<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Race Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>RACE 1</td>
<td>JCB TRIUMPH HURDLE (Grade 1)</td>
<td>2m179y (3380 Metres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>RACE 2</td>
<td>RANDOIX HEALTH COUNTY HANDICAP HURDLE (Grade 3)</td>
<td>2m179y (3380 Metres)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>RACE 3</td>
<td>ALBERT BARTLETT NOVICES’ HURDLE (Spa)</td>
<td>2m7f213y (4820 Metres)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>RACE 4</td>
<td>TIMICO CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP CHASE (Grade 1)</td>
<td>3¼m70y (5290 Metres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>RACE 5</td>
<td>ST. JAMES’S PLACE FOXHUNTER CHALLENGE CUP OPEN HUNTERS’ CHASE (2)</td>
<td>3¼m70y (5290 Metres)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>RACE 6</td>
<td>MARTIN PIPE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS’ HANDICAP HURDLE (2)</td>
<td>2½m56y (4070 Metres)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>RACE 7</td>
<td>JOHNNY HENDERSON GRAND ANNUAL CHALLENGE CUP HANDICAP CHASE (Grade 3) (1)</td>
<td>2m62y (3280 Metres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### KEY TO SYMBOLS

- **Top Rated:** The horse with the best chance based solely on past form, specially tailored to a 0-100 scale.
- **Horses For Courses:** A suitable track for the horse, compared to its lifetime record on similar courses as defined by Timeform's course data.
- **Jockey Uplift:** The engaged rider has a notably higher Timeform Jockey Ranking than those who've ridden the horse on its most recent starts.
- **Trainer Form:** A hot trainer to follow, based on Timeform ratings-related measurements looking at the recent performance of runners.
Going: Soft (Heavy in places)

Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there can be a tendency to go too soon. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. 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Going: Soft (Heavy in places)

Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there can be a tendency to go for home too soon.

Pace Information: Very Strong

1. **MOON RACER (IRE) (34)** (CD)
   - T: 9
   - 219L-0: 9
   - 110: 69.9kg
   - David Pipe
   - Tom Scudamore
   - 2015 Champion Bumper winner. Won first 2 starts over hurdles the following year, including a Grade 2 here, but career blighted by problems since. Hard to know what to expect.

2. **BRELADE (90)** (BF)
   - T: 9
   - 110-13: 69.4kg
   - Gordon Elliott, Ireland
   - Mark Enright
   - Bumper/big-field maiden hurdle winner to end 2016. Frustrating that he's been unable to add to tally over fences, but appears as type to do better in big-field handicaps back over timber. Tongue tied.

3. **MERI DEVIE (FR) (23)**
   - T: 9
   - 110-13: 69.4kg
   - W. P. Mullins, Ireland
   - R. Walsh
   - Ex-French mare who stood on for tallify with Willie Mullins in a 6-runner listed hurdle against her own sex at Punchestown last month. Switches from the Mares race to this and isn't obviously well treated.

4. **WHISKEY SOUR (IRE) (40)** (D)
   - T: 9
   - 110-13: 69.4kg
   - W. P. Mullins, Ireland
   - D. J. Mullins
   - Won first 4 starts for Willie Mullins, posting a very useful effort on the label at Galway in August but was clearly lucky in Grade 1 Champions Novices' Hurdle. Not seen to best effect last time.

5. **DIVIN BERÉ (FR) (34)**
   - T: 9
   - 110-13: 69.4kg
   - Paul Nicholls
   - Sam Twiston-Davies
   - Smart juvenile for Nicky Henderson last term, including runner-up in Fred Winter and Grade 1 at Aintree. Very low-key start for Paul Nicholls, but could easily come good and now sports a tongue tie.

6. **FLYING TIGER (IRE) (27)** (CD)
   - T: 9
   - 110-12: 68.9kg
   - Nick Williams
   - Noel Fehily
   - Fed Winter winner from 6 lb lower at this meeting 12 months ago. Acquitted himself well in good company this season, fourth in a Wincanton Grade 2 last and the assessor has given him a big chance.

7. **ALL SET TO GO (IRE) (46)** (D)
   - T: 8
   - 110-12: 68.9kg
   - Kevin Frost
   - Jamie Bargey (3lb/1kg)
   - Took it up notch when landing 10-runner handicap hurdle at Doncaster for Paul Nicholls in December. Same mark, but absent since and has changed yards, so has a lot to prove in a race like this.

8. **CHESTERFIELD (IRE) (11)** (CD)
   - T: 8
   - 110-12: 68.9kg
   - Seamus Mullins
   - Daniel Sansom (5lb/2kg)
   - Very progressive last term, winning conditionals' handicap at Aintree and Scottish Champion Hurdle at Ayr. Warmed up for this by landing a Kempton jumps bumper recently and he's on a fair mark.

9. **SPIRITOFTHEGAMES (IRE) (34)**
   - T: 8
   - 110-11: 68.9kg
   - Dan Skelton
   - Harry Skelton
   - Picked up where he left off when winning 19.5f Lingfield handicap in November. Better form still in defeat since, placed in the Lanzarote and Befair Hurdle handicaps this winter. That’s strong form.

