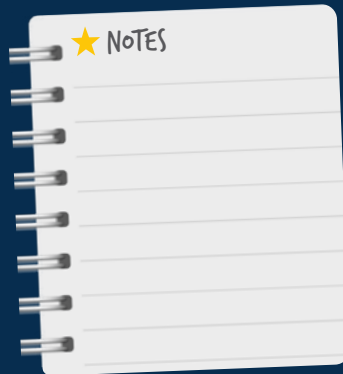
It was a concern for me the first time the tongue tie went on **MARINE NATIONALE** over Christmas, and it didn't seem to do its job in Leopardstown the last day. Listen, you'll forgive a horse a bad run on bad ground, but you'd be a small bit worried about this fella. **FOUND A FIFTY** will go forward for sure, but I'm not sure Cheltenham is his track. **IL ETAIT TEMPS** didn't run great here last year and that lingers in my mind. **FACILE VEGA** will go well if the rain stays around.

HARRY'S VERDICT



This could be quite an open Arkle this year and we might see a bigger field than normal. I'd be taking on **MARINE NATIONALE** after that last run. I thought jumping fences looked like a bit of an effort for him, although he could improve on better ground – he's short enough, though. **JPR ONE** looks the best of the English. He was unfortunate to come down here when he was going to win impressively. **FACILE VEGA** is a bit in and out, but **IL ETAIT TEMPS** is really tough and should run well.

★ NOTES



UNIBET CHAMPION HURDLE

TUE 12 MAR - 3:30PM DISTANCE: 2M 1/2F



Constitution Hill was imperious in last year's Champion Hurdle

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	6	7	8	6	7	5	6	7	8	6
Winner's SP	9/1	4/5F	5/2F	5/1	4/6F	16/1	2/1F	11/10F	8/11F	4/11F
Fate of Fav.	4TH	1ST	1ST	DQ	1ST	6TH	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST
Winning Dist.	NECK	11/2	4 1/2	4 1/2	NECK	15	3	6 1/2	3 1/2	9
Previous Run	4TH	4TH	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST

KEY TRENDS

- ★ 15 of the last 25 winners had won at the Festival previously
- ★ Mares have won four of the last 10 renewals
- ★ Eight of the last 12 winners were favourites or joint favourites

DAVY'S VERDICT



When he is fit and well, there is no getting away from the fact that **CONSTITUTION HILL** is an absolute monster, but the dirty scope is obviously far from ideal. There has been plenty of chat in Ireland that **STATE MAN** has improved bundles this year and is ready to serve it up to him, but a fully fit Constitution Hill would beat a fully fit State Man. If the defending champ doesn't make it, then State Man looks to have a fairly easy task, although could they then switch **LOSSIEMOUTH** from the Mares' Hurdle?

HARRY'S VERDICT



If he turns up in one piece and all is well, **CONSTITUTION HILL** should win again. He's one of the best we've seen for a long time, but a setback so close to the race is a real worry for connections. I know Willie and Paul were bullish about **STATE MAN** after Leopardstown and that they feel they can get closer to him, but it simply comes down to Constitution Hill and whether Nicky can get him right on the day. You'd imagine there will be more runners if Constitution Hill is pulled out – maybe even **LOSSIEMOUTH**.

★ NOTES

TUE 12 MARCH KEY TRENDS

REMAINDER OF
DAY ONE

2:50

ULTIMA HANDICAP CHASE

- ★ Each of the last 12 winners had at least one previous run at Cheltenham
- ★ No Irish-trained winner since 2006

4:10

CLOSE BROTHERS MARES' HURDLE

- ★ Willie Mullins has won nine of the 16 renewals but none of the last five
- ★ Only three British-trained winners since the race's inception

4:50

BOODLES JUVENILE HANDICAP HURDLE

- ★ Four of the last five winners ran in the same Naas race for their prep run
- ★ Only one top-weight has won the race

5:30

NATIONAL HUNT CHALLENGE CUP

- ★ Nine of the last 12 winners were aged between 6 and 8
- ★ Only one favourite has won in the last 10 years

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BROWN ADVISORY NOVICES' CHASE

WED 13 MAR - 2:10PM DISTANCE: 3M 1/2F



Sam Twiston-Davies and The Real Whacker after winning the 2023 Brown Advisory

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	7	6	7	8	7	7	8	7	7	7
Winner's SP	12/1	13/8F	8/1	7/2F	5/2F	4/1	4/1	1/4F	9/4F	8/1
Fate of Fav.	2ND	1ST	3RD	1ST	1ST	3RD	3RD	1ST	1ST	2ND
Winning Dist.	NECK	6	1/2	NOSE	7	1/2	1	6 1/2	3 1/2	NOSE
Previous Run	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	2ND	2ND	FELL	1ST	1ST	1ST

