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Win Bet - Bath 16:10 - Poet's Society @ 2/1

Some Thoughts On Royal Ascot - By The Champagne Kid

Royal Ascot for many is the ultimate racing festival of the year. The royalty, the fashion, the class horses in competition for glory for their owners, trainers, jockeys and punting supporters is what makes it one of the world's greatest racing festivals.

It is hard to argue otherwise, and any racing fan without some sort of a feeling of excitement and / or anticipation about this five day event is probably missing some sort of vital element of whatever goes into the make-up of the human condition.

There are so many aspects to this festival that excite people who otherwise have little interest in racing, it makes you wonder sometimes how our racing authorities generally fail to capitalise on this annual focus on Royal Ascot to invigorate more public interest in the day-to-day racing meetings outside of this event. And there is plenty of scope for that.

For all that the racing is top-class, and Ascot is a pretty decent racecourse in most aspects, my own personal experiences of the Royal meeting leave me a little bit cold. Too many people; too much noise; difficulty in getting a decent viewing position for those old-fashioned binocular viewers like me (although I do have what I consider to be the best image-stabilising binos you could find in my Canon 12x36 IS II 5's) and just the general over-crowding and interminable queuing to get a drink or a bite to eat. Not for me!

But for all us racing fans, the question is, as it always was and always will be, who are going to be the winners? It always bugs me when racing commentators and pundits talk about 'the punters being on top' just because a few favourites have gone in. Whenever I hear that phrase said I bristle, because as someone who looks for the less considered but potentially over-priced chance in the market, it nearly always confirms that I have had a bad day. That said, it is not always so at Royal Ascot. Hot favourites win at Royal Ascot probably to a greater extent than they do in general throughout the year. Backing highly rated favourites at Royal Ascot may not make you particularly rich, but on the other hand, you will not lose much even in a bad year.

In the last Royal Ascot meetings, there have been 150 winning horses. Almost half of those winners (71 in fact) have been ridden by 6 still active jockeys who are Ryan Moore, William Buick, Jamie Doyle, Frankie Dettori, Adam Kirby and Jamie Spencer. And just over one third of those 150 winners (52 to be precise) have been trained by only 4 trainers - Aiden O'Brien, John Gosden, Sir Michael Stoute and Wesley Ward

As for my own fancies for the meeting, I must admit that I am not much of an ante-post punter. As such, I will not be investing until day-of-race markets are up, but a couple of horses do interest me in advance of the meeting. One is Mission Impassible, entered in the Coronation Stakes, for whom I made a case on my Champagne Kid service for the French 1000 Guineas. In that race, she suffered

badly in running, but then went on to win next time out in a Group 2 at Chantilly. As a charge of Jean-Claude Rouget, a two-time winner of the Coronation Stakes, I'd be interested in her if she does take her place. For the intrepid ante-post punter, there is 33/1 currently available.

Another horse given a mention in this column a few weeks ago as one to follow, is Mark Johnston's Dee Ex Bee. At the time I had seen him as an interesting type for the Queen's Vase, but he has blown his cover somewhat by coming second in The Derby. He now carries an entry in the Group 2 King Edward VII Stakes, but his Epsom exploits now have him as short as 7/2 in a place for that event. There is also some 8/1 available for those who don't mind the inherent risks of an ante-post bet.

Whatever your approach to the Royal meeting is, the best advice is to make sure you enjoy it. You will find elsewhere, many a word written by all and sundry pointing you in the direction of their own fancies. Much of what is written will turn out to be totally wrong. If you are getting lost in a sea of impossible-to-solve cavalry charge handicaps, bear in mind some of the facts presented above. Sometimes it pays not to ignore the obvious. Colour of the Queen's hat? I'll go for lime green on day one!

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Rick's Sports Betting: Royal Ascot Could Be Good For Gosden And Dettori - By Rick Elliott

Royal Ascot is the greatest Flat meeting in the world and the best trainer and jockey have dominated more than most in recent years. Apart from the five English and Irish Classics the Group contests at the meeting are amongst the most prestigious in the sport. When the money is down and reputations are at stake Aidan O'Brien and Ryan Moore deliver and Royal Ascot is the meeting that matters most.

It is the most lucrative meeting in Britain and attracts the biggest crowd. For some it is a social occasion but racing professionals understand the importance of having runners. The racing is broadcast in over 200 countries as much as for the tradition as the quality of the sport. When the Queen discusses her engagements at the start of the year the first dates that are set in stone are the five days at her course.