10. **BEN DU NDEE (41)**
    - T: 9
    - 110-11: 68.9kg
    - Gordon Elliott, Ireland
    - Davy Russell
    - Consistent on the whole so easy to forgive his below-par display at Leopardstown last time. Clear of the rest when runner-up in competitive handicap on penultimate start so he merits respect.

11. **MOHAAJED (80)** (CD)
    - T: 9
    - 10-11: 68.3kg
    - Dan Skelton
    - Bridget Andrews (3lbs/1kg)
    - Good third in Scottish Champion Hurdle on final start last term and winner of a “match” at Market Rasen in May. Presumably saved for this following sound third of 4 in Grade 1 Christmas Hurdle.

12. **SMAOINEAMH ALAINN (IRE) (91)** (CD)
    - H: 100
    - Robert Walford
    - James Best
    - Fair form in Irish bumpers and fitted with a hood, has made faultless start to his hurdles career for Robert Walford, completing hat-trick over C&D in December. Subsequent 8 lb rise could be lenient.
### RESERVES

| 27  | KRUGERMAC (IRE) (9) (BF) | 81 | 2:10-6 | 10-0 (8-13) | 63.5kg (56.7kg) | Gary Moore | Reserve
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Looked a smart prospect when scoring on hurdling debut at Ascot in December 2015. Lightly raced and disappointing since, so readily opposed from miles out of the weights. **RESERVE.**

### 26 DECLARED RUNNERS (1 RESERVE)

**BETTING FORECAST:**

| 10-1 | Bleu Et Rouge, 14-1 Flying Tiger, 14-1 Sanddrem, 16-1 A Hare Breath, 18-1 Ivanovich Gorbachev, 18-1 Duca De Thaix, 18-1 Meri Devie, 20-1 Smaoineamh Alainn, 22-1 Chesterfield, 22-1 Moon Racer, 22-1 Lagostovegas, 22-1 Ben Dundee, 25-1 Mohaayed, 25-1 Jenkins, 28-1 Whiskey Sour, 28-1 William H Bonney, 28-1 Spiritofthegames, 28-1 Tigris River, 28-1 Le Richebourg, 33-1 Divin Bere, 33-1 Remiluc, 40-1 bar |

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

FLYING TIGER won the Fred Winter last year, and has been far from disgraced in small-field contests this season. He can up his game in this big-field/strong pace scenario and his mark could be lenient. Smaoineamh Alainn may well go slightly under the radar given her connections but she's promising, with Bleu Et Rouge perhaps the pick of the Irish.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

1. **FLYING TIGER (IRE)** 2. **SMAOINEAMH ALAINN (IRE)** 3. **BLEU ET ROUGE (FR)**

**WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Jockey</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Arctic Fire</td>
<td>W. P. Mullins</td>
<td>P. Townend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Superb Story</td>
<td>8-1</td>
<td>20-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Wicklow Brave</td>
<td>25-1</td>
<td>25-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Lac Fontana</td>
<td>11-1</td>
<td>11-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Ted Veale</td>
<td>10-1</td>
<td>10-1</td>
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**CHELTENHAM** Friday 16th March

**RACE 2**

**RANDOX HEALTH COUNTY HANDICAP HURDLE (Grade 3) (1)**

**5yo+ £100,000 2m179y (3380 Metres)**
Going: Soft (Heavy in places)

Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there can be a tendency to go for home too soon.

Race Information: Extreme

Pace Information:

for home too soon. races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there can be a tendency to go two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently.

Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The

Going: Soft (Heavy in places)

CHELTENHAM Friday 16th March

2.50

ALBERT BARTLETT NOVICES’ HURDLE (Spa) (Grade 1) (1)

4yo+ £136,260 2m7f213y (4820 Metres)

11 MR WHIPPED [IRE] (40) (BF)

1112 5 11-5 72.1kg

Nicky Henderson

Jeremiah McGrath

Irish point winner who was impressive when landing first 3 starts over hurdles, including 21f Warwick Grade 2. Perhaps found run coming bit soon when turned over at Musselburgh 3 weeks later.

12 MULCAYS HILL [IRE] (48) (BF)

2-2 6 11-5 72.1kg

Warren Greatrex

A. P. Heskin

Bumper/maiden hurdle winner 6 months apart but easily best effort when a narrow second in the Grade 1 Challow Hurdle (20.5f) in December. Can be forgiven his disappointment here in January.

13 OK CORRAL [IRE] (35)

27-1 8 11-5 72.1kg

Nicky Henderson

Barry Geraghty

One of the best around in bumpers in 2014/15, and made it 2-3 in this sphere when running away with a 21f novice event at Kempton last time. This is a much tougher assignment but he’s unexposed.

14 PAISLEY PARK [IRE] (36) (BF)

2-12 6 11-5 72.1kg

Emma Lavelle

Nick Scholfield

Made a winning hurdling debut at Hereford in December and progressed in defeat subsequently, runner up to Mr Whipped in Grade 2 at Warwick and Doncaster novice. Good prospect now tackling 3m.

15 POETIC RHYTHM [IRE] (76) (CD)

103-111 7 11-5 72.1kg

Fergal O’Brien

Paddy Brennan

Well held in the Neptune at this meeting last year but has improved this season, narrowly prevailing in a Grade 2 at Newbury in December. Versatile ground-wise and he’s in with an each-way shout.

