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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

Statman

Win Bet - Ludlow 13:45 - Rapper @ 13/8

Declan O'Donoghue - Irish Racing

Win Bet - Meydan 17:25 - Settle For Bay @ 5/1

TWL Pro Tip

Win Bet - Newcastle (A.W) 17:55 - Fayez @ 5/4

Race In Focus: Champion Hurdle - By Ian Hudson

Cheltenham Tuesday March 12th 2019 - Two miles and half a furlong hurdle race for horses aged four and over with 8 hurdles.

Description

The Champion Hurdle is the championship race for non-novice hurdlers over just beyond the minimum distance and was first run in 1927. It now has a fixed place in the calendar as the fourth race on the first day of the Cheltenham Festival. The winner of the race is often rated the best hurdler of the year and becomes a leading contender for the Champion Hurdle the following season. It is a Grade 1 contest and mares get a seven pounds allowance. This is the most prestigious hurdle race in the calendar and has a history of producing multiple winners. Many winners have been commemorated with races named in their honour. The current sponsors are online bookmakers Unibet.

Winners Since 2009

Year	Horse	Jockey	Trainer	SP
2009	Punjabi	Barry Geraghty	Nicky Henderson	22/1
2010	Binocular	Tony McCoy	Nicky Henderson	9/1
2011	Hurricane Fly	Ruby Walsh	Willie Mullins	11/4F
2012	Rock On Ruby	Noel Fehily	Paul Nicholls	11/1
2013	Hurricane Fly	Ruby Walsh	Willie Mullins	13/8F
2014	Jezki	Barry Geraghty	Jessica Harrington	9/1
2015	Faugheen	Ruby Walsh	Willie Mullins	4/5F
2016	Annie Power	Ruby Walsh	Willie Mullins	5/2F
2017	Buveur D'Air	Noel Fehily	Nicky Henderson	5/1
2018	Buveur D'Air	Barry Geraghty	Nicky Henderson	4/6F

Trends

- The average starting price of the winner since is 13/2.
- The SP's ranged from 4/6 to 22/1.
- There were five winning favourites two of which were odds-on.
- Only 2 winners started at double figure odds.
- 8 winners were returned at single figure odds.
- The biggest SP of those winners was 9/1.
- Only two horses ages five have won the race since 1985.
- There have been 12 winners trained in Ireland over the last 20 years.
- 18 of the last 20 winners were aged eight or younger.
- Before Buveur D'Air Hardy Eustace was the last back-to-back winner (2004 and 2005).

- The retired My Tent Or Yours has finished second three times without winning the race.
- Seven of the last 16 winners ran in the race the previous year.

Records Since 1927

Five horses have won the race a record three times: Hatton's Grace (1949-1951), Sir Ken (1952-1954), Persian War (1968-1970), See You Then (1985-1987) and Istabraq (1998-2000).

The leading trainer is Nicky Henderson with 7 wins: See You Then (1985-1987), Punjabi (2009), Binocular (2010) and Buveur D'Air (2017 and 2018)

The leading jockeys with 4 wins are Paul Moloney (1951-1954) and Ruby Walsh: Hurricane Fly (2011 and 2013), Faugheen (2015) and Annie Power (2016).

Leading Contenders

Odds correct as at January 16th 2019 and subject to change.

The current favourite is the winner in the last two years, BUVEUR D'AIR (13/8 with **Betfair**). The horse's win in the Fighting Fifth Hurdle at Newcastle in November was the dominant display of the season. However, on reflection the form in beating Samcro and Summerville Boy may not be as impressive as it appeared at the time. Both those horses underperformed and have been taken out of the Champion Hurdle betting by some bookmakers. VERDANA BLUE (8/1 with **bet365**) beat Buveur D'Air into second place in the Christmas Hurdle at Kempton. However, the runner-up made a serious jumping error at the third last which could have been crucial in the final reckoning. The second favourite at the time of writing is LAURINA (4/1 with **Betfair**) who won a match impressively at Sandown first time out this season. The horse is a mare so receives seven pounds from male horses and Annie Power won the Champion Hurdle in 2016 receiving the weight. APPLES JADE (9/1 with **bet365**) would also receive the mare's allowance but connections target winnable races and she may be kept amongst her sex at Cheltenham. MELON (10/1 with **Betfair**) could not beat a below par Buveur D'Air last year so is not fancied to reverse the form. SHARJAH (8/1 with **bet365**) is an improving horse who could make the frame.

Tip - LAURINA at 4/1 with Betfair.

Next Week's Race - RSA Chase

Previous Tips

Supreme Novices' Hurdle - Tornado Flyer at 16/1 (now 28/1).

Arkle Challenge Trophy - Lalor at 5/1 (now 6/1).

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

The Rocket Can Be The Master Again

Ronnie O'Sullivan has won more Triple Crown snooker tournaments than any other player in the history of the sport. Depending on your age and era you will have a view on who is the greatest player ever. Fred and Joe Davis, Steve (no relation) and Stephen Hendry would get plenty of votes. The maverick that was Alex 'Hurricane' Higgins could do things with a snooker cue that all those greats could only imagine. Jimmy White was another 'character' who made the game look easy.

However, O'SULLIVAN has claims to be the all time great and he is Evens with **Ladbrokes** to win the Masters for a record eighth time this week. He should ease past Ryan Day in his second round match which starts this afternoon.

In any sport there will be debates about its greatest exponents but comparing achievements from different eras is impossible. Pele is considered to be the best football player who ever lived but if you were born in the last 30 years Lionel Messi would be top of your list. In tennis Roger Federer must come close to being the best ever player and at 37 he is still going strong.

It must be galling for Andy Murray to see his contemporary still contending in Grand Slam tournaments while his career is all but over at the age of 31. In fact Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal still have majors in them and Murray's three great rivals are prominent in the outright betting for the Australian Open. FEDERER is 9/2 with **bet365** to win it this year.

Enable and Winx are the best race horses of the current generation and Frankel achieved one of the best ratings. However, some of the older generation believe Arkle will always be the greatest horse in the history of racing, over jumps or on the Flat. It's fair to say nobody would suggest any of the horses running in Britain today would appear in a list of the top 100 horses who ever raced round the world. The handicap chase over three miles at Wincanton (2.25) is the richest race of the day. GARRANE has the form and potential improvement to be the selection at 9/2 with **bet365**.