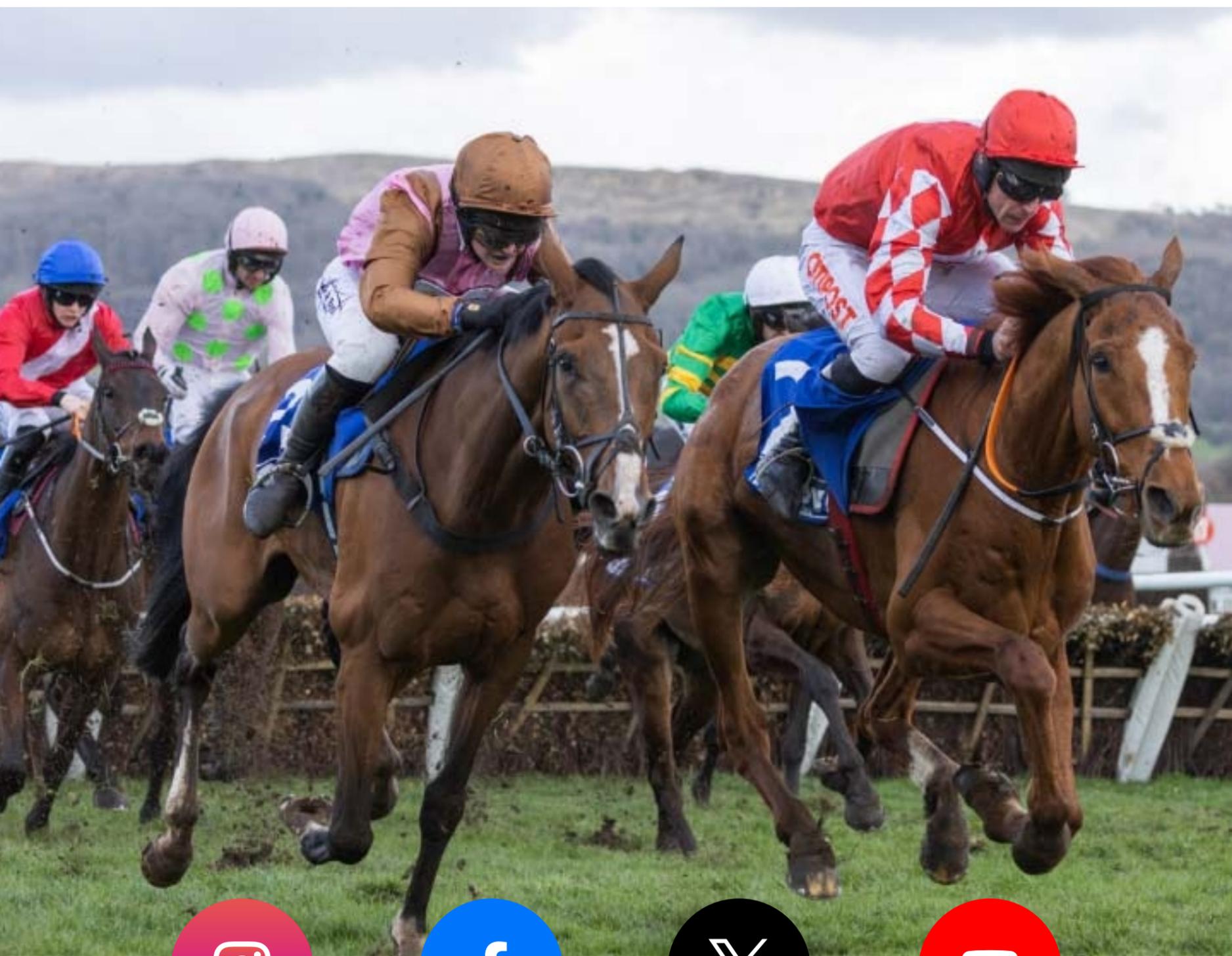


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CHELTENHAM

Festival Betting Guide 2024





It's easily my favourite time of the year, with the annual 'bookie v punter' battle for supremacy taking centre stage. Frankly, here at Betfred we usually miss out and at best break even over the course of the Cheltenham Festival.

"Anyway, whatever happens good luck to all our customers, enjoy the occasion and remember... I will ALWAYS pay out with a smile!"



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*Tap page to view 

Schedule

Tuesday 12th March

- 13:30 Supreme Novices' Hurdle (2m 1/2f)
- 14:10 Arkle Challenge Trophy (2m)
- 14:50 Ultima Handicap Chase (3m 1f)
- 15:30 Champion Hurdle (2m 1/2f)
- 16:10 Mares' Hurdle (2m 4f)
- 16:50 Boodles Juvenile Handicap Hurdle (2m 1/2f)
- 17:30 National Hunt Chase (3m 6f)



Wednesday 13th March

- 13:30 Gallagher Novices' Hurdle (2m 5f)
- 14:10 Brown Advisory Novices' Chase (3m 1/2f)
- 14:50 Coral Cup (2m 5f)
- 15:30 Queen Mother Champion Chase (2m)
- 16:10 Cross Country Chase (3m 6f)
- 16:50 Grand Annual Handicap Chase (2m)
- 17:30 Champion Bumper (2m 1/2f)



