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Inside Today...

FREE Tips From The Football King, Lucky 7 Naps and Two Percent Club

Top Tipsters For August 2018

The York Ebor Festival - By The Champagne Kid

Rick's Sports Betting: Four Into Six Does Not Work - By Rick Elliott

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Newcastle Can Bail Out Benitez And Mike Ashley

England Selection Dilemma - Balancing A Returning Stokes With The Success of Curran And Woakes - By Dave Owens

Trackside In Ireland - By Declan O'Donoghue

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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

[The Football King](#)

Win Bet - Everton v Southampton 15:00 - Everton @ 1/1

[Lucky 7 Naps](#)

Win Bet - Perth 15:40 - Caius Marcius @ 7/2

[Two Percent Club](#)

Win Bet - Ripon 17:00 - Dr Richard Kimble @ 5/1

The York Ebor Festival - By The Champagne Kid

Next week is my favourite race meeting of the year, the York Ebor Festival. In the Q&A that forms the sales page for my Champagne Kid, I talk about the meeting and also the origin of the name for my racing advice service. The particular paragraph discussing my involvement with this marvellous meeting is below.

Can you tell us a fun betting/horse racing fact about yourself?

I have been to the York Ebor meeting for every day of every year for the last 20 years. Amongst the friends I go with, we have a competition picking 2 selections each race, with one nap and one NB each day. Points are given for each win (10pts plus SP; double if the nap wins) and the winner at the end of the meeting is designated 'The Champagne Kid' for that meeting (and has to buy the champagne for all at the end of the day). The title is held until the following year.

The one at the bottom of the table is given the 'D A Nolan' title (named after one of the losing-most trainers of all time). I am by a good way the winning-most 'Champagne Kid' over the years but had a dire meeting last year and am the currently disgraced 'D A Nolan' title holder and have to wear the 'D A Nolan t-shirt of shame' at breakfast each day of this year's meeting. I aim to regain the correct title this year!

The first Juddmonte International Stakes I saw live in 1998 was an absolute humdinger won by the Pat Eddery ridden One So Wonderful for Luca Cumani by a short head from Faithful Son (Godolphin / Frankie Dettori) with another short head to Chester House (Sir Henry Cecil / Kieron Fallon). Three jockeys at the peak of their powers and a pulsating two x short head finish. Although I had backed One So Wonderful, I still cannot believe that Faithful Son was not declared the winner. Have a look on YouTube for the race; freeze the frame when they hit the line and judge for yourself. I still think to this day they called it wrong. But, without a doubt, the best performance I have ever seen in the International was by the peerless Frankel. It was a real 'hairs-on-the-back-of-the-neck' moment when he cruised effortlessly into the lead at around the 2-furlong marker, and then lengthened his lead to the winning line leaving everything else floundering behind.

In this year's International renewal, the older horses represented in the main by Poet's Word and Cracksman (who may not run unless rain arrives) look to me to have an advantage over the Classic generation whose main hopes would appear to lie with Eclipse winner Roaring Lion and runner up Saxon Warrior. At this stage, Poet's Word for me.

The meeting opens with a Class 2 sprint handicap over 5½ furlongs. The aftermath of this race usually consists in our group, of conversation once we have re-convened after watching the race in our usual spot in the Knavesmire Stand along the lines of "Did you have that? No, wasn't on my radar. How about you? No, wasn't

even in my calculations. Anyone else? Nope? Me neither!" It won't be the last time during the festival that such words will pass between us after the winner of yet another fiendishly difficult handicap has eluded us all.