KEY TRENDS

- ★ Five successful favourites in the past 12 years
- ★ 14 of the last 17 winners were seven-year-olds
- ★ 10 of the last 12 winners had at least three prior chase starts

DAVY'S VERDICT



The English have big chances headed by last year's Albert Bartlett winner **STAY AWAY FAY** who is a proper stayer and wasn't disgraced out of novice company the last day. He's battle-hardened now and may just take some beating here. I do like them when they have proved themselves over the trip and he reminds me a little of Weapon's Amnesty who I rode to win this. Fellow ambassador Harry Skelton has a good chance on **GREY DAWNING** should he come here, but they have the option of the Turners on Thursday too.

HARRY'S VERDICT



We potentially have **GREY DAWNING** in this.

We'll keep our options open – if it's soft we could go for the Turners, but on decent ground it's more than likely we'll come here. He made an unfortunate mistake two out at Cheltenham where he'd have been a good winner and was then very impressive at Warwick. **FACT TO FILE** has looked very good and I have plenty of respect for **STAY AWAY FAY** who beat us earlier in the season, but I'd say we've improved plenty since then.

★ NOTES

BETWAY QUEEN MOTHER CHAMPION CHASE

WED 13 MAR - 3:30PM DISTANCE: 2M



Energumene successfully defended his Champion Chase crown

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	8	7	10	10	8	9	9	7	8	9
Winner's SP	11/4F	9/2	5/1	11/1	EVSF	4/11F	6/1	17/2	5/2	6/5F
Fate of Fav.	1ST	PU	2ND	7TH	1ST	1ST	4TH	3RD	PU	1ST
Winning Dist.	6	11/4	31/2	HEAD	7	13/4	91/2	1/2	81/2	10
Previous Run	1ST	1ST	1ST	5TH	1ST	1ST	5TH	3RD	2ND	3RD

KEY TRENDS

- ★ Five of the last eight winners were ridden by Nico de Boinville or Paul Townend
- ★ 11 of the last 12 winners were in the top three in the betting
- ★ Eight of the last 12 winners ran in the Clarence House Chase at Ascot on their last run

DAVY'S VERDICT



Everyone is looking forward to seeing the rematch between **EL FABILO** and **JONBON**. To be honest, despite the fact that he was beaten the last day, I haven't lost faith in Jonbon on the back of one silly mistake. He is definitely the value call in the rematch even with El Fabiolo who is six from six over fences. **EDWARDSTONE** was far better from the front in Newbury the last day and could make it interesting if back on song. However, this does look a bit of a shootout between the big two.

HARRY'S VERDICT



You can forgive any horse a disappointing run, they're not machines, and I think you have to do that with **JONBON**. He made a bad mistake in the Clarence House and apart from that his record is pretty good. He was really impressive in the Shloer Chase on very soft ground. He has a good one to take on in **EL FABILO**, though, whose record has been foot perfect. **EDWARDSTONE** enjoyed making the running at Newbury, but I think the other two have more improvement in them.

★ NOTES



WED 13 MARCH KEY TRENDS

REMAINDER OF
DAY TWO

1:30

BARING BINGHAM NOVICES' HURDLE

- ★ 10 of the last 12 winners won on their last start
- ★ Willie Mullins is the race's leading trainer with six wins and has won the last two

2:50

CORAL CUP HANDICAP HURDLE

- ★ Seven of the last 10 winners were priced 12/1 or bigger
- ★ Nine of the last 12 winners were rated 140 or higher

4:10

GLENFARCLAS CROSS COUNTRY CHASE

- ★ Just three of the last 12 winners won their prep race
- ★ 10 of the last 12 winners were in the top three of the betting

