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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

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Win Bet - Ascot 16:20 - Stradivarius @ 9/4

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Win Bet - Ripon 17:40 - Blue Havana @ 4/1

England And Kane Are The Big Movers In World Cup

Betting - By Rick Elliott

The first phase of the World Cup has now been completed and all 32 teams have played one match. The tournament has not gone totally to form and Mexico have been the biggest overachievers. One of the most significant betting moves has been on England to win the World Cup and Harry Kane to be the top scorer. The teams from South America have struggled more than the European sides but Brazil are still the favourites to win the World Cup for the sixth time.

The best match in the first week of the tournament was the Iberian derby in which Spain and Portugal drew three-all. In the context of potential winners Spain's performance stood out. They controlled large parts of the match and it was only the late Cristiano Ronaldo free-kick that prevented Spain picking up three points. The 2010 world champions are still strong in all parts of the pitch and in Diego Costa they have one of the most effective strikers in the world.

Despite a howler against Portugal David De Gea is still the best keeper in the game. The defence is full of experience and know-how, there is creativity in midfield and Costa is the main man up front. Spain have played the toughest match in the group and look capable of winning the other two fixtures, against Iran and Morocco. They are now the shortest priced European team in outright betting in the World Cup. France and Germany did nothing special in their first matches.

England are now sixth in the betting and bookmakers believe they are more likely to win the World Cup than Portugal and Argentina. The late winning goal against Tunisia was crucial and if the match had ended in a draw it would have been a case of the old failings emerging at just the wrong time. Despite creating several clear openings in the first half and missing out on clear penalties despite VAR the second half performance did not inspire much confidence but then Kane scored.

Tunisia are a stronger team than Panama and took every advantage going against England while staying within the law. Panama should be an easier nut to crack and three more points and at least another goal from Kane is the most likely outcome of England's second match in Group G. The third fixture against Belgium should decide the group and there is very little between the sides but this is a match England can win and progress as winners of the group.

England's potential opponents in the last 16 will come from Group H. The winners of one group play the runners-up from another group. The projection was a match against Poland or Colombia but they were beaten by Senegal and Japan which has made the group wide open and difficult to fall. If England do win the group they could play Japan or Senegal in the first knockout round. Germany were expected to be awaiting in the quarter-finals but it could now be Mexico.

Mexico were outstanding against Germany, especially in the first half. They were value for a bigger lead than by one goal and Germany had very few clear chances after the break. Mexico have been eliminated at the first knockout stage in the last six World Cups. They have only ever progressed to the third round at World Cups in Mexico. However, it could be different this time and Mexico are dark horses to win the World Cup for the first time.

The heart might be ruling the head but England have a good opportunity to win the World Cup and if it happens Kane will have scored lots of goals.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Frankie Can Get A Tune Out Of Stradivarius In The Gold Cup

Racing gets the headlines today because the feature race of Royal Ascot is the Gold Cup and the race takes place at 4.20pm. Order Of St George won the race in 2016 and was just beaten by Big Orange this time last year. The horse is trying to win back the Flat stayer's crown but may have to settle for second place again behind Stradivarius. Depending on your age and gender that's a designer boutique label or a famous make of violin. It doesn't matter what you associate the name of the horse with because STRADIVARIUS is a proven stayer of the highest quality who can be backed at 2/1 with **Ladbrokes** to win the Gold Cup for John Gosden and Frankie Dettori.

It's unthinkable that Argentina in general and Lionel Messi in particular won't qualify for the knockout stages of the World Cup. However, they are the epitome of a one man team and an individual can't win football matches by himself. Argentina weren't impressive in qualifying for the World Cup and could only draw with Iceland in their first match. The pressure is on to get three points today but CROATIA could win the fixture against Argentina today and that outcome is 14/5 with **William Hill**.

The key to doing well in the World Cup is not necessarily winning the first match as Spain proved in 2010. They were beaten by Switzerland in their opener and went on to win the tournament. Australia won't be winning the World Cup but all is not lost in terms of getting out of the group despite losing to France. A win against Denmark today brings the Aussies back into contention for a top two finish and they have the energy to pick up three points. AUSTRALIA look a big price at 3/1 with **Betfair**.

Peru looked the better team in their first fixture against Denmark but missed a penalty while they were dominating the match. France were nothing special in their win over Australia. All but two of France's last 17 matches have featured two goals or more. France had to thank VAR for a crucial first goal against Australia and generally it was a disjointed effort. Peru need something from today's match so can achieve a DRAW which can be backed at 3/1 with **Paddy Power**.