Leaving the almost impossible handicaps aside, there are plenty other top-class races to get your teeth into. There is the all-age Nunthorpe over the minimum trip which was in won 2010 by Sole Power at 100/1. My partner was on at SP, as she was when Arabian Queen won the International at 66/1. That's what she does - 100/1 and 66/1 winners. Why bother with the 11/8's and the 9/4's when you have a talent for picking them at those prices? This year's renewal looks to be at the mercy of Battaash currently about 8/11 in the ante-post market. Not the sort of price I am interested in, and he has already blotted his copybook in this race last year when he boiled over in the preliminaries and lost his race before the start. I backed him on that day, but won't be backing him this year; not at odds-on. I really hope he puts on a performance somewhere close to his electrifying wins in last year's Prix de L'Abbaye or the recent King George Stakes at Goodwood though. For me, this year's Nunthorpe is one to watch and hopefully see a magnificent performance in, but I won't be having a bet.

Going back to the handicaps, the highlight of the week is of course the Ebor Handicap over 1m 6f. I find it almost as difficult to find the winner of this as I do the sprint handicaps, but as it is the handicap highlight of the week, one has to find a bet or two in the race. At this point, finding a winner is complicated by not having a clear idea of who will participate. Willie Mullins' 11 entries hardly help in clearing the already muddy waters.

Some of the horses who interest me at the moment for the Ebor are Godolphin's First Nation (currently around 16/1 in the ante-post market), last year's winner Nakeeta (around 14/1) who is bidding to become the first Ebor back-to-back winner in 95 years, and Ian Williams' Saunter who won the November Handicap last year and has the profile of a typical Ebor winner. He is currently priced around 33/1, and I think at that price is worth a small each-way ante-post interest.

As I said earlier, this meeting is my favourite of the year. That is not only for the quality of the racing, but also for the whole ambience surrounding it. York is a fantastic city for a visit, with excellent pubs and restaurants. If I had to nominate one of each as favourite, I'd go for The Rising Sun as favourite pub, and Delrio's Italian for favourite restaurant. Both wonderful places.

On the Saturday, the little competition in our group of friends will have come to an end, and I hope to be buying the Champagne to celebrate another successful meeting. I hope all Betfan readers and members have one too!

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE CHAMPAGNE KID](#)

Rick's Sports Betting: Four Into Six Does Not Work - By

Rick Elliott

The Champions League is the Holy Grail of European football and the most lucrative domestic competition in the world. The vast income from television money allows those taking part to invest in the best players and pay the highest wages. These clubs get stronger and are better placed to qualify again so the wheel keeps turning. Breaking into the top four of the Premier League is required for qualification and it has now become any four from six. Two of the superpowers must miss out.

There are three leagues within one in the top tier of English football. The big city clubs based in London, Manchester and Liverpool (but not Everton) are always in the top six and it's virtually impossible to break into that select group. These clubs have the financial clout to offer the best wages and attract the best players. Leicester City were the exception to the rule when they won the Premier League in the 2015/16 season. They caused the biggest shock in sports history to beat the rest.

Leicester are now established in the second band of teams in the Premier League. They will never be the champions in the current setup but will not fall into the relegation places with the squad. There have been some departures from the title winning team but the club is financially sound. The overseas owners will invest in players if required to maintain their top flight status. There are about 8 clubs that will more often than not achieve mid-table safety.

The bottom tier includes the clubs that have been recently promoted from the Championship the previous season and perennial strugglers. Teams like Brighton, Huddersfield and Watford do not have the ground capacity or resources to avoid the struggle of staying in the top division. Burnley have a small budget and are overachieving but will find their level and that could be among the group for which the nightmare scenario of dropping into the Championship is feasible.

Last season all the teams that were promoted in the four divisions did not suffer an immediate return to the lower level. The trick is to survive the next season and invest the television money in players who can establish the clubs in the Premier League. Huddersfield were fortunate to survive their first season in the Premier League. They had a great start but lack quality and could struggle this time. All the pundits think Cardiff are up against it and will go down. Newcastle will be in trouble if or when Rafa Benitez gets fed up with no transfer funds and leaves.

