

BetFan

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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

[Sean Haren Racing](#)

Cheltenham 16:20 - Dinons @ 11/10 Win Bet

[Smart Wagers](#)

Newbury 16:30 - Aquarium @ 10/1 Each Way Bet

[Neo Investments](#)

Newbury 14:20 - Young Rascal @ 6/4 Win Bet

Rick's Sports Betting: All Roads And Jumps Courses Lead To Cheltenham - 0y Rick Elliott

The jumps season runs for 12 months and the final day at the end of April is immediately followed by the start of the next campaign. However, the core season runs from late October to April but the sport is dominated by four days. The Cheltenham Festival continues to grow but other races have suffered. Its importance means horses are targeted at the major races so there are fewer clashes during the rest of the season. The Grand National meeting at Aintree is now more important than in the past but Cheltenham in the March is still the meeting that matters most.

Late October sees the first fixture at the home of National Hunt racing and the first time Aintree has raced since the summer. The Betfair Chase takes place at Haydock at the end of November and there are big Saturday races over jumps from the start of November until the turn of the year. However, the championship races for hurdlers and chasers over a variety of distances are run over the four days of the Cheltenham Festival. Ante post betting is available for most races but this type of betting is fraught with danger until bookmakers offer non-runner/no bet.

The waters are muddied by the fact that horses can have more than one potential target. The expansion of the meeting to four days means there are more opportunities and options. For example, the Ryanair Chase has Grade 1 status and some horses contest it instead of the Gold Cup. There are now more lucrative races for mares which have had a detrimental affect on the Champion Hurdle. The number of Graded races has increased but the stock of horses has not kept pace. The net result is some horses appearing in the ante post markets for more than one Cheltenham race.

Willie Mullins always has horses that are viable contenders for more than one race and he tends to make late decisions. His horses owned by Rich Ricci are generally kept apart and Douvan for example has had more than one potential target in the past. If a horse prominent in the betting is withdrawn late in the day the whole ante post market is turned upside down. There is now little incentive to bet on future festival races because the backed horse could be targeted at another race. Gordon Elliott and Gigginstown Stud make multiple entries that can distort ante post betting.

The landscape becomes easier to navigate when bookmakers offer no runner/no bet for races at Cheltenham. The concession usually applies to the four championship races first but during February some bookmakers introduce the offer for every race at the festival. The concession means stakes are returned

for any bets placed on horses that are withdrawn from the named race. You can back a horse safe in the knowledge that if it becomes a non-runner you get your money back. In such a competitive environment the guarantee is appearing earlier in the year which is good news for ante post punters. Final running plans are less significant once the offer applies.

Over the five months at the end of the year and start of the next year every impressive trial sees the horse touted for Cheltenham. Bookmakers and the racing Press fuel ante post interest but taking fancy prices could be false economy if you don't get a run. It's best to wait until non runners become no bets in the few weeks before the Cheltenham Festival in March.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Timely Home Win For Leicester

Leicester have lost their last two league matches which is hardly a crisis. The manager is under pressure and a home defeat to West Ham today would not help his cause. The visitors have spent a fortune, go through managers like they are going out of fashion and have left their spiritual home. Things could go from bad to worse today.

Leicester have kept four clean sheets in their last 23 matches during which they have let in 43 goals. However, West Ham have not found the net in five of nine Premier League matches this season and several players will be absent due to injury today. LEICESTER are the team to back at 6/5 with **William Hill**.

The England tour of Sri Lanka continues today with a one-off T20 international in Colombo. Bizarrely the tour has been scheduled during the monsoon season and the One Day International was severely affected by heavy rain. Amid the showers England won the series 2-1 and the only defeat was in the final match which was a dead rubber. Both sides have won four of the last eight T20 matches so on form and with home advantage the value lies in backing SRI LANKA at 13/8 with **Ladbrokes**.

The race formerly known as the Racing Post Trophy is the last Group 1 contest of the Flat season and takes place over one mile at Doncaster today (4.05) . Fillies are eligible and would get a three pound allowance but none are taking part. Saxon Warrior, trained by Aiden O'Brien and ridden by Ryan Moore won the race last year, beating Roaring Lion into second place. The trainer's leading fancy in the race today will be ridden by his son, Donnacha. MANGA GRECIA is the tip at 6/4 with **bet365**.