Thursday 14th March

- 13:30 Turners Novices' Chase (2m 4f)
- 14:10 Pertemps Network Final Hurdle (3m)
- 14:50 Ryanair Chase (2m 5f)
- 15:30 Stayers' Hurdle (3m)
- 16:10 TrustATrader Plate (2m 5f)
- 16:50 Mares' Novices' Hurdle (2m 1f)
- 17:30 Kim Muir Challenge Cup (3m 2f)



Friday 15th March

- 13:30 Triumph Hurdle (2m 1f)
- 14:10 County Hurdle (2m 1f)
- 14:50 Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle (3m)
- 15:30 Cheltenham Gold Cup (3m 2 1/2f)
- 16:10 Hunters' Chase (3m 2 1/2f)
- 16:50 Mares' Chase (2m 4 1/2f)
- 17:30 Martin Pipe Handicap Hurdle (2m 4 1/2f)



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UK v IRE



An annual sub-plot to the Cheltenham National Hunt Festival is the enduring battle between the UK and the Republic of Ireland for supremacy.

Fortunes have ebbed and flowed; sport is after all cyclical, and though it's not in dispute that Ireland currently very much have the upper hand, it's not always been the case. Cheltenham and the Irish go hand in glove. Wonderful horses, horsemen and women, passionate fans, hopeful connections.

We've highlighted some of the key characters from both sides of the Irish Sea, who will go a long way to determining how these compelling contests will be decided. Four days of white-hot competition on a spectacular, scenic stage designed by the Gods.

Visitors first, and where else to start than with a veritable force of nature. A man with surely few peers in the art of training National Hunt racehorses. Any racehorses in fact. He's been leading handler at the meeting 10 times in the last 13 Festivals. A 67-year-old titan from a

Key Stats & Trends

- 655 of the 1,261 (52%) first stage entries in 2024 are Irish – the first time that the Irish have had more than the home team
- Ireland won 18 of the 28 races in the 2023 Cheltenham Festival
- Willie Mullins was the leading trainer in 2023 with six race wins. He is now only six short of a century of Festival winners

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Willie Mullins

Willie is a phenomenon – rarely is the kind of dominance he exerts seen in any sport. In 2022 he trained 10 of the 28 winners across the entire meet – a success rate of over 35%. He'll be multiple-entered in most of the races and it's surely a question of not whether he'll have winners, but how many. We're privileged to be around in the time of Willie Mullins.

His ability to have his stars cherry-ripe for the big occasion is unmatched, anywhere.



Paul Townend

Willie's stable jockey since the great Ruby Walsh stepped down in 2019. He's enjoyed tremendous success, and has been the top jockey here in three of the last four Festivals.

At 33 he's at the very peak of his powers and has an enviable book of rides for his boss. He's got three Gold Cups in his locker already and just needs a Champion Hurdle among the really big pots to put an exclamation mark upon his exploits in the Cotswolds.



Gordon Elliott

Someone we'd be tempted to rate even higher in terms of dominating his field but for the presence of WP Mullins. Elliott is still only 46, was the youngest-ever trainer to win the Aintree Grand National, and was top trainer here for the 2017 and 2018 renewals.

Look for more multiple entries from this very powerful yard.



Jack Kennedy

Jack is just 24, and rides many of Gordon Elliott's big guns. He's already stacked up 10 Festival winners including the Gold Cup on Minella Indo in 2021.

He's had his share of injuries, a typical issue for most jockeys, but will look to add to his tally on several strongly-fancied Cullentra hopes over the four days. A gifted,



Rachael Blackmore

Talking of gifted – remember when it was a 'thing' to feel almost obliged to point out that a lady rider was in the plate, especially at the bigger meetings?

Not so in the present day, and though Rachael may well metaphorically stand on the shoulders of Nina Carberry, Katie Walsh and others, she's taken everything to a whole new level of brilliance.

34-yrs-old, she is enjoying a stellar career, and her CV includes an Aintree Grand National, a Gold Cup, and two Champion Hurdles. Rides predominantly for trainer Henry de Bromhead, who is outstanding without quite posting the level of Mullins/Elliott numbers.



JP McManus

Unusual perhaps to highlight the importance of an owner, but Limerick-born JP is a huge and important presence in the sport. Some of his best horses include the likes of Istabraq, Minella Times, Synchronised, and Baracouda – but the list is endless really, with over 4,000 career successes overall.

He's a brilliant supporter of racing, favouring many trainers on both sides of the Irish Sea, and is most unlikely to leave the Cotswolds without scoring this week – but for which side?

UK v IRE



Nicky Henderson

The master of Seven Barrows, Lambourn; and the last time he was top trainer here was in 2012.

Memories surface of his sensational Arkle scorer from that year Sprinter Sacre, and Nicky has trained 73 winners so far at this fabled meet. He's the elder statesman among our very best handlers, with boundless enthusiasm for the game and a wonderful 'touch' with his horses.



Nico de Boinville

34 years young and another jockey at the height of his very considerable powers. Nico emerged as Barry Geraghty was gearing down with Henderson, cutting his teeth on 'Sprinter' no less from 2015. This included a tearful, epic second Champion Chase on the electric fencer in 2016. Has ice in his veins, and a big-race mentality. Altior, Shishkin – he's been, and remains, a vital part of the enduring Seven Barrows success story.