The equivalent over jumps is the Cheltenham Festival but that is more a championship meeting. The whole National Hunt season is centred on the four days at Cheltenham and even the Grand National meeting at Aintree is somewhat secondary. The Flat has Champions Day in October so Ascot is a mid-season event and the races stand alone rather than be the culmination of months of racing.

Ascot employs an individual whose job it is to attract international runners. Australia has become a target for entries and in the past Black Caviar has raced at the royal meeting. The big target this time was Winx but connections decided there was not a great deal to be gained from a long trip to Britain. A summer campaign in Europe was mooted but in the best interests of the horse Winz will not be at Royal Ascot.

Royal Ascot has become an annual port of call for the US trainer, Wesley Ward and his sprinters have become competitive. Lady Aurelia will take some beating in the King's Stand Stakes and the horse will be assisted by Frankie Dettori on board. Ward usually has several runners at the Royal meeting and often has winners but Lady Aurelia is his best chance. Frankie loves Ascot and he has a good book of rides.

If O'Brien and Moore are not the leading trainer and jockey John Gosden and Dettori could take the titles. Cracksman and Stradivarius are leading fancies for their races and Gosden has leading contenders in other races. In 1996 Dettori went through the card at a regular meeting at Ascot and he became famous for the magnificent seven winners he rode. We should see several flying dismounts at his favourite track.

There are eight Group 1 races at Royal Ascot and 18 in total. There are 30 races over five days are all covered live on ITV. Bookmakers will be offering concessions and odds boosts for new and existing customers. Only the Classics on the Flat generate more betting interest than the feature races. The time of the year and good ground mean the top races often go to form and you rarely get shock winners. Very few outsiders make the frame or win Group 1 races.

The World Cup dominates the media but racing has its week in the sun. Royal Ascot is the best Flat racing occasion and this year it could be especially rewarding for Gosden and Dettori.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Can Messi Score At Hat-Trick Today?

He's rubbish that Ronaldo! Couldn't hit a barn door. That might be the case but he has now scored at least one goal in four successive World Cups and he is one of only four players to have done that. Ronaldo scored his career 51st hat-trick against Spain and now plays against the two weaker teams in the group. RONALDO is good enough to score another two-hat tricks which would make his current price of 2/1 with **Coral** to be the leading scorer at the World Cup the bet of the century.

Lionel Messi has also scored for Argentina at the World Cups in 2006, 2010 and 2014 and it's his turn today. He plays for Argentina against Iceland in Group D in a match his country should win. Iceland over performed at Euro 2016 and their 5-0 defeat to France was more indicative of their world ranking than the win against England who were abysmal. MESSI is 20/1 with **Paddy Power** to score three goals or more today.

The match bet of the four matches in the World Cup is CROATIA at 4/5 with **William Hill** to beat Nigeria. Croatia have conceded one goal or less in their last 14 competitive matches and Nigeria are not prolific. In midfield Luka Modric mixes it with the best for Real Madrid. He provides the creativity in front of a strong defence and goalkeeper. In the other matches France will be too good for Australia and the match between Peru and Denmark is difficult to call.

The most lucrative racing fixture is at York and the feature race is the handicap over six furlongs at 3.35pm. There are 20 horses declared to run which means each way bets will be settled at one quarter the odds for four places and some bookmakers may payout on five. FOXTROT LADY is improving and gets a five pound weight allowance due to the inexperienced jockey. The horse is the bet at 7/1 with **Ladbrokes**.

England - Bringing Moneyball To Cricket - By Dave Owens

The appointment of Ed Smith to national selector of the England team promises to see a new and revolutionary way to which the national side will select its teams in future. Smith took over at the 11th hour before the two-test series against Pakistan and made a couple of surprise inclusions in the return of Jos Buttler who was as at the time of selection in India smashing bowling to all parts in 20 over cricket in the IPL and by his own admission had no thought in his mind that he would be play a test match any time soon. The other selection of not was the drafting in of 20-year-old spinner Dom Bess with only 16 first class games to his name. Both selections had varying degrees of success with Buttler looking excellent on his return to the fold and Bess showing promise if not the full package yet for test cricket.

Its now after a couple of games and months into his tenure that we could well see Ed Smiths stamp on the side. For quite some time England have struggled in test match cricket, especially away from home – where victories have been scarce and performances not up to scratch. Smith had been brought into shake up the selection process of the side with a more analytics approach to selection with cricketer's numbers crunched on very specific fields to determine a player's value such as how batsman have faired on difficult batting wickets and a higher class of bowling as well as bowlers who have performed on flat pitch's and against heavy scoring batsman in county cricket.

The result of which is a mirroring of the famous book "Moneyball" which documented the true story of the baseball team the Oakland Athletics 2002 season.