4:50

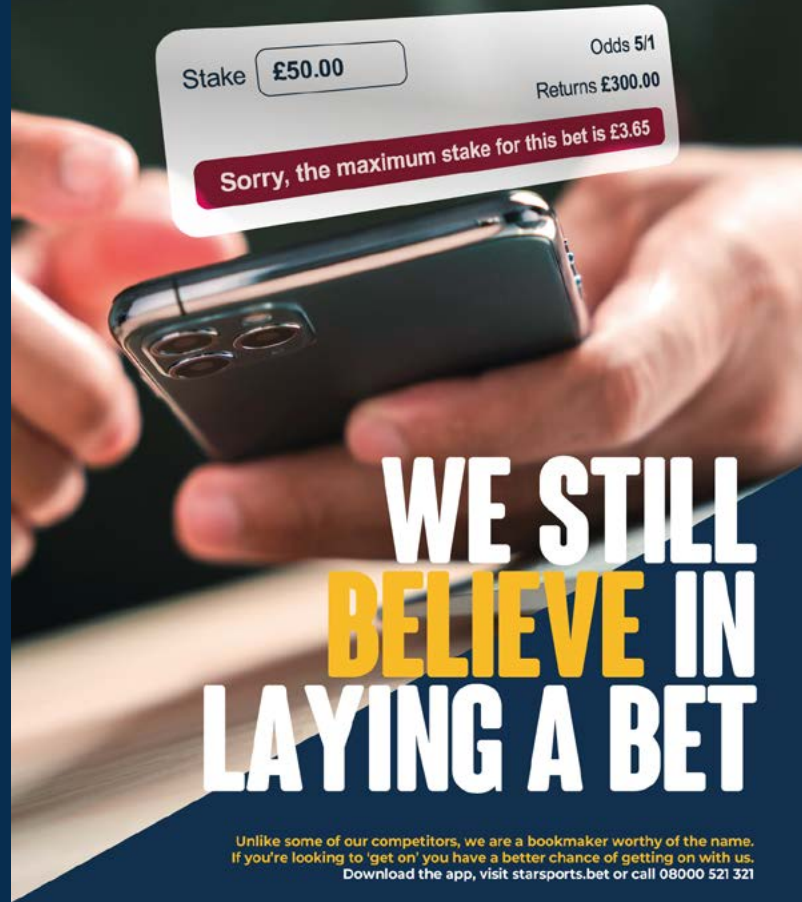
JOHNNY HENDERSON GRAND ANNUAL HANDICAP CHASE

- ★ Only two favourites have won this race since 2012
- ★ Eight of the last 10 winners carried 11 stone or more

5:30

WEATHERBYS CHAMPION BUMPER

- ★ Willie Mullins has won this a record 12 times and in four of the last six years
- ★ Ballyandy was the last British-trained winner in 2016



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RYANAIR CHASE

THU 14 MAR - 2:50PM DISTANCE: 2M 4 1/2F



Envoi Allen's success in 2023 made it a hat-trick of Ryanair wins for owners Cheveley Park Stud

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	8	7	7	9	7	7	9	7	8	9
Winner's SP	3/1F	16/1	EVSF	7/4F	8/1	9/2	2/1	3/1F	4/7F	13/2
Fate of Fav.	1ST	3RD	1ST	1ST	2ND	8TH	3RD	1ST	1ST	2ND
Winning Dist.	2 1/4	5	6	1 1/2	4 1/2	1 1/4	NECK	12	14	2 3/4
Previous Run	5TH	UR	2ND	1ST	2ND	1ST	2ND	1ST	1ST	7TH

KEY TRENDS

- ★ Willie Mullins has won five of the last eight renewals
- ★ The last 12 winners have all been aged between seven and nine
- ★ If lining up, Envoi Allen would bid to become only the third dual winner of the race

DAVY'S VERDICT



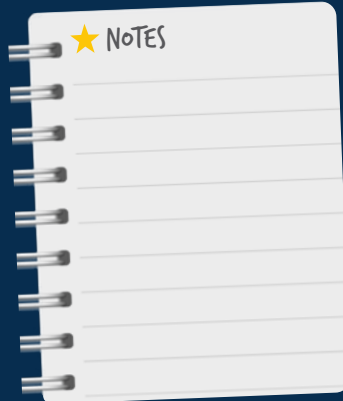
You had to have been impressed with **BANBRIDGE** in Kempton the last day and on a sound surface he is the one to beat for sure as he loves it here too. If the rain hangs about though, it would be no surprise if **ENVOI ALLEN** won the race for a second year on the spin. From a value perspective, Gordon has a couple of decent each-way chances with both **CONFLATED** and **FIL DOR**. The former was third in a Gold Cup last season, while the latter will love the step up in trip.

HARRY'S VERDICT



If it's decent ground, you'd have to say **BANBRIDGE** is the one to beat. They went a real strong gallop at Kempton and Pic D'Orhy franked the form in the Ascot Chase. We run **PROTEKTORAT** who has been really consistent on his last few starts since a disappointing run at Haydock. We're dropping him back in trip, but this track will hopefully suit and we hope he'll run well – whether he's quite up to winning, we'll find out. I think **STAGE STAR** might be vulnerable in this class.