Paul Nicholls

61-yr-old, Somerset-based former jockey-turned-master-trainer. Won a Hennessy as a jock in a brief career shortened by injury, but has won everything bar the Boat Race during a long period of excellence as a trainer.

Think of some of his champions – it's Henderson-esque in terms of impact. Kauto Star, Denman, See More Business, Master Minded, Big Buck's – another very long list to contemplate and admire.

He's struck 48 times before at this meeting, and has been leading handler on several occasions, the last of which was in 2009, one of four-in-a-row.



Harry Cobden

He's been the number one rider for Nicholls at his Ditcheat base since he was 19 – quite the vote of confidence.

If there's anyone riding better in the UK right now I'd like to debate the matter, as he's just brilliant, both for his retained stable and occasional outside interests.

In his mid-twenties, Harry broke a bit of a Festival drought last year when Nicholls' Stage Star won the Turners, and if he's given plausible chances this week, which is sure to be the case, expect fireworks.



Dan Skelton

A graduate of the Ditcheat/Nicholls academy, spending nine years with the multiple champion before going it alone in 2013.

Has six Festival successes to his name and is especially deadly in the handicaps – four of those wins have come in the fiendishly-competitive County Hurdle.

Second only to Nicholls numerically in terms of winners this domestic campaign, and is a danger to all.



Harry Skelton

Dan's younger brother Harry rides most of the stable's entries, and he's had five Festival successes to date including Politologue in the Champion Chase.

Enjoys the occasional flamboyant aeroplane celebration when crossing the line, and the feeling persists that the brothers run a tight, united and enthusiastic team from top to bottom.

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Supreme Novices' Hurdle

Tuesday 12th March 13:30
(2m ½f)



Race Summary

If he lines up, **Ballyburn** will be fancied to get Willie Mullins and favourite backers off to a flying start in the curtain-raiser. The same applies to stablemates **Mystical Power** and **Tullyhill**. **Firefox** is the sole representative of Gordon Elliott, while the unbeaten **Jeriko Du Reponet** is no mug for a trainer in Nicky Henderson who knows all about winning this race. **Tellherthename** and **Mistergif** are interesting outsiders.

Key Stats & Trends

- Mullins and Henderson won eight of the last 11 runnings
- 11 of the last 15 favourites at 2/1 or less have lost
- Only three of the last 27 winners were beaten last time out

Betfred Insights Verdict

BALLYBURN's seven-length victory in a Grade 1 at the Dublin Racing Festival is comfortably the best piece of form in this division and he'll take plenty of beating if lining up in what looks a fairly weak renewal. Otherwise, chance **Jeriko Du Reponet** whose form was given a nice boost lately and is sure to appreciate the test.

[Bet Here](#)

The Arkle Challenge Trophy

Tuesday 12th March 14:10
(2m)



Race Summary

Found A Fifty and **Il Etait Temps** top the market and there's little to separate the two. **Hunters Yarn** is the most-likely runner for Willie Mullins and it would be no surprise if one of **Gaelic Warrior** or **Facile Vega** joins him. **Quilixios** and **My Mate Mozzie** are interesting for Henry De Bromhead and Gavin Cromwell respectively, while **JPR One** heads the English charge.

Key Stats & Trends

- Nine of last 12 favourites have won the Arkle
- Five of last nine winners had won the Supreme the year prior
- The last 14 winners had all won their previous race

Betfred Insights Verdict

This is far from a vintage Arkle, but it is very competitive and a case could be made for the majority of the field. With little to separate **Found A Fifty** and **Il Etait Temps**, perhaps the best option is to wait and see whichever Willie Mullins horse is declared with Paul Townend on board.

[Bet Here](#)

Champion Hurdle

Tuesday 12th March 15:30
(2m ½f)



Race Summary

Tuesday's feature race is all about **State Man** in the absence of Constitution Hill. Willie Mullins' star is one of the shortest-priced runners of the week and is expected to do the business. Gordon Elliott is probably going to send **Irish Point** here and the six-year-old would rate the favourite's main rival – while the likes of **Not So Sleepy**, **Luccia and Co.** are hard to see as anything more than also-rans.

Key Stats & Trends

- 26/39 winners have placed the previous year
- 14 horses have won back-to-back here
- Horses between 6-8 generally win this race

Betfred Insights Verdict

Zero points for originality, but it's hard to see past **STATE MAN** here. He's a long way clear on ratings, form and all the rest, and should win the Champion Hurdle.

[Bet Here](#)

Mares' Hurdle

Tuesday 12th March 16:10
(2m ½f)



Race Summary

We've got another warm favourite for the next race – the Mares' Hurdle – in the form of last year's Triumph Hurdle hero **Lossiemouth**. Willie Mullins' five-year-old could face competition from the likes of **Ashroe Diamond**, **Echoes In Rain** and **Gala Marceau**, while the likes of **Love Envoi** – runner-up to Honeysuckle last season – **Hispanic Moon** and **Marie's Rock** are set to go to post.

Key Stats & Trends

- Willie Mullins has won this race 10 times since its inception in 2008
- Five of the last 12 winners were SP favourite
- Eight of the last 12 winners had at least one previous run at Cheltenham

Betfred Insights Verdict

By all accounts, Lossiemouth is going to be very tough to beat, but with a question to answer regarding the trip, especially if the heavens were to open, I can't have her at odds-on. Rivals are admittedly thin on the ground but last year's runner-up **LOVE ENVOI** has a fair chance of going one better if the weather plays ball. Even if it doesn't, I'd be hopeful she can make the frame so she rates a good each-way bet.