16 REAL STEEL [FR] (40)

9-5 5 11-5 72.1kg

W. P. Mullins, Ireland

P. Townend

Thurles maiden winner on debut for new yard and still bang there when falling at the last in Leopardstown Grade 1 next time. However, limitations seemingly exposed in the Deloitte last month.

17 ROBIN WATERS [FR] (41)

3 5 11-5 72.1kg

Dan Skelton

Harry Skelton

Useful margin point winner who has made an excellent start over hurdles, making it third time lucky in effortless fashion at Wetherby (21f) last month. This obviously much tougher but he’s improving.

18 SANTINI [48] (IC)

11 6 11-5 72.1kg

Nicky Henderson

Nico de Boinville

Wide-margin winner of sole start between the flags and made it 2-2 under rules when landing a Grade 2 here 20f at Warwick in January. Looks a smart prospect and this off-test will be right up his street.

19 TALKISCHEAP [IRE] (34) (D)

633-114 6 11-5 72.1kg

Alan King

Wayne Hutchinson

Done little wrong in career to date and made it 3-4 over hurdles when landing a competitive Newbury handicap on first crack at this trip last month. Live each-way claims with further progress likely.

20 TOWER BRIDGE [IRE] (41)

4-181 5 11-5 72.1kg

Joseph Patrick O’Brien, Ireland

P. Townend

3-3 in bumpers and left previous hurdles efforts behind when landing Grade 1 novice (22f) at Leopardstown recently. That was a muddling affair but he remains with potential going forward.

20 DECLARED RUNNERS

BETTING FORECAST:

6-1 Santini, 13-2 Chris’s Dream, 7-1 Chef Des Obeaux, 14-1 Ok Corral, 14-1 Poetic Rhythm

14-1 Tower Bridge, 16-1 Railway, 18-1 Calleb Mad, 20-1 Real Steel, 22-1 Enniscoffey Oscar, 25-1 Paisley Park, 25-1 Mr Whipped, 25-1 Dortmund Park, 33-1 Talkischeap, 33-1 Fabulous Saga, 40-1 bar

TIMEFORM VIEW:

Plenty in here with claims. CHRISS’S DREAM found a chunk of improvement to make a winning yard debut in a Clonmel Grade 3 last month, a race his handler’s Monalee took prior to a fine second in this race 12 months ago. There is no doubt Nicky Henderson holds a strong hand though, with Santini and Chef des Obeaux both highly respected. Enniscoffey Oscar is also in with a shout at a bigger price.
**ALBERT BARTLETT NOVICES’ HURDLE (Spa) (Grade 1) (1)**  
4yo+ £136,260 2m7f213y (4820 Metres)

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**  
1. CHRIS’S DREAM (IRE)  2. SANTINI  3. CHEF DES OBEAUX (FR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>WINNER</th>
<th>JOCKEY</th>
<th>TRAINER</th>
<th>B/H</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Penhill</td>
<td>W. P. Mullins</td>
<td>P. Townend</td>
<td>16-1</td>
<td>6-11-5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Unowhatimeanharry</td>
<td>Harry Fry</td>
<td>Noel Fehily</td>
<td>8-11-5</td>
<td>11-1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Martello Tower</td>
<td>M. Margaret Mullins</td>
<td>A. P. Heskin</td>
<td>7-11-7</td>
<td>14-1</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Very Wood</td>
<td>Noel Meade</td>
<td>Paul Carberry</td>
<td>5-11-7</td>
<td>33-1</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>At Fishers Cross</td>
<td>Rebecca Curtis</td>
<td>A. P. McCoy</td>
<td>6-11-7</td>
<td>11-8f</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>
TIMICO CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP CHASE (Grade 1) (1) 5yo+ £649,380 3¼m70y (5290 Metres)

Going: Soft (Heavy in places)

Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina: large-field races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there can be a tendency to go for home too soon.

Pace Information:

The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently. The track is left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The track is known for its long straight and undulating nature.

11. NATIVE RIVER (IRE) (34) (D) s

Colin Tizzard

Brought the curtain down on last season’s excellent campaign by finishing third to Sizing John and Minella Rocco in this race. Did the job well on return at Newbury and another bold show anticipated.

12. OUR DUKE (IRE) (27) s

Mrs J. Harrington, Ireland

Impressive winner of the Irish National as a novice last term. Below par when fourth to Edwulf at Leopardstown on penultimate start, but back on track when scoring at Gowran and he’s a big player.

13. OUTLANDER (IRE) (40) s

J. W. Kennedy

Classy chaser who has posted sold efforts in defeat in Leopardstown Grade 1s. won by Road To Respect and Edwulf the last two. However, struggled in this race last year and may again come up short.

14. ROAD TO RESPECT (IRE) (78) (C) h

Noel Meade, Ireland

Winner of a handicap at this meeting 12 months ago and produced best effort yet when landing a Grade 1 at Leopardstown in December (Outlander and Minella Rocco behind). Not to be underestimated.

15. SAPPHIR DU RHEU (FR) (34) (C) t

Paul Nicholls

Looked as good as ever when fifth in the 2017 renewal of this, but reportedly sustained an injury when falling in the Grand National next time and well adrift of Native River on return at Newbury.

16. SHANTOU FLYER (IRE) (3) (C) vrt

Richard Hobson

Runner-up in couple of big 21f handicaps here in January, and close second in the Ultima on Tuesday. Looks out of his depth in this, however.