The story was based on the management team questioning conventional baseball wisdom and going on the “look” of a player on the field and his very basic and simple baseball figures in hitting home runs and striking a batsman out and concentrating on very specific and (in the Oakland’s opinion) incredibly underrated attributes such as the ability to get a walk to first base (and not get out), pitchers records against a very specific style of hitter despite his overall record and many areas that baseball observers and “experts” has chosen to ignore for decades. This allowed a team with relatively no budget and money to compete and beat the very best and richest baseball teams out there with superior knowledge of data and how to view and value a player who would not be deemed a player of merit or worth in the usual way things were viewed.

England’s record in 50 and 20 over cricket has been very strong in recent years and it will be interesting to see weather this approach will apply to these formats where there has been a suggestion of “it’s not broke, don’t fix it”. It’s in the test arena that could well see most dramatic changes and surprises and will certainly make test sides announcements having more interest than usual to see just what England’s new style selection style throws up.

Click the link below it would be a pleasure to have you on board and taking your share of the profits.

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Trackside In Ireland - By Declan O’Donoghue

The Curragh is only 35 miles from Dublin, but the usual rush hour motorway madness meant many punters were still stuck on the M7 for the first race at the recent Friday night fixture.

They were the lucky ones.

As we expected the arrival of fast ground has seen a big revival in Jim Bolger's fortunes.

He had Vocatus, who would have had a squeak, entered for that opener but due to a temperature he couldn't run.

Kevin Manning switched to the other Bolger runner Copia Verborum who scooted home at 33/1.

Bolger said "I was a bit surprised Kevin initially opted for our other runner though he had some experience and that might have swayed him."

"But this colt had been working well and he'll be able to step up from this I'm sure."

All the money, the milk and honey, had been for Ballydoyle runner Cape Of Good Hope an 8/11 hotpot who faded to fourth.

That was about the only disappointment of the meeting for Donnacha O'Brien who bounced back in the next on Dom Carlos.

A market drifter - "eights" to 11/1 - his success came as no surprise to Joseph O'Brien who said "He has stepped up with each run and I liked him from day one."

The bookies were on good terms with the world at this stage but 5/2 jolly Soffia brought them back to earth in the next.

Well backed in the offices during the day and in the betting ring at the track she won snugly under Robbie Downey.

Trainer Eddie Lynam said "She's one of the few Kyllachys I have, and I don't know why as he was the sire of the best horse I ever had Sole Power."

No respite for the layers in the next as improving sprinter Blue Uluru followed up a highly impressive Navan win when obliging here as a 5/2 market leader. While some are starting to think that the far side is now favoured at Headquarters, Colin Keane took the traditionally favoured route up the stands rail which paid dividends in a tight finish.

Strong support for One Master in the featured Ballyogan Stakes but the William Haggas trained, James Doyle ridden 13/8 favourite never stood a chance.

It was notable that while Ballydoyle invariably have multiple entries for all big races, Actress was their sole entry here from very early in the week.

While she had gone off the boil a bit once the ground changed in the middle of last season, back on a fast surface now at her beloved Curragh she was clearly going to give the colts plenty to think about.

In truth this was over almost as soon as it had begun as Seamie Heffernan popped the 11/2 chance out in front and she led them all a merry dance.

This was a seriously good performance. While fast ground is a must, we'll see at Royal Ascot next week whether or not she is just a Curragh specialist.

Seamie was on target again in the next, booting home the nicely backed - 9/2 to 7/2 - Remmy D for Joseph O'Brien.

There is no stopping the O'Brien family and Joseph and Donnacha combined for what looked the bet of the week in the last.

Tissiak was an 11/8 hotshot and supporters were counting their winnings a long way out.

Donnacha clearly had a double handful in third even before they turned for home and she cruised to victory.

Lure Of The Sea was a market rival and ran a fine race in second and looks a potential Dermot Weld banker for Galway.

Tissiak has loftier targets and now goes for the Irish Oaks. What a penalty kick she was in this maiden.

If only the game was always so easy!

Declan's Irish Racing Service is in hot form lately with winners including Zorion 15/2 (won 10/3); Actress 6/1 (w 11/2); In A Pinch 7/2 (w 3/1); Timi Roli 7/2 (w 10/3); Change Of Velocity 3/1 (w 9/4); Hardback 5/2 (w 4/6); Kalaxana 2/1 (w evens); Dumhach Thra 15/8 (w evens); Lethal Power 13/8 (w 11/8); Tissiak 6/4 (w 11/8); Espere 11/8 (w 11/10) and Clique 11/10.

Join now to get the inside line on all the Irish runners at Royal Ascot!

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