[Bet Here](#)

Tuesday Round Up

Day 1

14:50 Ultima Handicap Chase (3m 1f)

Summary

The Ultima – the very first handicap of the week – is often won by the home team. However, the Irish dominate the betting for this year's renewal with **The Goffer**, **Meetingofthewaters** and **Stumptown** all prominent. **Chianti Classico** appears the leading British chance, but **Theatre Man** has been well-supported too over the last few weeks.

Verdict

This can go to **CHIANTI CLASSICO** for Kim Bailey. The seven-year-old's whole season has been geared around this very race and, off a mark of 143, he looks to have an excellent chance of landing the first handicap of the week.

16:50 Boodles Juvenile Handicap Hurdle (2m ½f)

Summary

One of the trickiest races of the meeting featuring juveniles who are handicapped on minimal evidence. **Lark In The Mornin**, **Batman Girac** and **Milan Tino** have attracted plenty of support, as have the fillies **Wodhooh**, **Miss Manzor** and **Nara**. Each-way heaven, this is.

Verdict

If there's a race to back one at a big price, it's this – and **PALAMON** is a good option. Paul Nolan's youngster looks to have been campaigned with one day in mind and gets in off a very low mark.

17:30 National Hunt Chase (3m 6f)

Summary

Recent renewals of this race have seen small fields and this year looks no different. **Embassy Gardens** and **Corbetts Cross** head the market for Willie Mullins and nephew Emmet respectively, while Gordon Elliott, who has an excellent record in the race, relies on **Salvador Ziggy**. English hopes **Kilbeg King** and **Henry's Friend** are just two of the outsiders.

Verdict

EMBASSY GARDENS has a great chance in Tuesday's finale. He's blossomed for jumping fences this season and his form is strong. The strapping son of Shantou is the main hope for Willie Mullins, who's won the last two renewals of this race, and should take plenty of beating against questionable rivals.

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Gallagher Novices' Hurdle

Wednesday 13th March 13:30
(2m 5f)



Race Summary

Again, if **Ballyburn** runs here he'll be very tough to beat. But if not, the Gallagher (former Ballymore/Baring Bingham) looks wide open. Henry De Bromhead's **Slade Steel** is sure to attract support, as too are the Willie Mullins-trained duo of **Ile Atlantique** and **Predators Gold** – and **Mystical Power** if he shows his face. Ben Pauling's unbeaten **Handstands** looks the best of the British.

Key Stats & Trends

- Just three of last 36 winners came from outside the top five in the betting
- 14 of the last 33 favourites have won
- 15 of the last 17 winners were successful last time out

Betfred Insights Verdict

BALLYBURN is a confident selection if he shows up. Failing that, **Ile Atlantique** must have a great chance. He was narrowly beaten in the Lawlor's Of Naas back in January but that's arguably the strongest form on offer in this field and there should be more to come from the lightly-raced six-year-old.

[Bet Here](#)

Brown Advisory Novices' Chase

Wednesday 13th March 14:10
(3m ½f)



Race Summary

It's shaping up to be a fairly small field for this year's Brown Advisory which is a shame, but quality isn't compromised at least as **Fact To File** and **Stay Away Fay** for Willie Mullins and Paul Nicholls respectively is a fantastic match-up. Henry De Bromhead's **Monty's Star** and **Broadway Boy** for the Twiston-Davies' are bang there on figures too.

Key Stats & Trends

- Six of last 14 winners have won the previous season's Albert Bartlett
- Seven-year-olds have won 14 of the last 17 renewals
- 34 of last 35 winners finished in the first three last time out

Betfred Insights Verdict

FACT TO FILE is the best novice chaser around and he should take an awful lot of beating here. He looks a Gold Cup contender for next year and if we're to see a special performance this week my bet's on it being him.

[Bet Here](#)

Queen Mother Champion Chase

Wednesday 13th March 15:30
(2m)



Race Summary

All season, the Champion Chase was billed as a repeat of last year's Arkle between winner **El Fabiolo** and runner-up **Jonbon**. Those two are still the leading players, but Alan King's 2022 Arkle hero **Edwardstone** has entered the reckoning after an electric performance in the Game Spirit at Newbury last month. The likes of **Captain Guinness**, **Elixir De Nutz** and **Editeur Du Gite** are all outside chances.

Key Stats & Trends

- 17/22 winners of previous years Arkle went on to finish in top 3 here.
- 13/23 winners had previously won the Tingle Creek
- 19/24 winners had SP no bigger than 5/1

Betfred Insights Verdict

Perhaps there was a case to be made for Jonbon getting revenge on **EL FABILOLO** – his Arkle conqueror last year – in the Champion Chase earlier this term, but after the latter's mighty performance at the Dublin Racing Festival last month, and Jonbon's misstep in the Clarence House, it's hard to see anything but Willie Mullins' superstar confirming the form.

