

BetFan

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

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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

Each Way Hits

Chester 15:15 - Lake Volta @ 5/1 Each Way Bet

Early Odds

Ascot 15:35 - Cross Counter @ 11/4 Win Bet

On The Nod

Salisbury 18:15 - Lamya @ 5/1 Win Bet

The Pace of The Race - July Cup, Newmarket 2.15 - By

The Champagne Kid

One of the many factors in assessing the chances of a particular horse winning a race is what sort of pace the race might be run at. It is a factor that I believe not too many punters consider in their prep work. If your 'form study' for a race consists of using the limited data provided in your daily morning newspaper, then you are definitely not considering the 'pace angle' since the details printed in such publications do not include much that will assist with understanding the pace-wise possibilities in the race. (This is not the fault of the dailies; it is not their function to provide intricate detail in the limited space that newspaper editors now allow for racing coverage.)

Even the industry's sole daily racing paper, The Racing Post, does not include much in the way of any type of standardised nomenclature for denoting the probable pace of entrants in a race. That paper's sister publication, the weekly Weekender, does include in its form pages the letters 'L' for Led, 'P' for Prominent, 'M' for Mid-division, and H for Held up, and this is at least something.

For a better indication of running styles and pace preferences, other publications such as Timeform, Geegeez.co.uk and the ATR website do publish their own indicators for pace. Timeform uses what it calls EPF (Early Position Figure) which ranges from 1 for a horse which generally leads in its races, through to 5 for a horse usually 'held up.' Geegeez.co.uk uses 1 to 4 similarly to Timeform but looks only at the horse's last 4 races, and the ATR website has a 'Pace' tab on its form pages which gives pace in a 1 to 10 rating with pace-setters the higher numbers, and also includes a pace forecast for the race such as 'Even or 'Strong.' The best thing about the ATR offering is that is totally free. The other resources mentioned require subscriptions.

But why does pace matter so much? Well, I dare say we've all lost money on what appeared to be a decent bet, when the runners have dawdled along for a mile and then sprinted for the last 2 furlongs. And afterwards cursed our bad luck in what the commentators call a 'falsely run race.' Let's look at such a scenario with human beings. In a 100 metre race between Mo Farrah and Usain Bolt, who wins? Bolt, of course. In a 10,000 metre race between the two, who wins? Farrah, of course. But say the 10,000 metre race is run at a gentle jog for the first 9,900 metres, who wins then? Hmm, maybe need to have a reverse forecast bet in place for this!

I believe that form is at its strongest when races are truly run, but given that all races are not run truly, we need to be able to assess pre-race that such an event may occur and make this assessment part of our bet selection process. And it is not just races that are run slowly for the first 80-90% of the distance that may be falsely run. Imagine a 10 runner race where 6 or 7 go off like scalded cats and the 33/1 outsider comes from behind to win by a nose, to great whooping and hollering and an "oooft,

that's one for the judge" from Derek Thommo Thompson! Well, that is a different type of falsely run race.

So, how do we put pace analysis into practice? Well, let's take an example using today's Group 1 July Cup at Newmarket. This looks very much like a race which will have a 'Strong' pace or as some might describe it, 'pace burnout.'

Timeform has two horses with a front-running EPF of 1 (Dreamfield and US Navy Flag), and four with a prominent EPF of 2 (Fleet Review, Sands Of Mali, Spirit Of Valor, and Blue Point).

Geegeez.co.uk has five with the pace description 'Led' (Dreamfield, US Navy Flag, Fleet Review, Spirit Of Valor and Intelligence Cross) and three with the prominent description (Sands Of Mali, Blue Point, and Redkirk Warrior).

The ATR site (remember, free to use!) has pace forecast "Strong" with three horses having a front-running pace figure of 9 (Dreamfield, US Navy Flag and Intelligence Cross) and three with a prominent pace figure of 8 (Fleet Review, Sands Of Mali and Blue Point).

The same names over and over. It is slightly unusual to see so many pace-setters in the one race, and whilst the July Cup has generally been won in the recent past by a pace forcer, this year's renewal has the look of a race that may end up with the afore-mentioned pace burnout, potentially leaving the spoils to a horse ridden more patiently from behind.

But which one? The ones who I feel may benefit most from the pace horses cutting each other's' throats up front are Limato, who needs to re-discover his form and may do so being returned from a mile to 6f in a race he has won and come second in from two attempts; Sioux Nation, the Aiden O'Brien perceived 'outsider'; Eqtidaar, the Royal Ascot 3yo Group 1 Commonwealth Cup winner; and the usually held up Brando, who already has 3 Newmarket wins from 4 races.

These four constitute a fairly long short-list, and whilst I won't be having a bet in the race, (and it is very possible that a pace setter may hang on for victory), I'd love to see one of them win, or maybe even just one or two of them to place at a decent each-way price, if nothing less than for to demonstrate the potentially profitable use of pace analysis in pre-race study that not every punter might normally consider.

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Blue Point And Mordin The Big Race Double - By Ian

Hudson

The racing today is about quality as well as quantity and the highlight of nine meetings in Britain and Ireland is the Group 1 July Cup. The Newmarket feature often identifies the best sprinter in Europe. However, the race has lost some of its prestige because last year's winner, Harry Angel, is not taking part this time. On UK form Blue Point is the best horse in the race. Redkirk Warrior is one of the best sprinters in Australia but may struggle again at this level in England.

The John Smith's Cup is one of the richest handicaps of the season and is the main race at York. This is another race in which last year's winner is not in the field. Ballet Concerto won of a rating of 102 and the lowest rated horse this year is four pounds higher. Mordin has a decent opportunity on ratings and form. The horse is due to be ridden by Graham Lee who has won the Grand National and Gold Cup at Royal Ascot so he has excelled on some big occasions in the past.