17. TEA FOR TWO (48) 461/1949

Lizzie Kelly

Antiree Grade 1 winner last term and better than ever when third behind Might Bite and Double Shuffle in the King George on Boxing Day. Ran poorly in the Cotswold Chase here next time, though.

18. TOTAL RECALL (IRE) (40) (D) 408/0-111

W. P. Mullins, Ireland

Has improved since joining Willie Mullins, winning big handicap chases on first 2 starts this season prior to landing a nice pot back over hurdles last time. Each-way claims.

18 DECLARED RUNNERS

BETTING FORECAST:

4-1 Might Bite, 9-2 Native River, 9-1 Our Duke, 10-1 Road To Respect, 12-1 Definitly Red, 14-1 Killultagh Vic, 18-1 Edwulf, 22-1 Total Recall, 28-1 Bachasson, 33-1 Double Shuffle, 33-1 Outlander, 33-1 Minella Rocco, 33-1 Djakadam, 33-1 American, 40-1 bar

TIMEFORM VIEW:

MIGHT BITE has his quirks, as shown when nearly throwing away the RSA at this meeting last season, but there’s no doubting he’s one of the very best chasers around at the moment and is the one they all have to beat. Native River has had an ideal preparation and should make a bold bid to better last year’s third, while Our Duke heads a strong team from Ireland.

TIMEFORM 1-2-3:

1. MIGHT BITE (IRE) 2. NATIVE RIVER (IRE) 3. OUR DUKE (IRE)

WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:

2017 Sizing John 7-11-10 7-1 Mrs J. Harrington

Robbie Power

2016 Don Cossack 9-11-10 9-4f Gordon Elliott

B. J. Cooper

2015 Conygree 8-11-10 7-1 Mark Bradstock

Nico de Boinville

2014 Lord Windoro 9-11-10 20-1 J. Culloty

Davy Russell

2013 Bobs Worth 8-11-10 11-4f Nicky Henderson

Barry Geraghty
Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there can be a tendency for home too soon.

Pace Information: Strong

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BALNASLOW (IRE) 2(80)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>PH747-2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mr Derek O'Connor</td>
<td>Graham McKeever, Ireland</td>
<td>Wasn't beaten far in this last year prior to finishing second at Aintree and then landing the Champion Hunter at Punchestown. Pulled up in a heavy-ground point recently, so rain would be a concern.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>BAREL OF LAUGHS (IRE) 2(15) (CD)</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>P/N11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mr Alex Edwards</td>
<td>Philip Rowley</td>
<td>Clearly goes well here, close third in this last season prior to going 2 places better over same C&amp;D in May. Should be cherry-ripe following a couple of runs between the fences, winning last month.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>BURNING AMBITION (IRE) 3(3)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mr J. J. Codd</td>
<td>Pierce Michael Power, Ireland</td>
<td>Multiple point winner who won maiden hunter at Limerick in decisive fashion. Much better form when second to Gilgamboa at Punchestown and he possesses untapped potential in this discipline.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CAID DE BERLAIS (FR) 3(65) (C)</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>BNP59</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mrs William Biddick</td>
<td>Mrs Rose Loxton</td>
<td>Useful hurdler/chaser who wasn't disgraced in the Perterpems Final at this meeting last year. Winner of each of his 3 starts between the flags for new yard and a player if seeing this trip out.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>COUSIN PETE 3(8) (C, BF)</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mr Nick Phillips</td>
<td>Mrs Elizabeth Brown</td>
<td>Won all 6 completed starts in points (including last month) and overcame mistakes when landing 14-runnner hunter here in April 2016. Runner-up effort at Market Rasen needing improvements on current.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>FOXROCK (IRE) 5(4)</td>
<td>b+t</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mr K. Walsh</td>
<td>Alan Fleming, Ireland</td>
<td>Formerly a smart chaser and won 4 times on the bounce switched to hunters last season. Chased Gilgamboa home on return/debut for new yard at Thurles so has a big form shout.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>GRAND VISION (IRE) 4(3)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mr Barry O'Neill</td>
<td>Colin Tizzard</td>
<td>Won veterans handicap at Lingfield in December and better than ever when also landing handicap at Wincanton last time, suited by emphasis on stamina down in trip. Bold jumper and this test will suit.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>MINELLA FOR VALUE (IRE) 2(84) (BF)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Mr D. Queally</td>
<td>Declan Queally, Ireland</td>
<td>Lightly raced under Rules in recent times (won a point recently), failing to justify favourite in a brace of hunters last term. Sixth in this race last year and will do well to repeat that outcome.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>ON THE FRINGE (IRE) 1(17) (CD)</td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Miss N. Carberry</td>
<td>Enda Bolger, Ireland</td>
<td>One of the best hunters around in recent years, bagging this prize in 2015 and 2016 before finishing fourth 12 months ago. Disappointing since, however, suggesting that his powers are on the wane.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>PACHA DU POLDER (FR) 2(3) (CD, BF)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76.2kg</td>
<td>Miss Harriet Tucker</td>
<td>Paul Nicholls</td>
<td>Very smart in his prime and well below strong-finishing stablemate Wonderful Charm to land this race in 2017. Ought to be spot on following reappearance at Doncaster and shouldn't be far away.</td>
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**ST. JAMES'S PLACE FOXHUNTER CHALLENGE CUP OPEN HUNTERS’ CHASE (2) 5yo+ £45,000 3¼m70y (5290 Metres)**

**CHALLENGER:**

**PREMIER PORTRAIT (IRE) 2(8) (BF)**

Mr Gus Levinson

Fit from a point win and ran right up to his best back under Rules when landing 10-runner hunter at Taunton (29f) in January, helped by strongly-run race. Hammered and unseated at Fakenham since.