NOTES



PADDY POWER STAYERS' HURDLE

THU 14 MAR - 3:30PM DISTANCE: 3M



Sire Du Berlais was a surprise winner of last year's Stayers' Hurdle under Mark Walsh

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	6	6	8	7	7	7	7	6	7	11
Winner's SP	15/2	14/1	EVSF	10/1	12/1	11/8F	50/1	12/1	4/1	33/1
Fate of Fav.	2ND	2ND	1ST	3RD	5TH	1ST	7TH	3RD	5TH	3RD
Winning Dist.	11/2	31/4	7	3/4	2	2 3/4	2	2 1/4	2 3/4	3/4
Previous Run	1ST	4TH	1ST	FELL	2ND	1ST	3RD	1ST	2ND	4TH

KEY TRENDS

- ★ Only two favourites have been successful in the last 11 years
- ★ Nine of the last 12 winners had at least one previous Grade 1 win
- ★ Only six of the last 12 winners won on their previous start

DAVY'S VERDICT



You might say that it's a case of my heart ruling my head with **IRISH POINT** as he gave me my last Grade One win as a pilot in Aintree last year. However, he's a proper soft ground stayer and this three-mile trip looks perfect for him. All that said, I certainly don't envy Jack's decision as **TEAHUPOO** has been kept fresh for this having hit the frame 12 months ago. He'll love the rain too if it arrives and they could easily fight out the finish between them. A race to savour.

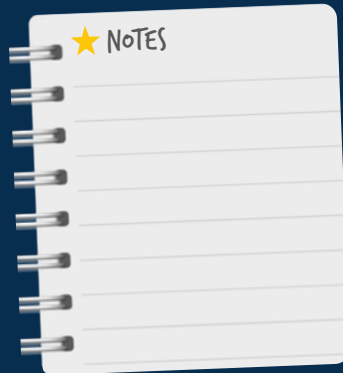
HARRY'S VERDICT



I know there have been a few shocks in this race over the years, but I'd fancy **TEAHUPOO**. He was a good third last year and Gordon has kept him fresh for it this time. Fitness won't be an issue and he has a good record after a break.

IRISH POINT could also come here for connections and **CRAMBO** has a chance for Fergal – he's a proper stayer. **SIR GERHARD** won the Ballymore here a couple of years ago and he could be interesting back over hurdles as fences didn't seem to suit him.

★ NOTES



THU 14 MARCH KEY TRENDS

REMAINDER OF
DAY THREE

1:30

TURNERS NOVICES' CHASE

- ★ Willie Mullins is the race's leading trainer with four wins
- ★ Seven-year-olds have won nine of the 13 editions

2:10

PERTEMPS NETWORK FINAL

- ★ Eight of the last 12 winners carried 11st 4lbs or less
- ★ The Irish have won seven of the last eight renewals

4:10

TRUSTATRADER PLATE HANDICAP CHASE

- ★ 12 of the last 15 winners carried less than 11 stone
- ★ Britain and Ireland have won this five times apiece in the last decade

4:50

RYANAIR MARES' NOVICES' HURDLE

- ★ Willie Mullins won the first five renewals but hasn't been successful in the past three years
- ★ British-trained mares have won the last two editions

5:30

FULKE WALWYN KIM MUIR CHALLENGE CUP

- ★ Neither Willie Mullins or Patrick Mullins have won this race
- ★ Nine of the last 11 winners were aged seven or eight

12:40

1	GINNY'S DESTINY	7/2
2	BLOW YOUR WAD	11/2
3	UNEXPECTED PAR	25/1
4	TIGHTENOURBELT!	10/1
5	BOWTOGREATNES	20/1
6	THEATRE MAN	15/2
7	PERSIAN TIME	11/1
	HAPPY AND FINE	25/1
	WAY HURRICA	16/1
	ES RITZ	12/1
	INE WOLF	9/1
	PERFECTO	11/2

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JCB TRIUMPH HURDLE

FRI 15 MAR - 1:30PM

DISTANCE: 2M 1F



Lossiemouth rewarded favourite backers in last year's Triumph Hurdle

STAT ATTACK

CONTEST RESTRICTED TO FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Winner's Age

Winner's SP 10/1 2/1F 9/2F 5/2F 9/1 20/1 12/1 2/1 6/4F **11/8F**

Fate of Fav. 4TH 1ST 1ST 1ST 4TH PU UR 4TH 1ST **1ST**

Winning Dist. 3 1/4 NECK 1 1/4 5 1 3/4 3 2 3/4 3 1/4 2 1/2 **2 1/4**

Previous Run 2ND 1ST 4TH 1ST 2ND 1ST 1ST 1ST 1ST **2ND**

KEY TRENDS

- ★ Irish-trained horses have won seven of the last 10 renewals
- ★ Nicky Henderson has trained a record seven winners of the race
- ★ Six of the last 10 winners had won at least one Graded race

