

Issue 188

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# BetFan

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## TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

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Win Bet - Haydock 16:55 - Breath Caught @ 7/4

# **It's Liverpool Or Chelsea For Fourth Place - By Ian Hudson**

**Hudson** - By Ian Hudson

Manchester City have won the Premier League, Manchester United and Tottenham have qualified for the Champions League and Swansea, Stoke and West Brom are relegated save for a bizarre set of results. The broadcasters of the last day are struggling for a story and are grasping at straws in focusing on the two matches that will determine who finishes fourth. Even if Chelsea beat Newcastle away from home a draw for Liverpool at home to Brighton should suffice and Chelsea will miss out.

Eight of the fixtures bring together teams with nothing at stake. There could be some changes in the standings which affects prize money. However, the financial rewards from league positions are small compared to the income from television money. Arsenal may be motivated to win at Huddersfield in Arsene Wenger's last match and Manchester City will be looking to end the season with a win at Southampton. There is nothing on the other six matches on the last day of the league season.

In the past there have been some dramatic storey lines related the final programme of fixtures. In the 1994/95 season Blackburn led Manchester United by two points with one match to play. United were away at West Ham and Blackburn played Liverpool at Anfield. Liverpool supporters faced the dilemma of wanting to see their team win but not wanting United to win the league. The plot was enhanced by the fact that Kenny Dalglish was the manager of Blackburn on the day.

Liverpool beat Blackburn but United could only draw their match so Blackburn won the title by one point. There has not been the same drama since that season but the television companies are duty bound to make the last day exciting even if in reality there is very little on the line. Brighton have nothing to play for and Liverpool have a brilliant home record. It would be a huge upset if Brighton avoided defeat.

Newcastle's form has dipped since relegation was out of the question. They could finish in the top half despite losing four matches in a row. When a team have secured mid-table security hunger and commitment levels drop and Chelsea can take advantage this Sunday. The motivated teams with something to play for can win the points they need to achieve the objective. Their opponents may already be on the beach but there is no doubting the integrity of the league.

Liverpool will thus qualify for the Champions League through their league position and Chelsea will be playing in the Europa League. Antonio Conte may pay with his job because the Chelsea owner did not invest millions to be not playing in the Champions League. Liverpool could qualify twice by winning this year's final against Real Madrid but Chelsea will not be given the extra place from the Premier League. The only ways an English team can get into the Champions League are winning the competition or the Europa League or finishing fourth in the Premier League.

Chelsea could still leapfrog Liverpool but if Liverpool draw with Brighton Chelsea will have to beat Newcastle by 16 goals to claim fourth place. The record score in the Premier League is 9-0 so that won't happen so the onus is on Brighton to do Chelsea a massive favour. Brighton only secured their Premier League status last Friday with a home win over Manchester United so they could be suffering mental letdown. Sadly Chelsea and the broadcasters will have nothing to get excited about during the second half of matches on the final day.

## **Today's Sports Betting Preview** - By Rick Elliott

### **No Goalfest Expected In The Championship Playoff**

Derby take a valuable one goal lead into the second leg of the Championship playoff semi-final against Fulham and today Middlesbrough host Aston Villa in their first match. Derby just sneaked into the playoffs by finishing sixth in the table but a precedent has been set for the team that earns the last place going all the way to the Premier League. If a team ends the season in form or with positive results momentum and confidence can count for a lot but conversely a team out of form will struggle in the fixtures that matter most. Any lead going into the second leg at this stage is worth its weight in gold and DERBY are now 11/4 with William Hill to get promoted to the top tier of English football.

Middlesbrough finished a place and seven points behind Aston Villa in the regular season. They have home advantage in the first leg and an opportunity to make an immediate return to the Premier League while Villa lost their top flight status two seasons ago. The visitors from Birmingham are managed by Steve Bruce who has guided two teams out of the Championship into the Promised Land of the Premier League. Tony Pulis manages Boro and he has also achieved two promotions to the top division. Any of three results in today's match is feasible but an open match with plenty of scoring opportunities is unlikely. Therefore, if betting on the fixture Under 2.5 Goals is the best option at 1/2 with Ladbrokes.

The Epsom Derby takes place in three weeks but plenty can happen in the remaining trials. The Dante Stakes at York next week is the most significant prep-race but it will take a massive performance to overhaul Saxon Warrior as the

favourite for the most prestigious Flat race in the sport. Lingfield stages their Derby trial today on the course that is similar to Epsom. Kew Gardens is the favourite but that could be more to do with the fact that the horse is trained by Aidan O'Brien than proven form on the track. O'Brien has won the race four times since 2008 but CORELLI is preferred to Kew Gardens and you can back that horse at 4/1 with Betfair.