[Bet Here](#)

Champion Bumper

Wednesday 13th March 17:30
(2m ½f)



Race Summary

This season's bumper crop lacks a standout, which makes the Champion Bumper a fascinating betting heat. **The Closutton** (Willie Mullins) contingent includes the likes of **Jasmin De Vaux, You Oughta Know, Cantico**, while Gordon Elliott has a typically-strong hand courtesy of **Jalon D'Oudairies, Romeo Coolio** and **The Yellow Clay**. Paul Nicholls' **Teeshan** and **Quebecois** are greatly respected too.

Key Stats & Trends

- Willie Mullins has 12 wins in this race
Eight of the last 21 winners were top-rated as per the BHA
- The last 20 winners all won on their
- previous start

Betfred Insights Verdict

Before the season, **CANTICO** was billed as Willie Mullins' top bumper horse and that shouldn't be forgotten. He improved significantly, like many of the yard's runners at that time, between his defeat in a warm race at Leopardstown over Christmas and facile success at Navan last month and rates fantastic each-way value.

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Wednesday Round Up

Day 2

14:50 Coral Cup (2m 5f)

Summary

If **Sa Majeste** heads here he'll be relatively short. So too will the ever-popular defending champ **Langer Dan**. Built By **Ballymore** for Martin Brassil, who saddled last year's runner-up, is a strong contender also but this is always a big field and there'll be many that are fancied on the day.

Verdict

BALLYADAM has a fair chance in this. Henry De Bromhead's nine-year-old has run very well in defeat at the last two Cheltenham Festivals and, despite his age, he's unexposed at this trip and comes here fresh on the back of a pleasing prep run at Christmas.

16:10 Cross Country Chase (3m 6f)

Summary

The Cross Country Chase has become a much classier race and this year's renewal is probably the best yet. Winner of the Gold Cup in 2021, **Minella Indo**, currently tops the market from last year's hero **Delta Work** and **Galvin**, who was runner-up. **Coko Beach** adds further intrigue.

Verdict

The ground is unlikely to be quick enough for **Galvin** and **Delta Work** seems to be regressing so **MINELLA INDO** is the pick. He ran a blinder off a huge weight on his first try round this unique course before Christmas and the vibes around his chances are particularly strong.

16:50 Grand Annual Handicap Chase (2m)

Summary

If **My Mate Mozzie** goes for the Arkle instead of this, **Saint Roi** ought to be popular as his whole season appears to have been geared around a spring handicap. **Madara**, who won at the Dublin Racing Festival last month, and the likes of **Saint Felicien** and **Dancing On My Own** are also prominent in the market. This is another devilishly-tricky contest with plenty of attractive odds on offer.

Verdict

A chance is taken on **IN EXCELSIS DEO** for Harry Fry. The JP McManus-owned six-year-old is prone to a mistake or two so he comes with serious risks attached, but given a clean round he could go very close off a potentially lenient mark.

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Turners Novices' Chase

Thursday 14th March 13:30
(2m 4f)



Race Summary

The Irish are fancied to win most of the Grade Ones this week, but the British have a strong hand for this race. **Ginny's Destiny**, **Grey Dawning** and **Iroko** all feature prominently in the betting, while Willie Mullins is probably going to run either **Gaelic Warrior** or **Facile Vega** – or both – and they will no doubt prove popular. Otherwise, rivals are pretty thin on the ground.

Key Stats & Trends

- 5/10 previous winners had won at the Festival before
- Nine of first 13 runnings were won by the Irish (four of those by Willie Mullins)
- Six of last 11 winners had won a Grade 1 novices' hurdle

Betfred Insights Verdict

GREY DAWNING is the selection. He almost certainly would have beaten **Ginny's Destiny** giving weight away at Cheltenham in December but for a bad mistake at the second-last and can reverse form here. **Iroko** is hard to advise the way his season has played out and whichever one Mullins decides to run has risks attached.

[Bet Here](#)

Ryanair Chase

Thursday 14th March 14:50
(2m 5f)



Race Summary

The weather – specifically how dry it is – will decide if likely favourite **Banbridge** lines up here or not. Defending champion **Envoi Allen** bids for a fourth Cheltenham Festival success, while **Stage Star** hopes to back up his triumph in last year's Turners. **Conflated** and **Capodanno** add intrigue dropping in trip and the likes of **Fil Dor**, **Protektorat** and **Fugitif** – plus the rest – are certainly no back-numbers.

Key Stats & Trends

- 15/19 previous winners had won at the course before
- 12 of last 16 winners had already won a Grade 1 race
- Cheveley Park Stud have won the three previous runnings

Betfred Insights Verdict

There should be plenty of pace in this, which could set things up for a strong stayer at the trip such as **CONFLATED**. He's been running well behind Gold Cup hero Galopin Des Champs over three miles this season and if those up front do too much early doors, Gordon Elliott's ten-year-old could well be there to pick up the pieces at the business end.

[Bet Here](#)

Stayers' Hurdle

Thursday 14th March 15:30
(3m)



Race Summary

If Irish Point diverts to the Champion Hurdle as has been strongly suggested, Gordon Elliott's **Teahupoo** will take plenty of money to go one better than when runner-up in last year's renewal. He faces competition from leading British hope **Crambo**, Grand National hero **Noble Yeats** and the Willie Mullins-trained **Sir Gerhard**. It would be foolish to completely disregard the legendary **Sire Du Berlais**, who won this at a huge price last season, and Paisley Park.