At the other end of the table it will take something extraordinary to prevent Manchester City not defending the title. In any case there is a nil percent chance of the champions not finishing in the top four. The three champions before last season failed to make the top four the following year but City will not finish outside the Champions League qualifying positions. United may be one of the elite to miss out. Jose Mourinho is up to his old tricks and it could all end in tears.

Naby Keita is a massive signing for Liverpool and they now have a world class keeper. Overhauling City may be beyond them but a top four position looks assured. Tottenham have not bought any players but conversely they have a settled squad and look booked for another top four finish. Chelsea are better equipped to adjust to a new manager so Arsenal could miss out again. The Gunners will miss the leadership and preparation skills of Arsene Wenger and that means finishing outside the top four and no Champions League football again.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Newcastle Can Bail Out Benitez And Mike Ashley

Mike Ashley has spent £90 million bailing out the House Of Fraser but not given Rafa Benitez much money to buy players for Newcastle and the fans are not happy. The retail entrepreneur has made a fortune selling sports gear but seems reluctant to put his hand in his pocket to improve the prospects of the club he owns. Benitez will get fed up sooner rather than later and the tipping point could be if Newcastle lose at Cardiff today but that is unlikely.

Most pundits and every bookmaker expect the Welsh club to make an immediate return to the Championship so you know things are bad if the Geordies cannot avoid defeat in today's match. However, Newcastle were not out of their depth when losing to Tottenham in their first match and can return to the north east with three points. NEWCASTLE can win at Cardiff and that result is 31/20 with **Betfair**.

The London derby between the home team in Chelsea and Arsenal brings together two sides under new managers. Whereas Arsenal employed Arsene Wenger for 22 years Chelsea change managers like they are going out of fashion. Maurizio Sarri is the latest boss at Stamford Bridge but he does not fit the stereotype of an Italian coach. Arsenal looked much the same as in the old days in losing Unai Emery's first match at home but that was against Manchester City.

The playing personnel has not changed much in both camps since last season when over 2.5 goals were scored in 55% and 68% of Chelsea and Arsenal's matches. Attack is the best form of defence and the mentality of the men on the touchline

suggests the standout bet is OVER 2.5 GOALS at 4/7 with Ladbrokes in a match in which both teams could score.

There is summer jumping at Perth and Market Rasen but the big money is on offer on the level and Newbury is the most lucrative of six Flat meetings in Britain and Ireland today. The feature is the Group 2 Hungerford Stakes over seven furlongs at 3.35pm. Horses aged three get a handy five pounds from older runners. The heart says Librisa Breeze can win and the owner is the chairman of Brighton FC who have a huge home match against Manchester United in the Premier League. However, the head says GUSTAV KLIMT will be impossible to beat receiving weight so the horse must be backed at 2/1 with Coral.

England Selection Dilemma - Balancing A Returning Stokes With The Success of Curran And Woakes - By

Dave Owens

England have played some of their best cricket for quite some time to grab a 2-0 lead against the worlds No1 with two convincing displays from England's bowling attack. It's been no secret that England have desperately been looking for back up to England's spearheads of Anderson and Broad and people to eventually replace them in the coming years. It was therefore even sweeter for England to see a couple of excellent performances from bowling all-rounders Curran and Woakes, who have both turned in Man of the Match performances as well as fine performances with the bat and bowl.

The Ben Stokes trial has been on the front and back pages of the news in the last week and his recent acquittal would likely mean England want to get their star player back on the pitch and back to business as quickly as possible. The result of which would likely see one of either Curran or Woakes left out. A decision that would be incredibly tough on either player with Woakes just off the back of a century at Lords and a fine bowling performance and Curran making one of the most encouraging starts to a test career for England for quite some time.

The third test is at Trent Bridge a ground and wicket that has usually been tailor made for England with it offering generous swing and seam movement for their bowlers and has made batting incredibly tricky for opposition against England's seamers in the past. Such a venue would seem perfect for 20-year-old Curran to continue his promising start with his biggest attribute being the ability to swing the ball a chance to build on the confidence he has already gained this series.

