

BetFan

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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

Shrewd Tipster

Win Bet - Catterick 15:35 - Neverbeen To Paris @ 15/8

The Pro Punter

Win Bet - Sandown 19:05 - Without Parole @ 4/6

On The Nod

Win Bet - Goodwood 17:30 - Oeil De Tigre @ 4/1

Potentially A Great Night For Salah And Liverpool - By

Rick Elliott

Liverpool and Real Madrid are the top two scoring teams in the Champions League and their players are at the top of the scoring charts. All the form points to an open attacking match which should lend itself to goals when the final takes place in Kiev on Saturday. Both sides are better going forwards than defending so the fixture has goals written all over it but the tone will be set in the opening exchanges. In any case this is a tie that Liverpool can win.

These massive finals can often be disappointing spectacles because teams are more concerned about not conceding than scoring goals. The FA Cup final between Chelsea and Manchester United was boring because neither side tried to take an early initiative. Once Chelsea had scored they were happy to defend in numbers and United did not have the pace or imagination to break the defence down. I'm sure the fans wouldn't mind losing 4-3 if the players at least tried to score goals.

The match wasn't quite a must win for Jose Mourinho but the performance and approach was not good enough for United fans. Manchester City, Liverpool and Tottenham have had success playing exciting football and many matches have been a joy to watch for neutrals. City won the Premier League in a canter, Liverpool are contesting the Champions League final and Tottenham finished third in the league. It's galling for United fans that the team won nothing and the football was poor.

Liverpool have scored 40 goals in 12 Champions League matches this season. Real Madrid have managed the second best tally but with 10 goals less. Liverpool have been champions of Europe five times and Real Madrid are 12 times winners of the European Cup and Champions League. The Spanish side have lifted the trophy in the last two seasons and three times in the last four years. Liverpool finished fourth in the Premier League and Real were third in La Liga. Both sides qualified for next season's Champions League so winning the trophy in Kiev is the now the main issue.

Finishing behind Barcelona and Atletico Madrid and 17 points off the pace is not typical Real but they have delivered in the Champions League. They have eliminated the champions of France, Italy and Germany. Real Madrid required four chances to score twice against Bayern Munich who found the net once from eight opportunities. Despite underachieving in the league Real have been highly efficient in Europe. The Liverpool defence will struggle not to concede in the final.

Cristiano Ronaldo has scored 15 goals in the Champions League which makes him the leading scorer. That's half Madrid's total so if his team score two goals statistically he should score once. The three Liverpool forward players have scored 29 goals between them but Mohamed Salah is by some distance the leading scorer in the Premier League. He is the first player to score 32 goals in a 38 match season.

Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane have made valuable contributions in the Champions League. At least one of that group should find the net in the final.

The Champions League final could come down to a shootout between Ronaldo and Salah. The winner of that contest will probably be on the winning side and would then become the favourite to win the Ballon d'Or. Lionel Messi and Ronaldo have won the award in every year since 2008 but Salah could help Liverpool win the Champions League and then be recognised as the best player in the world.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Stalemate Likely In First Test

The domestic football season is not quite over because the Champions League final is being played on Saturday. The match between Real Madrid and Liverpool in Kiev coincides with the third day of the First Test that brings together England and Pakistan at Lord's which starts today. The fixture matches two out of form Test teams because England have lost six of their last 10 five day matches while Pakistan have not won any of their last seven fixtures in the longest form of the game. In 16 series England have avoided defeat in each match just once but there are only two Test matches in the series against Pakistan. The pitch is good for batting and the weather will not favour the bowling so the bet is the DRAW at 4/1 with William Hill.

Today's other main betting action is the Super League fixture between the home side in Castleford and St Helens. The teams met in the Challenge Cup on the same ground just 12 days ago and St Helens won that match 36-18. Both teams recorded victories over the Magic Weekend but Castleford were more impressive. Ste Helens have won 14 of their last 16 fixtures and they have benefitted from a settled team. Castleford are weakened by the absence of some key players and are fifth in the table after finishing first in 2017. Therefore, ST HELENS should be backed at 4/7 with Ladbrokes.

WEEKENDER Is Progressive And Looks A Decent Bet

Sandown stages the best evening meeting of the Flat season and ITV4 are showing four races which is the first time a night fixture has been on terrestrial television. The prize fund of £233,000 is better than the principle meeting on many Saturdays and some high class horses have been attracted. The two Group 3 contests at 7.35 and 8.10 are the richest races at the fixture. Poet's Word cannot be opposed in the later race but is odds-on. Magic Circle won the Chester Cup just 13 days ago and Montaly is rated to run a big race. However, WEEKENDER is progressive and looks a decent bet at 9/4 with Coral to win this race.