Key Stats & Trends

- Six double-figure winners in the last eight years.
- Only two horses aged 10+ have won this race
- Irish have won five of last seven runnings

Betfred Insights Verdict

There seems to be plenty of confidence behind **TEAHUPOO** who gets a tentative vote. The seven-year-old is always improving and his record when fresh is impeccable, so he's hard to ignore in a weak-enough renewal.

[Bet Here](#)

Thursday Round Up

Day 3

14:10 Pertemps Network Final Hurdle (3m)

Summary

The great JP McManus has two very live chances in this with **Chantry House** and **Icare Allen** for Nicky Henderson and Willie Mullins respectively. **Gaith Chuil** is another likely type, alongside the likes of **Cleatus Poolaw**, **Springwell Bay** and **White Rhino**. Don't be afraid to back one at a big price in this, for there's usually one or two lurkers in the field.

Verdict

Unlike last year, I don't think this is a great renewal of the Pertemps Final. **ICARE ALLEN** is the standout for me off the back of his eye-catching third in a qualifier at Aintree back in November. Willie Mullins has left him alone since and, off an unchanged mark of 142, he's my idea of the winner.

16:10 TrustATrader Plate (2m 5f)

Summary

Jonjo O'Neill's **Crebilly** has been all the rage for this since the handicap weights came out. **Theatre Man** has also attracted support, while **Letsbeclearaboutit** leads the Irish charge, which will be typically strong.

Verdict

It's hard to be too confident for a Cheltenham Festival handicap, but Jonjo O'Neill's **CREBILLY** must have a great chance. The JP McManus-owned seven-year-old looks very well-handicapped and ought to be very competitive with a clear round.

16:50 Mares' Novices' Hurdle (2m 1f)

Summary

This is one of, if not the race of the week. It revolves almost exclusively around **Brighterdaysahead**, **Jade De Grugy** and **Dysart Enos** for Gordon Elliott, Willie Mullins and Fergal O'Brien respectively, but the likes of Jeremy Scott's **Golden Ace** can't be completely discounted.

Verdict

Brighterdaysahead is feared on her huge reputation and the penalty-free Dysart Enos is dangerous, but Willie Mullins' **JADE DE GRUGY** could be the full package. She's got an equal amount of speed and stamina and boasts one of, if not the strongest piece of form in this division.

17:30 Kim Muir Challenge Cup (3m 2f)

Summary

Basically the Irish edition of the Ultima, that's for amateur jockeys only. Unlike the latter, which is often won by the home team, the visitors dominate this race. That's reflected in the betting with **Inothewayurthinkin**, **Good Time Jonny**, **Angels Dawn** – the list goes on – at the head of it.

Verdict

Based on his earlier form behind the likes of Gaelic Warrior, it was a little surprising that **INOTHEWAYURTHINKIN** made the cut and, with top amateur Derek O'Connor likely to ride, he's the selection. The trip is an unknown, but he's always given the impression that the further the better and a race of this nature seems to have been the plan all season.

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Triumph Hurdle

Friday 15th March 13:30
(2m 1f)



Race Summary

The usual debate before the Triumph Hurdle is about which Willie Mullins horse wins – but this year it revolves around which one of them finishes second to Nicky Henderson's wildly-impressive **Sir Gino**. **Majborough** is the market's idea of his most-dangerous rival, followed by stablemates **Kargese**, **Storm Heart**, **Salvator Mundi** and **Bunting**.

Key Stats & Trends

- Eight of the last 12 winners competed in the Spring Juvenile Hurdle
- The Irish have won eight of the last 11 runnings
- 15 of last 19 winners were in the top four of the betting

Betfred Insights Verdict

Sir Gino won't be easy to beat but he's short-enough for a juvenile, so a chance is taken on **KARGESE** who won the Spring Juvenile Hurdle at the Dublin Racing Festival last month and is open to further improvement. In receipt of 7lbs from the hot favourite, she should run a big race.

[Bet Here](#)

Albert Bartlett

Novices' Hurdle

Friday 15th March 14:50
(3m)



Race Summary

Once again, Willie Mullins dominates the betting for another Grade One at the Cheltenham Festival. **Readin Tommy Wrong**, **High Class Hero** and **Dancing City** are his leading fancies and current top three in the market, while **Shanagh Bob**, **Gidleigh Park** and **Johnnywho** for Nicky Henderson, Farry Fry and Jonjo O'Neill respectively form the British charge.

Key Stats & Trends

- Only one horse aged 8+ has ever won this race (Unowhatlmeanharry)
- Nine of last 10 winners have gone off at double-figure odds
- Previous novice hurdle experience at Cheltenham is desirable

Betfred Insights Verdict

The unbeaten HIGH CLASS HERO has a great profile for this. He gained a lot of experience over the summer and enjoyed a lovely prep at Thurles earlier this year. The strong-travelling seven-year-old ought to make a very bold bid

[Bet Here](#)

Cheltenham

Gold Cup

Friday 15th March 15:30
(3m 2½f)



Race Summary

Galopin Des Champs' victory last year was sensational and he's a relatively short price to do what only eight horses have done before him and win a second Gold Cup. **Fastorslow**, who has two wins and two losses against the reigning champ, represents his stiffest competition – while the hugely-popular **Shishkin** is right there towards the head of the market. There's no shortage of interesting contenders after that – including the likes of **Gerri Colombe**, **L'Homme Presse**, **Gentlemansgame** and Grand National hero **Corach Rambler**.