The July Cup is a race for horses aged three and older and the distance is six furlongs. It is one of Britain's most prestigious sprint races and a championship contest. Harry Angel won as a three-year-old last season and benefitted from a weight for age allowance. The horse tracked the leaders and was strong in the final furlong. It would have been interesting to see how Harry Angel performed without the allowance but the horse was withdrawn earlier in the week.

The champion sprinter was injured at Royal Ascot when ducking down in the stalls. Harry Angel was the highest rated sprinter in the world last season. Merchant Navy won the Diamond Jubilee Stakes in which Harry Angel could not recover from losing several lengths at the start. The big disappointment was Redkirk Warrior who finished 10th without getting into contention at any stage in the race. The horse has winning form with Merchant Navy in Australia.

The Newmarket Handicap is a Group 1 race for horses aged two and older over six furlongs that is run at Flemington. Redkirk Warrior won the race and beat Merchant Navy who finished third less than half a length adrift of the winner. The winner was carrying 10 pounds more than Merchant Navy and that form makes the July Cup winnable but Blue Point can be the fly in the ointment. The horse won the Group 1 King's Stand Stakes over five furlongs at Royal Ascot and the form is solid.

The York heritage handicap is virtually a conditions race due to the narrow range of weights in the projected field. Even though three-year-olds are eligible

no horses of that age have shown the form to get a place in the field. With Lee on board Mordin can reward his backers by winning the race at a big price. The horse has finished second on his last three starts but won the three other races he contested. Blue Point and Mordin would make a lucrative double on a busy day for racing.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Does It Matter If England Finish Third Or Fourth?

Is the match to decide which country finishes third in the World Cup the most meaningless in sport? It's like John Isner and Novak Djokovic or Rafael Nadal playing a tennis match at Wimbledon because they lost in the semi-finals. At the snooker world championships the losing semi-finalists don't get announced at the Crucible Theatre and then play a match to determine who is the third best player in the world. If England beat Belgium today it will be their second best finishing position and best effort overseas. Losing in the semi-finals of the World Cup is devastating, even more so when you were 22 minutes from playing in the biggest match in the sport. ENGLAND are 2/1 with **Ladbrokes** to win the match in 90 minutes.

Novak Djokovic leads Rafael Nadal by two sets to one in the second Wimbledon semi-final. The winner of the match will be a big favourite to beat Kevin Anderson in the final. The South African had to endure more than six hours of serve dominated tennis to see off John Isner. The American was magnanimous in defeat and it would be cruel to ask him to play Djokovic or Nadal in a third place match over five sets. If FIFA want to have a third placed team in the World Cup they could have used the number of corners or shots on target to determine that outcome. At Wimbledon the hypothetical third place match could still involve Djokovic because NADAL can win the last two sets and the match and that outcome is 2/1 with **William Hill**.

There are consolation races for some of the major Flat handicaps but that is slightly different. They are lucrative in their own right and give horses who do not make the field for the big race the chance to race for decent prize money over the same distance and on the same ground. It's the third day of the July Festival at Newmarket and the July Cup is one of 10 live races across ITV. The Group 1 six furlong contest often identifies the best sprinter in Europe. In the absence of last year's winner, Harry Angel, the horse to back is BLUE POINT at 11/4 with **Betfair**.

Hidden Gems in Top Bowler Market - By Dave Owens

Cricketers by and large are categorised into only a couple of fields in which they perform for their teams – usually compromising of batsman, bowler or wicket keeper with the addition of all-rounder status who can perform prominently with bat and bowl. Aside from the clear disciplines to which players are known for, phrases are

often used for front line batsman who can bowl but are not used often enough or deemed good enough to be recognised as an all-rounder such as “occasional bowler”, “part time spinner” and “batsman who can bowl”.

It always beneficial for the individual and team if this sort of cricketer can develop his second skill (bowling) to make them more valuable to the team and give the side more options with the ball. This is especially true in 20/20 cricket, where a bowler is limited to only four overs and different bowlers and styles of bowling are often useful to a side to offer variation and different questions for a batsman trying to line up bowlers.

There are increasing instances of front line batters graduating to be effective limited overs bowlers with players looking to increase their skill set to either keep themselves in a side or push for further recognition. When Gloucestershire signed Benny Howell a few years back he was known purely as a batsman and spent the majority of his first season not bowling at all. Through working on his bowling and variations of slower balls he is talked about as one of the best 20 over players in England and has been signed to play in overseas 20 over competitions. Joe Denly's first decade as a cricketer was known purely as a fine top order batsman who represented England in limited overs cricket as just a batter but in recent years has added some overs of leg-spin to his game in the shortest format.

This sort of cricketer can offer some excellent value in a “Top Bowler” market where the leading wicket taker for his side in the innings takes the honours. So, an improving bowler who has spent a fair bit of his career not bowling will naturally have a very poor wickets to match ratio on his statistics and can well be priced far higher than his improving skills and performance warrant. Another angle to look at is a team with a new 20/20 captain having different ideas as to who to bowl and when. An example of this is Sam Billings taking over as captain of Kent and opening the bowling with Denly in Kent's opening two game and offering an outsider in this market a chance to take early wickets and represent excellent value on his market price.

The shorter the format and the less overs a bowler can bowl offers the greater variance in who picks up the most wickets. A four or five-day match would never see such a type of bowler as mentioned above worth touching with no restrictions on how many overs bowlers can bowl and front-line bowlers bowling most of the day/innings and never remotely worth opposing. With the English 20/20 season in its opening match's, it will be worth keeping an eye on which teams and captains are using different resources than usual and some potential for some unexpected winners in the top bowler market.

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