With the tests being in rapid succession there is the option should England manage to win the third test as they are strong favourites to do. England could well take the option to rest either Broad or Anderson in the remaining matches as has been mooted during the pre-series previews to manage their workloads which would ensure whoever did miss out could quickly be brought back into the fold.

Whatever the decision made at Trent Bridge someone will be very unlucky to miss out and will have England in the rare position of plenty of competition and pressure on the bowling front and some interesting decisions in the coming weeks.

Click the link below it would be a pleasure to have you on board.

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT CRICKET COUNSEL](#)

Trackside In Ireland - By Declan O'Donoghue

Following the "morning money" can sometimes be a short cut to empty pockets but it paid handsome dividends for early shoppers last Sunday.

The betting ring sharks at The Curragh though ignored it, much to their cost.

In the opener, the office money had been all about Mid Winster,

Andy Slattery's runner was taken at 10/1 and all the way in to 9/2. At the track though he was chalked up at "sixes" and drifted to 8/1.

The locally trained Carbon Fibre was all the rage in the ring, Michael O'Callaghan's Helmet colt being hammered in from 3/1 to 9/4 jolly.

The early birds collected on Mid Winster, while Carbon Fibre finished third.

The Anglesley Lodge Maiden was next and again the offices were badly stung in the morning crossfire.

The Darren Bunyan trained Optionality had been pitched in at the deep end on her debut late last season when last of 13 in a Listed at Dundalk.

Clearly much better was expected this time as some early 25/1 was hoovered up and she was slashed to "sevens" in the offices.

Yet she opened at 8/1 in the betting ring and went right out to 12's as the Ajmera attracted the hot money.

Early 5/2 lasted jig time and Johnny Murtagh's filly was 13/8 at the off. For what it's worth Eddie Lynam's Hot Stone stayed a steady 7/2 but never landed a blow.

Optionality veered left slightly on leaving stalls but Gary Carroll straightened her up quickly and then kicked on to lead them all a merry dance on the stands side as she romped home.

Only one horse attracted support in the Loder Fillies Race both in the ring and in the offices as Lady Kaka was hammered in from 5/2 to 13/8 favourite.

And the bookies knew they'd have to dip into the big satchels from an early stage as Robbie Colgan - formerly better known as a jump jockey - scooted a mile clear on Lady Kaya and she won doing handstands.

"That was awesome!" said winning trainer Sheila Lavery.

"Robbie said it was just like a swinging canter up the Old Vic gallops."

"She's got all the right entries, but I imagine the owners' phone will be hopping off the table with offers" Lavery said.

The big prize on offer, the Keeneland Phoenix Stakes went to the UK with Advertise, the warm 11/10 favourite delivering the goods for Martyn Meade and Frankie Dettori.

While some crabbed the performance with words like "workmanlike" that is somewhat unfair. Group One races on The Curragh are hard won, and previous winners of the race include George Washington, Fasliyev, Mastercraftsman and Caravaggio.

It was a tight run affair and Meade was relieved in more ways than one afterwards.

"Well I had been bullish about his chances and I was afraid I'd have to eat my words!" he explained.

"After he won the July Stakes at Newmarket Frankie said we could go anywhere with him, but it does look like he needs seven furlongs now."

"The Dewhurst is the obvious target and the big question is whether he will get a mile next year" Meade added.

Dettori said: "He's very uncomplicated, very tough, and brave too."

*Another good week for Declan's Irish Racing Service with Ducky Mallon 11/2 (won 5/1); Mazzuri 11/2 (w 4/1); Making Light 4/1 (w 3/1); Facethepuckout 2/1 (w 5/4) and Alpha Centauri 11/10 (w 9/10).

Why not join up now and get the inside line on the Irish runners at York?

[CLICK HERE FOR DECLAN'S IRISH RACING](#)