Key Stats & Trends

- Second-season chasers have won 17 of the last 34 runnings
- Five of the last 11 winners had ran just once earlier in the season
- Only one winner aged 10+ since 1998 (Cool Dawn)

Betfred Insights Verdict

Galopin Des Champs will be incredibly difficult to beat if at his best, but he's had a relatively long season and underperformed in two of his last four starts, so there's reason to take him on. **FASTORSLOW** is the choice as he doesn't have all that much to find on the favourite and looks set to peak on the day.

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Friday Round Up

Day 4

14:10 County Hurdle (2m 1f)

Summary

This looks like a typically-warm contest. **King Of Kingsfield** will be popular, as will **Under Control** for Nicky Henderson & JP McManus if going to post. Willie Mullins has a decent hand courtesy of **Absurde** and **Bialystok** - while **L'Eau Du Sud** is the sole runner for Dan Skelton, who's won half of the last eight renewals.

Verdict

BIALYSTOK was put up just a pound by the British handicapper after being brought down at the second-last when going easily in a Listed handicap at the Dublin Racing Festival and that marks the six-year-old, who was a staying-on fourth in the Grade 1 Royal Bond earlier in the season, as a lively player in this.

16:10 Hunters' Chase (3m 2½f)

Summary

I'd imagine most of the money will be for the seven-year-olds **Ferns Lock** and **Its On The Line** here. They're the more attractive types ahead of the likes of **Billaway**, **Premier Magic** and **Vaucelet**, who are veterans in this sphere. Two-time Cheltenham Festival hero **Samcro** would be a very popular runner if making the journey.

Verdict

Ferns Lock and **Its On The Line** are younger, improving types who aren't dismissed lightly, but the latter - and the ultra-consistent **Billaway** - had a very tough race the last day, whereas last year's winner **PREMIER MAGIC** has enjoyed a smooth preparation and looks a big price.

16:50 Mares' Chase (2m 4½f)

Summary

This is all about Willie Mullins, who saddles warm favourite **Dinoblue** and last season's runner-up **Allegorie De Vassy**, and Gavin Cromwell, who trains **Limerick Lace** and **Brides Hill**. The rest of the field, bar maybe Gordon Elliott's **Riviere D'etel**, are likely just making up the numbers.

Verdict

DINOBLUE is many people's banker of the meeting, but stablemate **Allegorie De Vassy** bounced back to form at Naas the last day and can't be discounted that easily. That being said, the former has been brilliant this term and remains the selection.

17:30 Martin Pipe Handicap Hurdle (2m 4½f)

Summary

Some classy horses, including **Galopin Des Champs** no less, have won the Martin Pipe in recent years and the whispers are that **Sa Majeste** is the next Willie Mullins superstar in a Cheltenham handicap off a lowly mark. His stablemate **Quai De Bourbon** is next in the betting ahead of a whole host of fascinating types from various yards.

Verdict

Perhaps **Sa Majeste** is a good thing off his rating but I'd urge caution on that front as he's not only very hard to weigh up but could still run in the Coral Cup. Instead, chance **QUAI DE BOURBON** who's crying out for this trip and looks to have been laid out for a spring handicap.

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Cheat Sheet

Owen McMahon

Betfred Insights



Nap

Fact To File

Brown Advisory

He could win the Gold Cup next year too - that's how good I think he is.

NB

Crebilly

Plate Handicap Chase

This looks to have 5-10 pounds in hand and should take plenty of beating given a clear round.

Longshot

Palamon

Boodles Juvenile Handicap Hurdle

Been campaigned with one day in mind and gets in off a very lowly mark.

Lay

Corbetts Cross

National Hunt Chase

A poor jumper and he's got 18 fences to clear. Not guaranteed to stay either.

Alan Firkins

Betfred Insights



Nap

Ballyburn

Supreme Novices' Hurdle/Gallagher Novices' Hurdle

He's got gears we haven't even seen yet.

NB

Stay Away Fay

Brown Advisory

The two that beat him here in January are heading for the Ryanair and the Gold Cup.

Longshot

Favoir

County Hurdle

E/W play from the Skeltons, stable do well here, sound Newbury effort last time.

Lay

Brighterdaysahead

Mares' Novices' Hurdle

Three words - Jade De Grugy, who could have been my Nap/NB.

Frankie Foster

Betfred Ambassador



Nap

Hunters Yarn

EW

Arkle

Well regarded by the stable, would have been 2/2 this season but for fall at the last on chase debut where he had the measure of some solid horses.

NB

Teahupoo

Stayers' Hurdle

Dual Grade 1 winner and 3rd in last year's Stayers'. Only 7 years old and still improving unlike lots of last year's opposition.

Longshot

Ballyadam

Coral Cup

Six lengths off State Man giving 5lbs in the 2022 County Hurdle and 4L off the winner in that same race last year. Longer trip in the Coral Cup should suit and he's a pound lower than at last year's meeting

Lay

Sir Gino

Triumph Hurdle

Has been impressive but isn't substance to the form and I'm willing to take him on at a short price against others who have experienced a more competitive field in Ireland.

