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[Equine Equity](#)

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Saturday's Racing Preview - By Ian Hudson

Malaya Could Win At Kempton En Route To Cheltenham

Kempton's jumps fixture on Saturday stages the last major prep races for the Cheltenham Festival and there are some potential runners at the meeting that matters most in action. The Dovecote Novices' Hurdle often produces a decent winner and this year Mont Des Avaliors has the potential to be a player in one of the novices' hurdle races at the Festival. Malaya is a decent juvenile who could figure in the Triumph Hurdle given a good run at Kempton.

The best hurdlers, chasers, runners over the cross country course and bumper horses will all be primed to be at their peak in just over two weeks. The Cheltenham Festival dominates the sport like no other event in other sports. It is one of the few occasions in the jumps season when the best horses race against each other. The Aintree Grand National meeting produces great races but Cheltenham in March is the pinnacle. It's known as the Olympics of National Hunt racing and it's about the best of the best.

Nicky Henderson has the favourites for the three most prestigious races and no trainer has won all three in the same year. He is the leading trainer at the meeting and looks certain to add to his tally this year. Buveur D'Air (Champion Hurdle), Altior (Champion Chase) and Might Bite (Gold Cup) are his market leaders and the treble pays over 12/1. The first two horses are bankers and Might Bite is the best chaser in training in Britain and Ireland.

There is often wind and rain at the Festival and it can be quite cold. However, the temperatures are set to be below average over the next two weeks. In that context it's difficult to predict ground conditions but there should be an element of soft. Henderson's best horses are so good that they are not ground dependent but Might Bite is proven in dry spring conditions. Any surface will not inconvenience Buveur D'Air and Altior and the unique treble is on.

If all three win Henderson must be in with a shout for the leading trainer award. Gordon Elliott won it last year after sending out six winners at the Festival. Willie Mullins produced the same number but Elliott took the title because more of his horses finished second. Samcro is Elliott's banker but he could have about 40 runners over the four days of the meeting. Mullins will bring a strong team but Henderson could outscore the Irish trainers.

Paul Nicholls does not have many superstars but Politologue has a great chance in the Champion Chase. Malaya could get in the picture for the Triumph Hurdle but the acid test is the juvenile race at Kempton. The Betdaq Handicap Chase on the same card is more a Grand National trial but the race could throw up a live contender for a similar race at the Festival. The Kempton card is decent and stands alone as valuable.

Backing winners is important but the funds will then form part of the Festival betting bank.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Sheffield United Can Win Away At Hull

There are no Premier League fixtures this evening so your betting diet includes Championship footy and Six Nations egg chasing. For insomniacs or early risers there's also the final of the men's 50km mass start cross country skiing from the Winter Olympics. I hope you'll all be setting your alarms for that. The man from a cold country will probably win the gold medal.

There are no medals up for grabs when Hull host Sheffield United in the Championship. The visitors are 14 places and 33 points ahead of their opponents in this match. Hull are one place above the relegation places while Sheffield United are one place below the promotion places. The match should produce an away win but football is not an exact science.

However, in this case the most obvious outcome should take place. Sheffield lost two games on the bounce but have won their last two fixtures. Hull have only won once over their last 10 matches in the league. United won the League One title last season and were in good shape for another promotion before a blip. They can get back into the top six with a win tonight so SHEFFIELD UNITED are tipped at [17/10 with William Hill](#).

Italy have never beaten France in the Six Nations and lost heavily in the last meeting in Rome. However, two years ago in the match in France the home team's winning margin was just two points. The handicap line has been set at 17 points and that looks way too big. France have lost both their matches in the Six Nations so ITALY +17 is the standout bet at [11/10 with Betfair](#).

Warwick stages a decent handicap chase at 3.30pm which is worth over £18,000 to the winner. Dell' Arca has turned in some decent efforts in the past and has to be respected off today's mark. Kayf Adventure has good course form and is a leading contender. However, CALIPTO has the best form on ratings and has a manageable weight so should be backed at [9/2 with Ladbrokes](#).