**SADDERS ENCORE (IRE) 2(5) (BF)**

Mr Joshua Newman

Built for fences and won on point debut, but failed to land the odds in an ordinary hunter at Lingfield last month. Right up against it.

**SHANTOU MAGIC (IRE) 3(71)**

Mr Will Ramsay

Fairly useful at his best for Charlie Longsdon around 3m. Added to tally between the legs last month but he's up against it on the balance of his form.

**SHOTAVODKA (IRE) 2(7) (D)**

Mr Hugh Nugent

Smart handicap chaser at his best and added to good record, fresh with victory in Hereford hunter under this pilot in January. Closely matched with Virak on recent Haydock class.

**SIR JACK YEATS (IRE) 3(9)**

Mr James King

Multiple winner over hurdles/fences last year and 2-3 switched to hunters in recent months. Improvement needed if he's to emerge on top here, but this 7-y-o may well have a part to play in trip.

**TOP WOOD (FR) 3(72)**

Mr Samuel Davies-Thomas

Unreliable sort but a useful staying chaser on his day. David Pipe. Landed a couple of points in ready fashion for new handler this winter but a lot depends on the mood he's in.

**UNIONISTE (FR) 1(9) (C, D)**

Mr David Maxwell

Useful chaser at his peak back in good form in hunters, completing a couple of simple tasks without alarm in recent weeks. Thorough stayer and forms part of a strong Nicholls team.

**VINCITORE (FR) 4(3) (D)**

Miss Sarah Rippon

In the force of old and is well out of his depth.

**VIRAK (FR) 2(37)**

Mr Lorcan Williams

Proved disappointing last season but switch to hunter chases has proved just the tonic this time round, scoring at Ludlow and Haydock (seeing off Shotavodka). Any further rain would be in his favour.

**VOLNAY DE THAIX (FR) 2(30) (BF)**

Mr Jack Andrews

Smart hurdler/chaser for Nicky Henderson on his day. Largely below par last season but wide-margin winner of couple of points on this year's and it's not hard to envisage him taking a hand in the finish.

**WARDEN HILL (IRE) 3(23) (D)**

Mr Tom Chatfeild-Roberts

Once-useful chaser for Nick Channon and runner-up on hunter debut at Fakenham a year ago. Well held in this year ago, but a recent win at Doncaster at least confirms he's in good nick.

**WELLS DE LUNE (FR) 2(26)**

Mr Peter Bryan

Won a brace of handicap chases for Charlie Longsdon at up to 19f in 2016/17. Free-going nature a huge concern over this trip, but he looked good at Ffos Las last month (20f).
ST. JAMES’S PLACE FOXHUNTER CHALLENGE CUP OPEN HUNTERS’ CHASE (2) 5yo+ £45,000 3⅞m70y (5290 Metres)

23 WONDERFUL CHARM (FR) (41) (D) 97
Paul Nicholls  Mr Sam Waley-Cohen

Left with plenty to do when a strong-finishing second in this race 12 months ago. Warmed up for repeat bid with a smooth victory at Musselburgh and this 10-y-o has to be high on any shortlist.

24 YOUNG HURRICANE (IRE) (280) (D) 90
G. C. Brewer  Mr John Dawson

Better than ever aged 11 in 2017, landing back-to-back staying hunters. Runner-up in a point last month and stamina’s his forte, but he does lack the class of a few.

24 DECLARED RUNNERS

BETTING FORECAST:
4-1 Burning Ambition, 7-1 Wonderful Charm, 9-1 Foxrock, 16-1 Caid Du Berlais, 18-1 Pacha Du Polder, 18-1 On The Fringe, 18-1 Virak, 22-1 Grand Vision, 22-1 Sir Jack Yeats, 25-1 Volnay De Thaix, 25-1 Balnaslow, 25-1 Unioniste, 25-1 Wells De Lune, 28-1 Barel of Laughs, 40-1 bar

TIMEFORM VIEW:

WONDERFUL CHARM was probably an unlucky loser behind stablemate Pacha du Polder in this race 12 months ago, and compensation could well be forthcoming with a ready win at Musselburgh last month likely to have put him spot on for this. 7-y-o Burning Ambition is the up-and-comer in this division, while Foxrock is classy but his previous record at this track is slightly off-putting.

TIMEFORM 1-2-3:
1. WONDERFUL CHARM (FR) 2. BURNING AMBITION (IRE) 3. FOXROCK (IRE)

WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:
- 2017: Pacha du Polder 10-12-0 Paul Nicholls Bryony Frost 23
- 2016: On The Fringe 11-12-0 Enda Bolger Miss N. Carberry 24
- 2015: On The Fringe 10-12-0 Enda Bolger Miss N. Carberry 24
- 2014: Tammys Hill 9-12-0 Liam Lennon Mr J. J. Smyth 24
- 2013: Salsify 8-12-0 Rodger Sweeney Mr C. J. Sweeney 23
Going: Soft (Heavy in places)

Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses which race prominently often fare well on the chase course, especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina: large-field races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there seems to be a tendency to go for home too soon.