Trackside In Ireland - By Declan O'Donoghue

The turf flat season runs until tomorrow week at Naas in Ireland, and it was business as usual in the opener at that track last Sunday with a Ballydoyle 1,2,3.

Donnacha O'Brien brought San Andreas home in front of a fast finishing Ferretti with early leader The Corporal third.

Never slow to get in on the act, Joseph O'Brien was on target in the next , a juvenile fillies maiden with 16/1 shot Rainbow Moonstone.

She had finished last on her debut the previous Monday at Gowran Park but Joseph explained:

"We thought she'd run well at Gowran, but that was over a mile on heavy ground and she went well early but didn't stay at all."

"Back to six furlongs on much better ground today we thought she'd run well, but I didn't think she'd win."

"She wouldn't be one for the all weather at Dundalk, that's why we were anxious to run her again before the end of the season" he added.

The Birdcatcher Nursery was a big attraction, and was won for the second year in a row by Ger Lyons.

This time Chicago May - 7/1 to 11/2 -did the business, and she had won over seven furlongs at the track earlier in the season.

Colin Keane won from the front - certainly the best tactic on the day for no obvious reason - and Lyons said:

"She's a hard filly to train, and Colin deserves that as he has her hands full trying to ride her out every day."

"But I must say she was really tough and brave today, she was all guts out there."

"Hopefully next year she'll develop into a black type filly, otherwise she might go racing in America" Ger added.

Patrick Prendergast is enjoying a fine season, and 11/1 shot Cedars Of Lebanon scored a repeat course victory when landing the seven furlongs Auction Stakes.

Sunblessed, an unconsidered 50/1 chance was a real eye catcher when coming from a different postal zone to take second.

Yet it was mainly O'Brien family domination again with Sarrochi and Curley - in the Fillies Listed - adding to Aidan's tally while Dwindraft was another for Joseph.

Incidentally that was Joseph's 83rd winner of the flat season.

So those who thought he was going to figure mainly on the jumping scene had better think again.

Another good week for Declan's Irish Racing Service with Magical 7/1 (won 5/1); Flavius 7/2 (w 9/4), Centrifolia 7/2, Perfect Taratino 10/3 (w 5/2), Western Frontier 13/8 and each way Lakemilan 11/1 (2nd 5/2 fav.).

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England's Test Series in Sri Lanka – Uncertainty in Both Camps - By Dave Owens

England kick off their test series against Sri Lanka at the start of November with their test line up and status a far cry from the one-day side who are widely considered the best one-day side in the world now and are installed as the favourites for next year's 50 over world cup. The England one day line up looks a well-oiled machine with the batting line up looking very settled with the nucleus of the top 7 having played together and been successful for some time and excellent players sitting on the bench waiting to come in. This is in stark contrast to the test line up, with the retirement of Alastair Cook leaving all top three places up for grabs and not one player having nailed down a top order place.

England equally have questions about the quality of their spin bowling in the 5-day format. Interestingly it's the spinners Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid who are likely to play in the first test who have recently been described as England's "best bowlers" in one day cricket but have always struggled away from home in the longer format and couldn't be further away from their fine reputations for England in white ball cricket with the ball.

Sri Lanka themselves have been in disarray with poor results in all formats and the seemingly bizarre dismissal and dropping of their one-day captain and best player

Angelo Mathews and has seen the team have 6 captains in a two-year period to really emphasise the problems and upheaval that has gone on.

England come into the series on the back of a 4-1 series win against the No 1 side in the world India. As has been the case for quite some years, home advantage has proved to be everything in Test cricket and winning away has proved to be a near impossible task for nearly every team. It's this factor that make both sides hard to separate by the bookmakers going in the first test.

With lots of uncertainty on both sides and also the potential of weather intervening – it could well be a case of which team settles into the series best and taking information gleaned from the first test with regards to betting on the second and third tests of the three match series and having a better picture on team selection and conditions for the series.

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