DAVY'S VERDICT



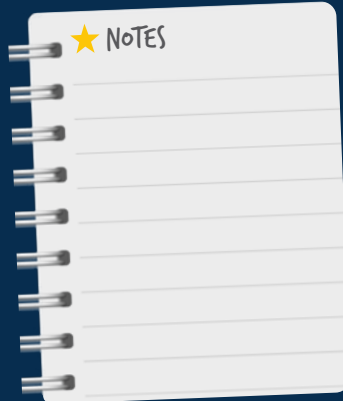
Everyone knows four-year-old races are not really my cup of tea, but I was blown away by **SIR GINO** here the last day. That was some step up from his first run in Kempton and he slammed Burdett Road, jumping miles better in the process. His trainer knows how to ready one for this and I'd be shocked if this lad didn't win. The Irish juveniles finished in a bit of a heap in Leopardstown and shouldn't be troubling the favourite. The filly **KARGESE** came out on top of that pile and likely will again.

HARRY'S VERDICT



SIR GINO was very good on Trials Day and he's likely to be odds on which speaks volumes. He will surely take a fair bit of beating and he looks to be one of Britain's best chances of the week. **NURBURGRING** could be one to look out for from Ireland, while Willie had the first four home in the Spring Juvenile at Leopardstown. I wouldn't have a clue who has the best chance out of **KARGESE**, **STORM HEART**, **MAJBOROUGH** and **BUNTING**, but he does seem to like Majborough for the future.

★ NOTES



BOODLES CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

FRI 15 MAR - 3:30PM DISTANCE: 3M 2 1/2F



Galopin Des Champs got the better of Bravemansgame in last year's race

STAT ATTACK

Winner's Age	8	8	9	7	8	7	8	8	8	7
Winner's SP	20/1	7/1	9/4F	7/1	5/1	12/1	100/30F	9/1	3/1F	7/5F
Fate of Fav.	5TH	7TH	1ST	4TH	2ND	8TH	1ST	3RD	1ST	1ST
Winning Dist.	SHD	11/2	4 1/2	2 3/4	4 1/2	2 1/2	NK	11/4	15	7
Previous Run	6TH	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	1ST	4TH	2ND	1ST

KEY TRENDS

- ★ Only two of the last 10 winners were British-trained
- ★ All of the last 10 winners had previously won at Cheltenham
- ★ Seven of the last 10 winners won last time out

DAVY'S VERDICT



If the ground turns really soft, then I really cannot see beyond **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** who can follow up last year's win. If conditions dry out, then genuinely any of the top six or seven could win headed by **FASTORSLOW** who has beaten the favourite twice already. The most interesting one for me though is **SHISHKIN** who will be a tactically tricky ride for Nico de Boinville. He struggles to travel early on in his races but has to be produced late so as to not lose interest. I've always loved the horse.

HARRY'S VERDICT



If he turns up on form, **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** should win this. He was a very good winner 12 months ago and I think he was feeling the effects of a hard race at Punchestown when beaten by **FASTORSLOW**. He's been back on top form in his last two performances and the others have got it all to do. I think this trip could stretch Fastorslow's stamina and I can see **SHISHKIN** struggling tactically. **CORACH RAMBLER** loves Cheltenham and comes alive in the spring. He can go well at a price.

★ NOTES



FRI 15 MARCH KEY TRENDS

REMAINDER OF
DAY FOUR

2:10

COUNTY HANDICAP HURDLE

- ★ Willie Mullins (4) and Dan Skelton (4) have won eight of the last nine renewals
- ★ Nine of the last 10 winners were rated 134 or higher

2:50

ALBERT BARTLETT NOVICES' HURDLE

- ★ The favourite hasn't won since 2013
- ★ 13 of the last 15 winners were aged six or seven

4:10

ST. JAMES'S PLACE FESTIVAL CHALLENGE CUP OPEN HUNTERS' CHASE

- ★ Only three favourites have won since 2014 with two 66/1 winners in the last four years
- ★ The last nine winners have all been aged 10 or 11

4:50

MRS PADDY POWER MARES' CHASE

- ★ All three previous winners were second favourite
- ★ The Irish have won all three renewals

5:30

MARTIN PIPE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE

- ★ No winning favourite in the last 10 years
- ★ British trained horses have won seven of the 15 renewals



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