Pace Information: Very Strong

1. BLow By Blow (IRE) [22] (D) b/t 94 Gordon Elliott, Ireland
   Found Grade 1 company too hot at Naas in January, but firmly back on track when running away with a Thurlow Grade 3 next time. Ground in his favour and remains open to improvement in this sphere.

2. Sire Du Berlais (FR) [20] t 100 D. J. Mcinerney
   Hurdles winner in France and shaped very well when runner-up on return at Fairyhouse last month. 9 lb higher here but he’s still unexposed and yard saddled the winner of this last year. Tongue tied.

3. FLaxen Flare (IRE) [50] (C, D) b 96 Gordon Elliott, Ireland
   Ciaran Gethings
   Well held this winter but has good form at the Festival, winning the Old Winter as a 4-y-o and fifth in the County Hurdle the following season. Leap of faith required, though.

4. DREAM BERRY (FR) [321] t 96 Jonjo O’Neill (38b/1kg)
   Went close in a couple ultra-competitive handicaps at the Aintree/Punchestown Festivals last season but not since. Still worthy of respect.

5. EARLY DOORS (FR) [40] 94 Joseph Patrick O’Brien, Ireland
   J. J. Slevin
   Struggled in the Deloitte at Leopardstown last time, but prior to that he landed a Naas Grade 3 and was runner-up in the Royal Bond at Fairyhouse. Merts respect.

6. NO HASSLE HOFF (IRE) [27] 98 Dan Skelton
   Fergus Gregory (38b/1kg)
   Looked one to follow after landing 23f Uttoxeter handicap on return but the bubble burst in a big way at Warwick. Ran as well as could be expected in Grade 2 at Haydock since.

7. BRELAN D’AS (FR) [33] (D) h/t 98 Paul Nicholls
   Bryony Frost
   Useful hurdler who failed to progress over fences after a promising comeback. Back over timber now and remains with potential in this sphere.

8. TOMMY RAPPER (IRE) [27] t 99 Dan Skelton
   Bridget Andrews
   Maiden/novice winner who completed hat-trick in 23f Haydock handicap by neck. Idled in front and could still be fairly treated after 5 lb rise.

9. BRILLARE MEMENTO (IRE) [36] (C,D) s 96 Martin Keighley
   Harry Stock (38b/1kg)
   First start following a wind operation when landing a 7-runner Towcester handicap (19f, soft) from the front last month. 4 lb rise and he’s 2-3 over hurdles here, so there’s cause for optimism.

10. COEUR DE LION (104) 99 Alan King (3b/2kg)
    Kevin Dowling (5b/2kg)
    Won twice in juvenile company over hurdles and far from disgraced when seventh in the Triumph Hurdle. Improved performer on the level since though disappointed on latest hurdlng start at Sandown.
23 DISCORAMA (FR) (19)  
2-1237  5  11-2 | 70.8kg
Paul Nolan, Ireland  Dylan Robinson
Made a winning hurdling debut at Fairyhouse and excellent second at Limerick next time. Found Grade 2 too much at Naas 19 days ago work to do off this opening mark.

24 BRAVE EAGLE (IRE) (76) (D)  
11-21  6  11-2 | 70.8kg
Nicky Henderson  Alan Doyle  (5lb/2kg)
Won both starts over hurdles last term. Lost unbeaten record when second in 17f Exeter handicap on return but resumed winning ways in Newbury handicap, finding plenty. Remains unexposed.

RESERVES

25 ARTHUR’S GIFT (IRE) (27) (C, D)  
4211444  7  11-1 | 70.3kg
Nigel Twiston-Davies  Reserve
Completed a quick-fire hat-trick at up to 3m at the end of last year. Creditable efforts in defeat since but will need to pull out more to defy this mark. RESERVE.

26 KILDISART (IRE) (27) (BF)  
2-125  6  11-1 | 70.3kg
Ben Pauling  Reserve
Jumped well when making second hurdles start a winning one in Ascot maiden in November. Found only a well-treated rival too good on handicap bow soon after but only fifth of 9 since. RESERVE.

24 DECLARED RUNNERS (2 RESERVES)

BETTING FORECAST:

10-1 Flawless Escape, 11-1 Diese Des Bieffes, 12-1 Sire Du Berlais, 12-1 Deal D’Estruval, 18-1 Amour De Nuit, 18-1 Delire D’Estruval, 20-1 Mr Big Shot, 20-1 Carter Mckay, 20-1 Blow By Blow, 22-1 Tommy Rapper, 22-1 Brave Eagle, 22-1 Early Doors, 25-1 Coeur De Lion, 25-1 Melrose Boy, 28-1 Lough Derg Spirit, 28-1 Brillare Momento, 33-1 No Hassle Hoff, 33-1 Dream Berry, 33-1 Burrows Saint, 33-1 Discorama, 40-1 bar

TIMEFORM VIEW:
Willie Mullins tends to run some of his better horses in this race and DEAL D’ESTRUVAL could be the pick of his trio. He was unlucky to bump into one even better treated when second over 2m on his handicap debut at Leopardstown last time and remains capable of better, especially back up in trip. Sire du Berlais and Diese des Bieffes head a long list of potential dangers.