Matt Hulmes

Betfred TV Presenter



Nap

Minello Indo

Cross Country

Gold Cup hero ran a corker under massive weight in December. Delta Work looks like he may not love the game anymore, leaving the way clear for class Minello Indo.

NB

Iroko

Turners Novices' Chase

Exemplary in sole chase at Warwick. This may not be the deepest race and as a former Festival winner, has the class to land this prize.

Longshot

Corach Rambler

Coral Cup

Loves Cheltenham and the Festival. Easy winner of the Grand National and although toppling Galopin may be too tough, he can run onto a place at least.

Lay

Dinoblue

Mares' Chase

This is purely a question of her seeing out the trip. I also like the claims of ownermate Limerick Lace, so happy to take her on at Evens.

Aidan O'Hara

Twitter Tipster



Nap

Absurde

County Hurdle

For a horse that will be much better on decent ground, he did well in the DRF. Given superb flat form and jumping, he'll be a threat in the County.

NB

Il Ridoto - EW

Plate Handicap Chase

He's run superbly in his last two runs here and after poor run at Ascot, back to usual tactics here and should be involved in the finish.

Longshot

Champ

Stayers' Hurdle

Backed a few times for this, but on his day is capable of getting involved again. I think his current huge price gives us license to hope for a good run.

Lay

Sir Gino

Triumph Hurdle

Far too short given we have no link to Irish Form. Also wary he'll turn out at all if the ground is other than soft. Too many negatives to call 4/6 value.

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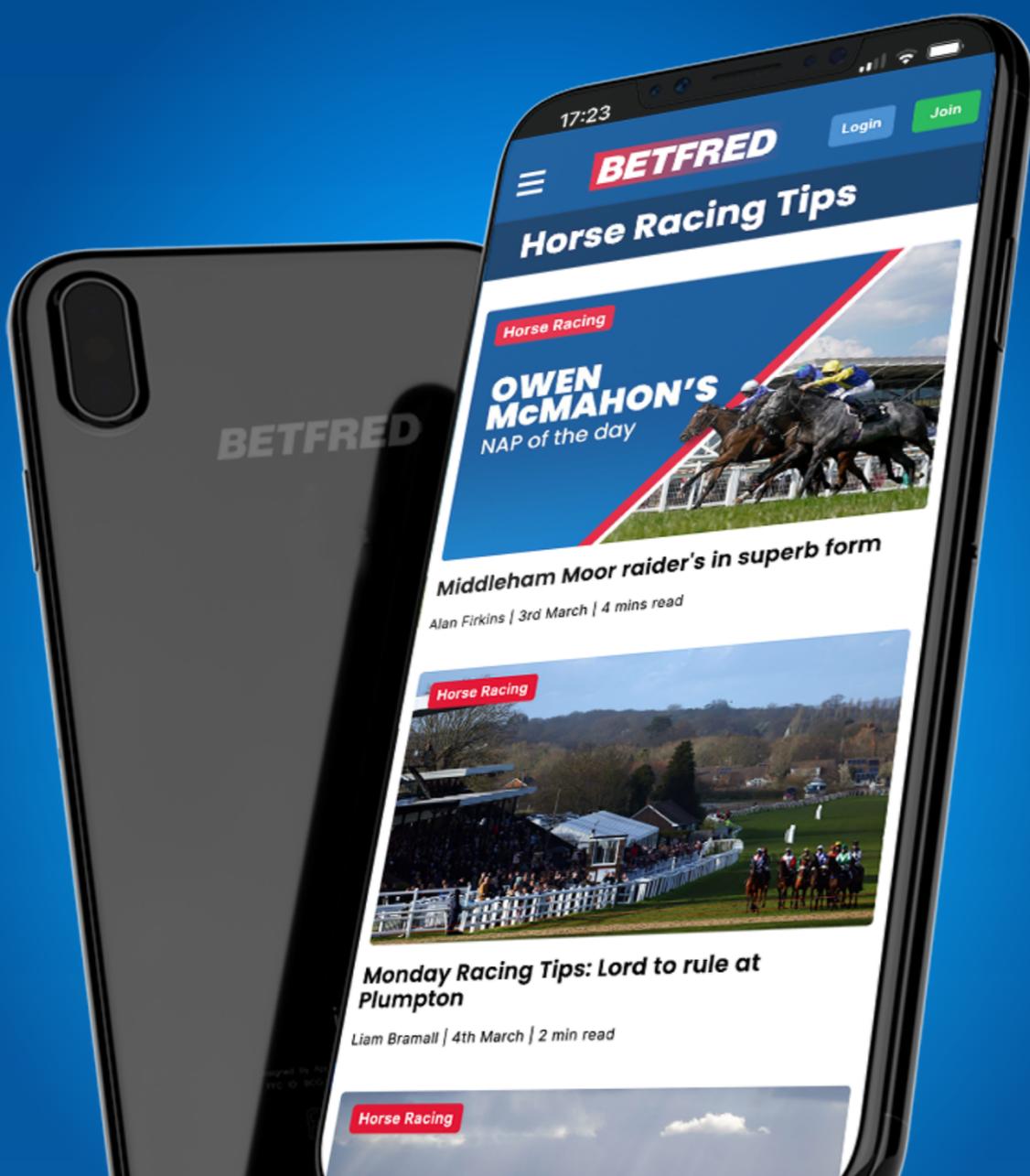
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