## **English Struggles in The IPL – Players Playing Catch Up To Long Standing Teams And Settled Line Ups** - By Dave Owens

After years of under-representation in the world's biggest T20 tournament, 12 England internationals were selected for this year's IPL, as well as Jofra Archer, who hopes to qualify to represent England in the future. It's been a tough and challenging time for the English invasion with a large section not being able to break into their franchise side and the guys playing not performing as they and their team would have hoped.

The IPL has been running for 10 years now and most of the sides recruit on continuity and previous success they have had with players from previous campaigns. It's a strategy that makes a lot sense with 20/20 cricket very much a case of finding balance in a side and players to perform very specific roles within the 20 overs. Opening the batting is generally requiring a fast scorer who can take advantage of the first 6 over restrictions. A specialist "death" bowler who can bowl Yorkers, slower balls and lots variation as well as have a steady nerve, balance in bowling as well with a big emphasis on quality spin, but also with good pace in reserve for the different pitch's and opposition encountered.

This emphasis on selecting players who have performed well for a franchise in the past and are lined up to play a specific role in teams line up has had an adverse effect on a lot of the English players who have not played or performed in the IPL before and as such are used more as back up to the tried and tested player when sides select their four overseas players. Billings, Wood, Roy, Woakes, Moen Ali, Hales and Jordan have hardly played a match between them.

Interestingly the most successful Englishman in the tournament so far is Jos Buttler with an excellent 320 runs to his name and scores of 67, 51 and 82 in his last three innings which has saw him as his team's top scorer in the last three games. Unlike his fellow countrymen this is Buttler's third IPL and he is a known quantity for his exploits in previous tournaments and very much selected with a clear role in his side and a starting place guaranteed. He has kept wicket in every game and has started as a lower order finisher at the start

of the tournament and as the season has progressed used his power hitting at the front of the innings.

With England's ever improving form in the shorter format, it could well see more English players playing in the IPL and hopefully taking their chances and making themselves an integral part of the franchise sides which would benefit both the individual and England team with exposure to the pressure cooker environment of playing in front of millions in India takes on.

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**Declan's Eye-Catchers** - By Declan O'Donoghue

**BANDUA (Dermot Weld)** It was at Cork that dual Derby winner Harzand started out and while nobody was making comparisons, this stablemate has gone into many notebooks after scoring twice with real aplomb at the same track. The Gallinule Stakes at The Curragh is next stop and a prominent showing there would book him a spot in the Irish Derby.

**CROCODILE DUNDEE (Tom Cooper)** Looked sure to win at Tipperary on Thursday night but had to settle for second. As it was his first run since October it's possible that match fitness was an issue - he was very disappointing first time out last year - so should be sharper next time.

**FERGIETHELEGEND (John Carr)** People have short memories and hard to believe that the man who trained Sublimity to win the Champion Hurdle was having his first win in two years when this lad won at Wexford. It's ironic, given the trainer's surname and the fact that the race was sponsored by Bolands Mercedes Benz, that they barely made it to the track on time having been held up in Dublin traffic!

**FLATTERING (Aidan O'Brien)** Mixed fare for Ballydoyle last Saturday with Saxon Warrior and Mendelssohn enjoying contrasting fortunes for the famed Tipperary yard. At the relative backwater of Cork this filly turned in a stunning performance though seemingly the outsider of O'Brien's three runners. Don't miss her in the opener at Lingfield today. Still some 25/1 for the Oaks available.

MRS GALLAGHER (William Jarvis) Excelled under Josephine Gordon at Naas where her superior toe gave her a decisive advantage over the five and a half furlongs trip. Fully entitled to take on the colts at Royal Ascot.

IDAHO (Aidan O'Brien) Almost guaranteed to beat inferior rivals in the Ormonde Stake at Chester, it was the manner of victory that impressed, with Ryan Moore particularly pleased. Forget the King George, which always looked a pipedream anyway, staying is very much the name of the game for this steady improver. He could make them all - including stablemate Order Of St. George - hop in the Ascot Gold Cup.

WOULD BE KING (Ger Lyons) Ran a cracker at Naas in his first race since July when just touched off by the race fit Imaging. Should get his turn soon and certainly liked the faster ground.

**\* Another great moneyspinning week for Declan's Irish Racing Service with Claregate Street 6/1 (won 5/2); Causey Arch 5/1; Famous Saying 5/2; Like An Open Book 9/4 (w 7/4); Aiseolas 9/4 (w 13/8); Bloomfield 6/4; Bandua 11/8 (w 4/5); Screaming Rose 11/8; Idaho 10/11 (w 8/11) and Van Beethoven 4/5 (w 1/2). Each way - Texas Radio 12/1 (2nd 6/1); Forever Together 12/1 (2nd 11/2).**

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