TIMEFORM 1-2-3:
1. DEAL D’ESTRUVAL (FR)  2. SIRE DU BERLAIS (FR)  3. DIESE DES BIEFFES (FR)

WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:

2017 Champagne Classic 6-11-3  12-1 Gordon Elliot, 14-1 Paul Nicholls, 16-1 Paul Nicholls, J.J. Stevin 23
2016 Bisi du Rhone 5-11-7  14-1 Paul Nicholls, 16-1 Paul Nicholls, 18-1 Jack Sherwood, W.P. Mullins 24
2015 Killultagh Vic 6-11-1  7-1 W.P. Mullins, 12-1 W.P. Mullins, 16-1 Paul Nicholls, L.P. Dempsey, M.P. Fogarty (3) 21
2014 Don Poli 5-11-8  12-1 W.P. Mullins, 14-1 W.P. Mullins, 16-1 Paul Nicholls, M.P. Fogarty (3) 24
2013 Salubrious 6-11-8  14-1 W.P. Mullins, 16-1 Paul Nicholls, 18-1 Jack Sherwood, Harry O’Oeham (3) 23
GOING: Soft (Heavy in places)

Left handed, undulating. Stiff fences that place a premium on sound jumping. The last half mile is uphill, although the lead changes hands on the run-in less frequently than expected. Horses who race prominently often fare well on the chase course, especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field races over two miles often go to hold-up horses, as there can be a tendency to go two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field especially in shorter-distance races. On the New Course, the hurdles track has just two flights in the last six furlongs, resulting in more emphasis on stamina; large-field especially in shorter-distance races.

Pace Information: Extreme

1. GARDE LA VICTOIRE (FR) (129) (CD) 96
   Philip Hobbs
   Smart hurdler/chaser at his peak, winner of the Arkle Trial here back in 2015. Runner-up on return over hurdles in France, but well held back in this sphere next time and he’s on a stiff mark.

2. FOREST BHAN (FR) (13) (D) 96
   Brian Ellison
   Smart chaser at his best and back to winning ways at Kelso (17f) in October. Didn’t convince next 3 starts but latest Jumper’s bumper victory confirms he’s in back in good heart.

3. ROCK THE WORLD (IRE) (61) (CD) 96
   Mrs J. Harrington, Ireland
   Third in 2016 edition of this and emerged victorious in latest year’s renewal. However, has found life tougher since and, with 6 lb higher this time round, he may prove vulnerable.

4. GINO TRAIL (IRE) (41) (CD) 96
   Kerry Lee
   Bold-jumping front runner who made it 3 wins from 5 starts this term when gamely holding off an unexposed rival at Sandown (15.f). This tougher from 4 lb higher.

5. VANITEUX (FR) (79) (D) 97
   David Pipe
   Twice a winner over fences for Nicky Henderson last term. Best effort for new connections when chasing home Politologue in a Kempton Grade 2 in December and he’s looking on a dangerous mark.

6. NORTH HILL HARVEY (34) (CD) 95
   Dan Skelton
   Winner of first 2 starts over fences prior to finishing second in Sandown Grade 1 in December. Below par at Warwick since but very much of interest now pitched in a handicap in this sphere.

7. LE PREZIEN (FR) (90) (CD) 96
   Paul Nicholls
   Grade 2 winner here as a novice. Good placed efforts in strong handicaps here first 2 starts this term but his jumping has never been the most assured and mistakes cost him last time.

8. DON’T TOUCH IT (IRE) (41) (D) 96
   Mark Walsh
   Mrs J. Harrington, Ireland
   Did well last term, a campaign which culminated in a high at Punchestown. Well held sole completed start this year but appears to have been targeted at this venue by last year’s winner.

9. TOP GAMBLE (IRE) (41) (D, BF) 98
   Davy Russell
   Multiple Grade 2 winner perhaps not the force of old, again below his best when fourth behind stablemate Gino Trail at Sandown (15f) last time. Handicapper has relented at least.

10. VALDEZ (34) (D) 96
    Alan King
    Scored at Newbury (11f) in January, but well held back here last time. Off a good mark and has a good chance of making a return.

11. DOLOS (FR) (41) (D) 97
    Paul Nicholls
    Harry Cobden
    Useful hurdler who has taken well to fences, successful on debut in this sphere at Ascot and clear of the rest when going down narrowly in Sandown handicap last month. Remains with potential.

12. SIZING PLATINUM (IRE) (139) (D) 96
    Colin Tizzard
    Tom O’Brien
    Ran poorly in this race 12 months ago but capitalised on drop in to calmer waters at Newton Abbot (2m) in October. Good third over C&D later that month but he may find this too tough again.

13. EASTLAKE (IRE) (139) (CD) 94
    Noel Fehily
    Jonjo O’Neill
    Very hard to predict nowadays though did shape encouragingly under a sympathetic ride when well held on return at Cheltenham in October. Has a wind operating since latest outing.

14. SOME PLAN (IRE) (41) (D) 95
    Henry de Bromhead, Ireland
    Noel Fehily
    Last year’s Irish Arkle winner who only really has one effort of note subsequently, third in a 2m handicap at Fairyhouse in December. Seemingly coming under pressure when falling last time.

15. THREE STARS (IRE) (41) (D) 95
    Mrs J. Harrington, Ireland
    J. J. Stevin
    Optimum chance when minimum weight hurdle since and is taken to make a bold effort in this Grade 3 handicap.

16. TOWNSHEND (GER) (41) (D) 96
    W. P. Mullins, Ireland
    P. Townend
    Useful hurdler who landed 3 maiden/novice chases at 2m during 2017. Largely underwhelming efforts more recently, but latest Leopardstown seventh may have instilled some confidence.

17. DRESDEN (IRE) (24) (D) 95
    Henry Oliver
    James Davies
    Let down by jumping over Grand National fences in December but more like it in landing back-to-back 2m handicaps. However, mark in 140’s may leave him vulnerable in this much stronger contest.

18. FOXTAIL HILL (IRE) (48) (CD) 95
    Nigel Twiston-Davies
    Jamie Bryson
    (3lb/1kg)
    Won Grade 3 handicap here (20.7f) last January and resumed winning ways under a superb ride back at this venue in October. Well below par since but will be a danger to all if able to bounce back.

19. BOUVREUIL (FR) (104)
    Paul Nicholls
    Sam Twiston-Davies
    Smart chaser who has performed with great credit at this meeting for the last 3 years, third of 24 in the Plate off a 3 lb higher mark 12 months ago. Claims if coping with the drop back in trip.

20. THE GAME CHANGER (IRE) (61) (D) 86
    Gordon Elliott, Ireland
    J. W. Kennedy
    Ended long losing run at Ballinrobe (17f) in August and followed up over hurdles at Listowel a month later. Went off the boil thereafter though, and others rate stronger.

21. THEINVAL (FR) (74) (D) 100
    Nicky Henderson
    Jeremiah McGrath
    (3lb/1kg)
    Not at his best so far this season, but generally consistent and dangerous to discount given that he was beaten just 2 lengths off the same mark in this race 12 months ago. Best away from the mud.

22. BORN SURVIVOR (IRE) (83)
    Dan Skelton
    Bridget Andrews
    (3lb/1kg)
    Useful hurdler who made an impressive start over fences at Wetherby (15f) on return. Good third at Haydock next time but not for the first time finished weakly at that venue in December.
23 BRIGHT NEW DAWN (IRE) (20) (D) 95
34°F-6RF 10-11 | 68.5kg
Venetia Williams Alain Cawley
Largely consistent last season. Not disgraced at Cheltenham on return in November, but refused to race at Leicester 2 starts back and fell early at Chepstow last time. Best overlooked.

24 DOITFORTHEVILLAGE (IRE) (22) (CD, BF) t 96
J1-6RF 9 10-11 | 68.5kg
Paul Henderson Paddy Brennan
Scored off 4 lb lower mark over C&D in November. Unable to cash in off lower hurdles mark subsequently (albeit not disgraced) and he’s no forlorn hope for each-way purposes back over fences.

RESERVES
25 BUN DORAN (IRE) (62) (D, BF) 97
32°F-21 7 10-11 | 68.5kg
Tom George Reserve
Some strong form to his name as a novice, and shaped well both starts earlier this season, a late error impacting his chances at Wetherby (15f) in January. Reserve 1.

26 VOSNE ROMANEE (11) (D) 96
P12JVS 7 10-10 | 68.0kg
Dr Richard Newland Reserve
Multiple winner over hurdles/fences, taking 7-runner handicap chase at Worcester (2m) in September. Shaped ok over hurdles/Jumpers’ bumper last time but this will require more. Reserve 2.

24 DECLARED RUNNERS (2 RESERVES)

BETTING FORECAST:
11-1 Don’t Touch It, 12-1 North Hill Harvey, 14-1 Theirival, 14-1 Vaniteux, 16-1 Rock The World, 18-1 Dolos, 18-1 Gino Trail, 20-1 Bouvreuil, 20-1 Top Gamble, 20-1 Le Prezien, 22-1 Forest Bihan, 22-1 Valdez, 22-1 Foxtail Hill, 25-1 Some Plan, 25-1 Three Stars, 25-1 Born Survivor, 28-1 Garde La Victoire, 28-1 Townshend, 33-1 Sizing Platinum, 40-1 Eastlake

TIMEFORM VIEW:
A leap of faith is required in supporting VANITEUX, but there were signs a revival could be close to hand when second in the Desert Orchid at Kempton in December. The handicapper has given him a chance and he could be worth chancing. Jumpers’ bumper cover Forest Bihan arrives on his last winning mark, with Bouvreuil, Don’t Touch It and last year’s winner Rock The World completing the shortlist.

TIMEFORM 1-2-3:
1. VANITEUX (FR) 2. FOREST BIHAN (FR) 3. BOUVREUIL (FR)

WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:
2017 Rock The World 9-11-5 10-1 Min J. Harrington Robbie Power 24
2016 Solar Impulse 9-11-0 28-1 Paul Nichols Sam Twiston-Davies 24
2015 Next Sensation 8-11-2 16-1 Michael Scudamore Tom Scudamore 20
2014 Savello 9-11-5 16-1 A. J. Martin Davy Russell 23
2013 Alderwood 9-10-11 3-1f Thomas Mullins A P McCoy 23